

30 May 1974

Dear Harold:

Been checking the NY Times especially carefully since the transcript avalanche to snag anything for you that didn't duplicate what the Post has been carrying, and the enclosed is the only thing that seems to qualify. It seems incredible that nothing else has turned up, but at the same time I have tried to eliminate marginal material because there is no point in burdening you unnecessarily when you are so stacked up with other things.

Your note of the 9 19th regarding the idea that coup time is approaching again finds no dissent here. We agree with your ideas entirely, particularly about the military frame of mind.

We got the Woodward-Bernstein book on the 19th, and I was able to read it within a week or so. You should read it yourself sometime before you do your chapter or chapters on how the press handled Watergate. Not because your arguments are invalid, but because this is a well-done book and will be very convincing to those who don't know more than they read in the book. They play up very convincingly all the ~~XXXXXX~~ checking and cross-checking that went on, how careful they had to be in every respect, and give no hint of how they actually were caught in a situation which I've sometimes thought of as a crossfire of competitive leaks. It's good reading, hard to put down, and you should know what you're taking on if you challenge them.

↓
I have to say that we continue unenthusiastic about the Sayings of Chairman Richard, or more specifically about the whole approach of linking a bum like Nixon with an historic figure like Mao. For two reasons: First, regardless of either adverse opinions or adverse realities, between a fifth and a fourth of all human beings on this planet believe that they have eliminated mass hunger and misery and regained pride and self-respect because of this man. They believe, rightly or wrongly, that they have found through his ideas a better way of living together. Secondly, to relate the self-contradictions of a scoundrel like Nixon with such a man is to help perpetuate a vast American ignorance about what has happened in China, an ignorance typified by all the groundless ridicule that has been heaped upon the Little Red Book by people who haven't read it. My quasi-hillbilly progenitors, in spite of being dedicated agnostics, nevertheless drew most of their standards of conduct from what they remembered of the Bible, and when this failed them resorted to the sayings of Poor Richard's Almanac. I remember this very clearly, and long ago decided they simply were referring back in both cases to ~~Examples~~ of common sense which they found useful in dealing with the situations that confronted them. To the Chinese, Mao means a hundred times as much as the Bible and Poor Richard meant to the simple frontier mentality in this country. He is a Moses, too. I'm not talking about sacrilege, but about a continuing refusal in this country to realize what tremendous things have happened to a very large segment of the human race.

None of which is particularly relevant to the question of whether such a book would be a success, so don't let what I say bother you. I mention it merely to explain our attitude here.

Very glad indeed to hear that your dizziness and fatigue seem to be leaving gradually. Let's hope that figuring out what's wrong is half the battle.

Best from us both,


idw