

2/15/72

Dear Js,

Having had to spend the day in pursuits other than writing, something I come to dislike and resent more and more, having then had to decide that I will not ask to be heard vs. Kleindienst (when you recall the positions of our great liberal hopes you may agree it would be a futility, a waste of time, an idle exercise), and having had to think of how without resources I will be able to arrange a repair required by an unresponsive county government that needlessly caused it, I got to after-supper disquieted, unwilling to devote myself to further unpleasantnesses and satisfied that were I to read, much of it was not remain. I then recalled that I had clipped from this morning's paper a listing of the current China programs, thinking to send it to you as a reflection of the changes taking place and of what I had expected to be a fair amount of propaganda. Sure enough, NBC had a special tonight. So, while Lil labored, as she now has to do nightly, I sat and watched what to me is not short of astounding in the US, a really fair and friendly and understanding and self-critical hour-long taking of solid information to the uninformed people. I just couldn't believe it, from the opening, which said there are no more slums in China, to the end, a roundup by Service, of all people. By far the poorest quarter was Pearl Buck.

Increasingly I have come to wonder is among the new objectives is the beginning of an effort at an Anti-USSR alliance with China. After seeing so fair a show, by NBC, narrated by the former VOA head, and I find the notion less difficult to conceive.

My real purpose in writing is in the event you may want to make your own analysis of what is going on here and why, or should you want to prepare for consideration of aspects at a later date, to let you know so you can get a transcript. They generally supply them free, and sent to the office, I think there would be no problem at all.

This told the Hurley story-fairly. It aired Service, Ludden, Emerson and Davies-straight, absolutely straight - no single dirty or tricky question. It was, in fact, hippodromed in advance on the show as "we are now going to show you something never before seen on television". Not really an exaggeration, either. They laid it out, the story of Yen-an, of Chiang, of the popularity and mass following of the Communists. I still find it hard to believe we can come to this. Even the asking of questions, had policy been different, would there have been a Korea, even a Viet Nam. On Korea, they openly and without reservation labelled the Yalu as the greatest military defeat in American history, crediting Chinese valor and emphasizing it by saying they were pitted against overwhelming mechanization. On McCarthur'd fault-triggering, no punches withheld. Friendly, accurate descriptions of Mao and Chou. Chancellor's script even called for him to say that Mao broke up his own bureaucracy with the young, who he told to do their own thing in a land of respect for the elders, telling them not to do what their elders told them but to take over and do what they think should be done. He said they have done it "and somehow it seems to work".

Perhaps the line I'll remember most as one not intended to convey the subtler meaning, "when the sun is setting here, it is rising there".

By and large, I think this is the most honest bit of TV reporting I can recall. Perhaps my judgement is influenced by great surprise, perhaps any honesty overwhelms me. But I do begin to get the feeling that not only is the word out but more, it is setting loose forces it will not be easy to restrain or recall.

In even small things, like border incidents with the USSR, it showed Chinese footage and used pro-Chinese commentary.

I do not, of course, think the corner is turned, that the government seeks a worldwide rapprochement, a genuine detente or anything like that. There is no overnight reform in any kind of journalism. But this was so completely foreign to the totality of the past, so close to straight and faithful reporting and on an issue where the past is within the recall of most of the audience, that I cannot but wonder how, even with the President going there, it came about.

So, it is note to let you know about it should you decide that for any purpose you may want to get the transcript.

It was an hour. I think the clipping lists a total of 7 1/2 hours in three of four days on TV on this single subject, all specials, utilizing in some cases foreign footage of a kind not general seen in the US, from "enemy" sources. There is no exception, unless CBS has nothing slated. Don't recall. Even Metromedia and the local independent, which aired one of unknown origin and got a rave from the Post. Incredulously, LW