

3 December 1970

Dear Harold:

While the FNSS is assembling a report on our latest expedition to Chinatown, I'll use some of the time to make at least a partial reply to your long and interesting letter of Oct. 19 -- the parts that I didn't respond to earlier.

Evans Carlson was a friend in Peking, while still in the Marine guard at the Embassy. In case you didn't know it, he had started out as a volunteer in the Army and wound up in the 15th Infantry Regiment that was stationed in Tientsin. As I recall it, he rose to Captain in the Army and was at that rank when he went into the Marines. During our acquaintance he became an assistant Naval attache at the embassy, and it was in that role that he was transferred to Chungking during the Sino-Japanese war, and, as you know, finally visited the red areas. His travels took him to within a few miles outside Peking when he was visiting the Northern Hopei liberated area which was under a general named Lü Cheng-tsao. One day I was surprised to have a strange Chinese turn up at my home-office with an envelope which contained another which Evans asked me to turn over to the NA. As far as I know, this was probably the first first-hand report the American authorities had had on the actual operations of the red guerillas. Evans was very much like Joe Stilwell, very down to earth and practical, and above all a warm and generous human being. Both were convinced that the much-maligned Chinese soldier could lick his weight in wildcats if given half-way decent leadership. I never saw Evans again, but of course followed his wartime career with much interest and was appalled at the treatment he received afterward, and, of course, deeply saddened when he died in such frustrating and shameful neglect after all he had done.

Perhaps it would be helpful to you if I outlined how I got to China and what I learned there, a little of it. At a time when the lucky journalism graduates were taking jobs at \$15 a week, I got out of the University of Missouri in 1932 with an exchange fellowship to teach journalism at Yenching University outside Peking for two years and do graduate work toward a master's. When I got there in the summer of 1932 the prevailing warlord in the north, the "Young Marshal" Chang Hsueh-liang had just closed down the only English language daily in town, the Peking Chronicle, which was subsidized by the Kuomintang. The journalism department at Yenching had just moved the campus weekly, the Yenching Gazette, into town and made it into a daily. When I came along they made me managing editor, of all things. It lasted about 18 months before the Kuomintang got the Chronicle going again and maneuvered Chang Hsueh-liang to Sianfu to contain the Reds -- with results we all remember.

But in that 18 months I was assembling a daily paper from several news agencies -- small pony services, but amazing in the composite perspective on world events they provided. There was Reuters, Havas, the German Transocean, United Press, Tass, the Chinese Central News Agency, and Domei.

Taking into account the various self-interest angles involved, it was simple to figure out what was going on in Germany, including the Reichstag fire, at a time when not one American in a hundred knew anything at all had happened. At the same time I was learning that my Chinese students were far more mature and sophisticated than I, and that this was a culture where intellect was prized above everything else. Somewhere along the line I learned to read official statements for what they omitted saying as well as for what they said, and that the more absolute the power, the more absolute is the lie likely to emanate from it.

When my fellowship expired, I disagreed with my faculty advisors over the subject of a thesis, said to hell with a master's degree on that basis, and signed up to teach freshman English for a year. So I learned something about the English language too, being in the unhappy position of teaching it to kids who were, on the whole, much smarter than I who was supposed to be teaching them.

And I met Jenifer, with the predictable result, and I can only say that she completed that uncanny feeling I had had the moment the train slid through the city wall of Peking, that inexplicably I had come home.

The AP correspondent in Peking in those days was an Australian named Timperley (whom you may have encountered during and immediately after the war) who was also working up articles for the Christian Science Monitor and such magazines as the old ASIA. He took me on for a year as an assistant, so when he moved to Nanking in the spring of 1936 I was left as the AP correspondent in Peking. The Japanese came in in 1937, and I covered that show until November of 1941, including considerable travel in Manchuria, North Korea (the Changkufeng incident of 1938) and Mongolia.

Late in 1941 it was obvious the United States was on a collision course with Japan, so I took Jenifer to Shanghai and put her on the President Harrison. She got as far as Manila before Dec. 7, at which time the Harrison was diverted to Chinwangtao to evacuate the Peking Marines, and the Pearl Harbor attack stranded her in Manila, where she was interned in Santo Tomas. I was stuck in Shanghai, but my Japanese friends managed to get her flown back to Shanghai with some diplomatic evacuees from Manila by the time the first repatriation ship left Shanghai in June. We came back together on the first Gripsholm, and we were sent to Washington, where I did features and covered the war and state departments until the summer of 1945, when we were transferred here..

