

Later 7/18/71

Dear Jim,

I wrote Rothensetin a lengthy letter based on yours, with a few added comments, made as many copies as I could, but by the time I sent one to McG's AA and each of those I consulted, I ran out and asked some to forward to others. I think it is potentially very important, especially the Occam bit, which we missed, and the suspicion of necrophilia where KT claims to "political" necrophilia after the assassination. If you'd like, when I get a copy back I can send it.

Your Pentagon Papers letter of the 13th begins with a chronology that has significance as icing than as cake. It is more relevant to what happened if considered as the last of endless failures, still not ended.

Not disputing your interpretation but rather suggesting multiple purposes, note that Helms also defended against charges of domestic spying, surely known to most editors there to be false, made no reference to "operations", as though this part of the iceberg didn't exist, and I know of no editorial eye being raised, and did all of this and more in the context of the Irvin hearings and the disclosures about the Army and FBI. I am inclined to think he knew, his boys having seen to it as part of their SOP, that there would be no significant CIA documents included. Some I know wonder openly if the CIA really tried to leak some of the papers. (Today's and late last night's radio news refer to a Detroit story not in the edition of the Post that gets here suggesting the protection of people, sources, is part of the justification for the attempt at prior restraint presented to the Supreme Court.)

When I can I'll make copies of the unidentified Helms speech I've finally received in an envelope with no return address, stamped, not franked.

The key thing is the word you use in describing the comments of the scholars I think are probably very interesting, "documents". They can communicate verbally when they have to communicate at all, and their major interest was determining the nature and course of events where they were happening, about which they were not about to say anything (The Wise & Ross chapter on Laos in Invisible Government, if you do not recall it, may interest you in this connection.)

I am fascinated by that of which I was not aware, the absence of any clear indications for the three weeks between the D and JFK assassinations. I would probably be particularly interested in what they have to say about this.

I think I would go further than you, as I will in TIGER, on policy being against any kind of SEAsia regime that the paranoids could consider "Communist". I think and think I can prove the basic policy was vs China, to which everything else was subordinated, and I do not mean mere "containment". Would not this ~~exist~~ find some confirmation in the absence on papers on China?

According to Carl Stern, NBC Justice-legal correspondent, Justice is unhidden in its intents esp. re wiretapping and appeals, Burger is working with them without concealment, and there is an intent to change the basic meaning of basic law, without legislation. I agree with the thought on intimidation, one of the central themes of COUP. What it boils down to is that this is a crew of fascists determined to achieve what they can of an authoritarian society by whatever means they can, knowing, as has always been the case, that they are a minority and have to accomplish their ends by exceptional means. What makes it possible is the press.

I'd like to suggest another thought, that after Agnew's "es Moines speech he became the likely Republican second candidate, for inevitabilities are forcing Nixon to do what he had never conceived he could and the unregenerates cannot abide it. Agnew is an anything. His counter-policy statements and silences are, I think, significant. Best, HW

13 July 1971

Dear Harold:

Many thanks for your thoughts of July 6 on the Pentagon Papers situation.

Agreed. Multiple leaks, by many and to many, over quite some period of time. Neither Fulbright, McCloskey nor Gravel bit. McCloskey and Gravel disclosed their's only after the Times broke the ice and was followed by other papers.

The following chronology may be relevant:

8 Feb. 71 -- South~~er~~ Vietnamese invade Laos.

18 March 71 -- Retreat from Laos begins, a rout.

14 April 71 -- Richard Helms speaks to the American Newspaper Publishers Association. The NY Times says this is ~~one~~ his first public speech as CIA director and probably the first public speech by any CIA director in 10 years. The gist of it was that there is nobody here in McLean but us simpleminded bureaucrats, boss; we just collect intelligence and do what we're told and never, never never make policy decisions or even recommend them.

13 June 71 -- NY Times begins publishing Pentagon Papers. A note to the second installment says the Times has had the study for "over three months," which would coincide with the rout in Laos.

If this chronology is significant, it suggests that when nobody took the bait and used the leaked material, Helms made his speech to prepare the scene for publication by the Times a month later. Did the administration object ?

In this connection, we have two hours of tape on a discussion by several Bay Area scholars, including notably Franz Schurman of UC Berkeley and Peter Scott, co-authors of an excellent book called The Politics of Escalation.

Their observations center around the paucity or total absence of CIA documents in the Pentagon Papers, the total absence of any clear indication of what actually took place during the three weeks between the assassination of the Diem brothers and that of JFK, and on the common thread that has run through all administrations of unvarying hostility to anything resembling a communist regime in Southeast Asia. They also note very little appears about China. This discussion was recorded during the court injunction ~~is~~ against publication. If it sounds interesting we'll dub it on to a 120-minute cassette and send it along.

We understand the damage to the military you mention, but consider it natural. They are being told in the most demoralizing way possible exactly whom they work for.

We also appreciate your remarks about Burger and Mitchell and do not think you overestimate the situation in any way. There are many examples of their methods and tactics besides the Black Panther business in Chicago you have alluded to. Repeatedly, they have prosecuted when they had no case, and the only conclusion possible is a strategy of intimidation and tying up leadership of possible dissent. We agree that the Supreme Court decision was anything but a victory for dissent. If the press won a skirmish it has yet to win the war.

That's about it. We're sending two other separate covers to you under today's date. All together they would have been a bit bulky, as the batch sent July 10 was.

Hope at least some of it can be of some help.

Jenifer sends her best,



jdw