

The New Alsop v The Old Alsop: What's the Game?

SFChron 12/19/72 swings me toward the more extreme view I've held, if it is not at all conclusive and my thinking still is unfixed.

My opinions have ranged between the least and most suspicious, that these atypical columns could have been the old liking for things Chinese and the land emerging in honest reporting of the changes he's seen with his own eyes, or that they could betoken a change of national policy and direction. Including military and the military's.

In support of the latter theory, two things, the first from my research for TIGER: the military plan in SEAsia was to contrive the killing of US personnel there and thus provoke an excuse for war with China. Whether entirely nuclear or old-fashioned land and air war I don't now recall, if I knew.

In support of this these quotes from the Chron clip:

"China is 'not at all safe from a preventive-nuclear attack by Russia'."

"...I have been writing regularly about the Soviet buildup on the Chinese frontier. ...Soviet Russia is spending about \$11 billion a year to maintain its forced on the Chinese border...It is lunatic to suppose that their posture is anything but defensive (vis-a-vis Russia)...We must pray that this potentially formidable China is allowed to realize its formidable potential'..." Among the other gems, we should help China if there is this kind of trouble.

Now one of the things I expect to explore in TIGER is the US intent to form an alliance the other way around: with USSR vs China. It failed only because USSR would not go for it.

This is merely a switch on that. With that breach seeming irreparable for the immediate future, old-fashioned balance-of-power politics point this way (not virtual abandonment of traditional US Latin American interests) and so does the larger potential for economic benefit. In large areas USSR is already a rival and economically independent. Besides, the reawakened Japan has China as a natural partner and we are now the economic rival of the new Japans of the world. China is the one large exception in a position to pay.

Moreover, political rivalry between us and the USSR is more likely in the rest of the world than US-China.

Having made an opening both east and west, the Nixophrenics may prefer China. At this point they can go either way or neither, playing one vs the other for a while.

I suggest that the Chinese knew what they were doing when they let Alsop in.

(I had no idea from the columns that he was back so long ago.)

Your note of 12/30 bears on this theory, beginning with the suggestion that "he may be the kind of conservative who sees China as a lesser communist evil compared with Russia." When it comes to the potential for nuclear delivery, no matter how they grow, there can be no question. Ditto economically. These things alone could be part of his explanation, were he to make one. Another is that we have never attributed to them the extensive proselytizing we have attributed to the Russians (I suspect a greatly-exaggerated attribution) and for racial reasons in vast areas they are less likely to attempt it. Besides, they have no record of it, aside from some few allegations in a few parts of Africa and negligibly in L.A.

I think the more intelligent reactionaries have come to realize that all peoples now require and are entitled to a few pore of the needs of life. Thus they are less opposed to some kinds of change. There can't be a large market for foreign capital in the red lands and they've come to accept that foreign capitalism will not now have a chance in them. With the changes in the world, imperialism as we've known it is and will be dead. It today can't be profitable anyway, so the lesser evil, and the choice to be opted is profit from trade and friendships or neutralization in the diplomatic area.

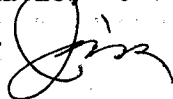
Your point that the Chinese have always been more Democratic than the Russians fits and makes such changes as Alsop's easier and easier for him. Besides, we've been so hung up for so long on the USSR, never dreaming that the sleeping giant would awaken so fast, more of our hate energies have been directed toward USSR. Your point about the new ruling class in USSR also relevant to such a theory as I postulate is possible. Ditto for contrast with his KMT experiences and observations, and more, give him a chance to atone for his record with them and in his writing of them. So, if I'm right about his new thinking, and I'm not at all sure, we next have to ask if it is his or he got it from some trusting official source before he went. HW1/6/72

30 December 1972

HW:

Thanks for sending the Post version of the Alsop columns on China. You are correct: both the Chronicle and the States-Item sometimes cut him. I share your mystification about his seeming turn-around, and can only suggest that he may be the type of conservative who sees China as a lesser communist evil compared with Russia. Just why this should be is something he will have to explain, not I; since it seems to me that what such people really fear is any change toward genuine social democracy, meaning change toward a government for the benefit of more than a few ruling class types. If that's true, then Joe really has been charmed, since the Chinese are and always have been fundamentally more democratic than the Russians, both in practice and theory. It is in Russia that a new ruling class has gained power, and in China where one has been struck down in the cultural revolution. I suppose one must remember that Joe also was exposed to Kuomintang China at its very worst, and the shock to a puritan at finding rigidly honest Chinese must be traumatic, to say the least.

jdw





JOSEPH ALSOP
He says the atom shelters

SF Chronicle
Alsop in S.F.
DEC 19 1972
**--Tells of
China Visit**

General Joseph Alsop told the San Francisco Chronicle today that he had just returned from a visit to China.

Alsop, who recently returned from a tour of Europe, said his hosts allowed him into formerly forbidden areas of the country before he left.

"For a good many years I have been writing regularly about the Soviet buildup on the Chinese frontier."

He said he found that "every major city in China has an underground city to protect its citizens in case of attack. They can't prevent destruction, of course."

RUSSIA

Soviet Russia is spending about \$11 billion a year to maintain its force on the Chinese border, Alsop told a group of several hundred at the Sheraton-Palace.

Alsop said mainland China will become a "formidable" force in world economics if the country does not have to spend so much on defense, adding it is ironic to suppose that their posture is anything but defensive (vis-a-vis Russia).

"I am forced to conclude," he said, "that the new China works."

This "working," however, applies to industry and economy alone.

"I doubt that it will have vigorous art or culture because it is so unfree as a society," he said.

VIEW

The Russian threat, he said, will drop as China's economic growth rises.

He must see that this potentially formidable China be allowed to realize its formidable potential.

He said that should the Soviets launch a major attack on China, they would hit again in more vulnerable areas like the Persian Gulf.

And in answer to a question as to whether the U.S. should help maintain peace in the east of a Soviet attack, Alsop said, "I will give the impression that we're likely to help."