

11-4-83

DEAR MR. WEIBERG

THANKS FOR INFORMATION
ON KING. ALPHAEL, etc.

MY PERSONAL CONDITION
IS LIKE YOURS - WHICH
BOGS ME,

AS FOR THE PRESIDENT. HE

 SEEMS TO BE A HITLER,
OED Id.

ON TV - IT SEEMS TO ME HE MAY

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B2

BE ON DRUGS; OR ACTING

HE GETS HIS FACTS MIXED-UP.

YOUR COOPERATION HIGHWAY

- WILL BE THE HIGHLIGHT OF
1983.

AS THE THANKS GIVING SEASON

IS COMING UP - I AM WISHING

YOU LOTS OF HAPPINESS
AND MUCH JOY TO THOSE
YOU LOVE.

SINCERELY,



WES HIGHLAND Father & Son
1111 N. MOUNTAIN

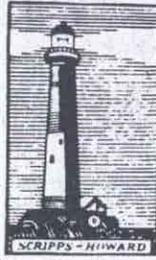
SUPPOSED TO BE A FAR OUT LIBERAL

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"Give light and the people
will find their own way."

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Friday, November 4, 1983

At issue

Letting the press do its job

By WILLIAM SAFIRE

WASHINGTON — The same vicious virus that infected the Nixon White House and caused its ruin is now raging through the Reagan administration.

"The press is the enemy," President Nixon used to say. That contempt and hatred for an unelected elite led to the bunker mentality of "Us against Them," and then to an obsession with leaks and the excesses of Watergate. The same baleful mood permeates the White House and the Pentagon today.

But this president skillfully masks his animosity toward reporters; he limits to private counsels his denunciation of his earliest journalistic supporters as "hostile." Not merely "critical" — the word the President uses is "hostile": They have crossed over to the enemy, to Them.

To defeat Them, he has directed a campaign now reaching crescendo:

- To frighten government officials away from reporters, President Reagan signed an order making it

possible for a bureaucrat to demand that his employees take polygraph tests whether or not leaks have taken place or the employees are under suspicion.

- Reagan has ordered that all government officials be required to sign lifetime agreements to submit future writings for government clearance. This attempted rape of the First Amendment would force all outgoing officeholders to plead with their replacements to allow publication of memoirs or informed criticism of the new administration's policies.

- In seeking to gut the Freedom of Information Act, in requiring all White House officials to report to a central authority before returning calls from reporters, and in undermining the tradition of regular press conferences, Reagan has made a policy of avoiding questions that might show him out of touch. Not since Watergate in 1974 has a healthy president avoided reporters for as long as Reagan did this fall.

- Fearful of television pictures of casualties and impressed by Mrs. Thatcher's management of a supine British press during what I will now call the Malvinas war, Reagan dictated that coverage of his Grenada invasion would be handled exclusively by Pentagon press agents. He not only barred the traditional access, but in effect kidnapped and whisked away U.S. reporters on the scene.

The excuses given for this communications power grab were false. Caspar Weinberger pretended that reporting was denied because of concern for journalists' safety, which is absurd: The Reagan administration would hail the obliteration of the press corps. Another reason advanced — that the military was too busy to provide the press with tender, loving care — is an insult calculated to enrage journalists.

The nastiest reason, bruited about within the Reagan bunker, is that even a small press pool aboard the task force would have blabbed and cost American lives. Not only is this below the belt, but beside the point: We know that the Cubans knew of the invasion plans at least a day in advance. In fact, the absence of U.S. war correspondents has curtailed criticism that the Pentagon miscalculated and sent in a dangerously small initial invasion force.

I SHOULD BE writing today of the strategic importance of this timely invasion, which I favor and applaud; and here I am looking at my old friend Cap Weinberger with dismay. He is an intelligent human being, a good man, a patriot; and now he is declaring a willingness to obstruct military justice in Lebanon, professing his abdication of control of the military on a matter of public policy, and — in my sorrowful opinion — lying through tight lips about why he barred the press from the battlefield in Grenada.

Perhaps Cap is driven by a desire to reaffirm membership in Reagan's Us. Since the press hates Us, he can indulge in the politically popular hatred and harassment of Them.

Count me among Them. I wish my former colleagues now in the bunker would remember Nixon's words in his farewell: "Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them — and then you destroy yourself."

The New York Times News Service

Pro

Concerns for journalists' safety were absurd: The Reagan administration would hail the obliteration of the press corps.



William Safire

By OTIS PIKE

WASHINGTON — In what is hoped will be a calm period — after more shocking news than either the news media or the public could fully absorb — there is a reasonable opportunity to look at the fight that broke out between the U.S. military and the U.S. news media during the invasion of Grenada.

The conflict is real and inevitable. It is a conflict the media do not cover well. No matter how objective the media — print and electronic — can be on other issues, we are no more objective than any other constituency when our own ox is being gored.

Radio, television, and print journalists were outraged when they were barred from landing with the invading forces.

Editorials thundered that reporters were present when U.S. forces landed in Europe on D-Day in World War II. Other comparisons were made with the relatively complete coverage of the Korean War and the very complete coverage of Vietnam.

WE HAVE FORGOTTEN already. We had very strict censorship during World War II. Reporters may have been allowed to go ashore on the beaches of Normandy, but what they could send home was censored. Embarrassed officers spent long hours, scissors in hand, reading the personal letters sent home by enlisted men lest some snippet of fact as to location, strength or mission be included among the rambling letters of loneliness, boredom, love and lust.

We succeeded in World War II when censorship was so complete. As military censorship has disappeared, so has military success. Thus the inevitable conflict.

Our military is trained to win. Winning requires secrecy and an image of skill, courage, stamina, strength and sacrifice.

Our media are trained to report. Reporting must avoid secrecy, and must also report blunders, cowardice, exhaustion, weakness and agony, all of which demoralize us.

The conflict has become infinitely sharper since television provided pictures to go with the words. You can describe our roles in Lebanon and Grenada with words as necessary because "not only has Moscow assisted and encouraged the violence in both countries, but it provides direct support through a network of surrogates and terrorists." Television can and does show the President saying those words, but it cannot, and does not, show Moscow assisting and encouraging violence, or providing support to surrogates and terrorists.

When the President also says, "Brave young men have been taken from us. Many others have been grievously wounded," he is talking to television's strength. No words can equal the horror of live pictures of men grotesquely crumpled in death, or writhing in agony from wounds. Television is not as good as the printed word in conveying the reasons and strategies for combat. It is overwhelmingly, brutally more powerful in conveying the horrors of war.

If there had been nightly television coverage of George Washington's army at Valley Forge — ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, sick and demoralized — the United States would never have been born. The immediate horror of the sacrifice would have overwhelmed the less

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Otis Pike

perceptible purpose. If there had been nightly coverage of the carnage at Antietam, or Bull Run, or Shiloh, the United States could not have survived.

There is a very real question as to whether any nation that refused to control any of its media can succeed in a sustained military conflict with a nation that controls all of its media.

The conflict is not new, but technology has made it more acute. The built-in contradiction between freedom of the press and military success has never been as troubling or as important as now. Too bad the media coverage has been so one-sided.

Newhouse News Service

Busy man's corner

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. The Bible, Proverbs 21:9.

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