I was supposed to work on the cable desk here, but Kirk Simpson retired in Washington and recommended I be given the daily column he was writing from there at the time. Even without any real sources here, it was possible to keep going fairly well for the year and half before they took the column back to New York because the Cold War had been declared and I wasn't having any of it.

For several years I did an interpretative column on weekends after that, and can say that I wrote about war in Korea four years before it happened, about the communization of China at least two years before it happened, and was writing about Sino-Russian cleavages and disagreements some 10 years before they became public property in 1960. No one, of course, paid the slightest attention.

Late in 1948 and early 1949 the AP sent me back to China briefly, and I can personally confirm your impression that everybody wanted to get rid of him. I can recall at least two bankers who got blue in the face, pounded on the table, and shouted that NOTHING, not even the Communists, could be worse than the Gimo. Most of the time I was in Shanghai, but did get up to Nanking, down to Canton and across to Taiwan. Everywhere they were just waiting for it to happen. Our ambassador and intelligence people were reporting accurately on the situation, but naturally no one paid them any attention either. McCarthy hadn't started yet, but there had been Parnell Thomas, and a couple of Republicans named Bill Knowland and Richard Nixon. Peking had fallen to the Reds before I left China for the last time, but the Reds never would reply to requests to revisit my old "home." They seemed to have a policy against letting anyone back in who had been there before, with the single exception (among Americans) of Ed Snow. Even he had to wait until 1960 or so, and is now on his second visit.

In any case, my acquired inability to swallow official statements without question led me, in 1947, to get permanently hung up on the flying saucer thing. Suffice to say that the official and unofficial campaign against the credibility of UFO sightings set a pattern of obfuscation, official denial, cover-up and red herrings which in my opinion laid much of the groundwork for what we have come to refer to as the Warren Commission Report. So when the shots rang out in Dallas both Jenifer and I were constitutionally incapable of accepting the official explanation. We not only felt we had been through all this before, we felt the same people were pulling the strings behind the scenes. I would very much like to have your reaction to my deepseated conviction that the same people who are determined to keep us from realizing that we have been under surveillance probably from prehistoric times are equally determined to keep us from realizing the coup d'etat that took place on Nov. 22, 1963 and subsequent smaller coups buttressing the original coup. The latter coverup is easily understood. The former defies common sense beyond rationalization, on any basis. Why?

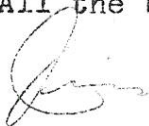
To answer a couple of questions in your letter: I have not been able to find "The Billiken Courier," but the local library has it listed and eventually it should turn up. We now have the Kaiser book on ~~XXX~~ "RFK Must Die" and although I haven't had time to read it, my impression is that he suggests two possibilities, 1, that Sirhan may have been hypnotized and programmed by someone else, or, 2, that someone else may have suggested to Sirhan that he hypnotize himself. I understand now that Kaiser is saying he thinks he know who this other person is, but won't name him for obvious reasons.

About starving out cities: No, I don't necessarily visualize entire cities being starved out, although I think that is not inconceivable from the standpoint of those who would do it. They would not hesitate, if they thought it would work. On the other hand, no one who hasn't seen it happen understands how easy it is to cut off any section of a city with barbed wire barricades enfiladed with a little machine gun fire from corner blockhouses. The Berlin wall is an example. Of course, there will be a tunnel dug here and there, a crash-through now and then, but on the whole the barricade is airtight for all practical purposes. I saw it work in Tientsin in the Japanese blockade of the British and French Concessions that summer, in 1938, and it's not only very effective, it's extremely easy to do.

As a one-time enthusiastic expert on Latin America, how long do you think Allende will be allowed to continue in Chile? It seems to me that allowing a socialist revolution to succeed peacefully is the one thing that would be intolerable. Bad enough to have a Fidel succeeding on the basis of violence, but to have the transition to socialism take place peacefully -- I find it hard to imagine that being allowed to go on indefinitely. Talk about dominoes.

Well, the FNSS appears to have about completed her report, so I knock off too. We haven't heard anything more from Hal. If we do, we'll let you know. We do have the impression that he wants to have a heart-to-heart with Paul, and when he does you no doubt will hear about it before we do. In any case, we'll relay anything significant.

All the best,



jdw