

3 August 1971

Dear Harold:

This will attempt to deal with some of the high spots in yours of July 23, 24, 26 and 28.

Yes, when you have a copy to spare, we would like to see what you did with the Occam~~-~~chop mein view of the threat letter. In this connection, let me mention that in the one limited experience I had with a known necrophile I was much impressed with what seemed to be the quite compulsive attraction anything connected with death appears to have for such a person. ~~The~~ Necrophilia may have nothing to do with this, of course, but if it does, the point should be kept in mind that it can be a very powerful factor.

While on this same topic, I agree that the ~~Requiescat~~ sine Pace explanation for ~~XXXXXX~~ R.S.P. is the only one thus far that makes real sense. As a curse, it's a dandy.

We have the Detroit story about the PP and are sending you a copy. It looks to me like a story probably planted, and used only because the Detroit paper was anxious to get in on the big time stuff.

We're also sending you copies of the NY Times story about the Helms speech and highlights therefrom. You should have it to compare with what is supposed to be the transcript, if nothing else. Don't/ bother to send us the transcript unless something very unusual and significant was left out in one or the other.

When Jenifer has time, we hope sometime this week, she will audit once more the scholars' discussion of the PP and try to excerpt just what they said about the blank space between the D and JFK assassinations. Our recollection is that they were not too specific, being on the air, and sort of skirted it themselves, but they kept reverting to it and it obviously loomed important in their minds.

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You may be right in your opinion that American hostility to Communism was more directed against China than against Communism itself in Southeast Asia. Certainly China was the most dynamic example of it in the area. However, I have to agree with Max Frankel of the New York Times who did a long piece demonstrating how the anti-Communist mold for our entire foreign policy was set during the Truman administration and carried ~~through~~ through in all others in a mindless and unthinking way. He does not deal with what I think is a powerful motive -- the unprecedented political pay dirt which local politicians struck in anti-Communism. It was just too good to pass up. The rich vein has about been worked out by now, particularly with the young, and the whole anti-Communist stance is no longer so rewarding, and, as IndoChina has shown, can lead one into a swamp when overdone.

I'd say that the failure of the PP to deal much with China is due not only to a determination to continue concealing the central hostility to China from the population here, but ~~is~~ also to do nothing to louse up Kissinger's little project. This supposes that whoever leaked the PP knew the K project was in the works, of course, and I still incline to feel that the CIA was in on both ~~exist~~ deals. I still have to be shown that the Kissinger trip could have been pulled off in secret without the CIA knowing about it and actively helping.

Working through your letters, we have to beg off on transcribing the tapes you mention. Jenifer is nearly a month behind in processing the NY Times, which gives you some idea of the avalanche of material we are handling these days. Normally she would be glad to try it, but such a prospect right now is one we daren't take on. In this connection, for the next few weeks we shall be sort of on the other side of the moon. I have some graveyard shifts coming up, several drastic changes in shifts, and we know from experience that in this sort of situation we fall even farther behind. The same difficulty arises, I'm sorry to say, with working with Post-Mortem. You mention news magazines. We don't take any and don't see them too often. Our impression is that they said little about the JG deal.

We don't have TV because we're in a poor reception area for one thing, and for another find about 99 per cent of it revolting. There is a set in the basement which someone left with us while abroad; we've tried it a couple of times and always take the stupid thing back down in disgust. I agree that TV sometimes has things not available elsewhere, but with KPFA this factor is minuscule and more than compensated for by far more thorough treatment of important issues. The discussions on KPFA, for instance, are vastly superior to anything TV ever comes up with. As for news and public events, TV is so anchored to the visual image that it frequently misses what is really important.

We're sending you copies of news stories about F. Lee Bailey, by the way. We're much interested in this angle ourselves, and will pass along anything that turns up. Your idea that Gervais managed to tip JG off sounds entirely plausible. It had occurred to us, without any real insight into the situation. Very early in the game a French magazine carried an article on JG which attributed to Gervais some sort of statement to the effect that JG was the kind of a man who not only got loyalty from his subordinates but accorded them the same loyalty. I think this could be an important factor in this situation, these two very independent characters having what appears to be great trust in each other.

Your typewriter ribbon: check the way the ribbon is winding off the reels. It MUST come off the back of the reels as you look at them from in front. If it winds off the front, this means constant reversing and re-reversing, in effect making the ribbon stand relatively still.

I've not had time to see our electronics dealer about your ~~transceiver~~ transceiver problem. However if 5 watts is the maximum allowed and you have anything approaching that in power it ought

to work at that distance, particularly if you can achieve a line-of-sight situation. As for an aerial, no need to put one up on the roof where it'll be seen. In the attic as high as possible, or even under an eave, should achieve almost as good an effect.

Before I forget it, I want to mention how glad we are to have the clippings you send. The Post seems to be particularly fruitful. We appreciate them very much.

I agree with your idea that the Chinese are responding to a situation rather than to Nixon. This is an important point. It is also important to realize that they know as well as any one that Nixon is the only man who could turn America around from its blind policy of hostility for the past 22 years. They know as well as anyone that no man has done more to perpetuate such a policy by leaping at the throats of all those who suggested that it be changed. You apparently get Life. Go back and read Ed Snow's article in the April 30 issue, and then read his newslet one in the July 30 issue on what China wants from Nixon. Even in the April 30 issue he quotes Mao as saying that at present the problems between the U.S. and China would have to be solved with Nixon. This is a typical Chinese statement. Ostensibly it refers to the fact that Nixon is president. But behind that bland homily is a keen awareness of Nixon's past, present and probable future. They sense a general readjustment of forces in their part of the world, where they have traditional interests just as we have in this hemisphere. No one is more aware of the peculiarities of our political system than the Chinese. As you point out, they know where Nixon is weak, what he needs, and probably know better than he does what he'll be glad to get. All their statements since the Kissinger visit fully bear out your insight that they have no intention of giving up anything the least bit important to them. If Nixon goes, he will return with a bagful of beautiful platitudes and nothing else except the political hay he can turn them into here.

Snow is particularly good in pointing out how the Chinese are bargaining from strength. They have no debts, either abroad or at home. The currency has been absolutely stable for 22 years. The people are solidly behind them. There is every reason why this is so. Mao has freed the cities of the corruption which had to be seen to be believed. "He has given us back our pride," is the way the people in the cities put it. In the countryside, where 80 per cent of the people live, he is even stronger. A peasant himself, he knows the peasant value system and adheres to it in all important respects. In my opinion, never has China been so unified, so truly proud, so hopeful. For the ~~China~~ China where I lived almost 10 years, this is a change of such profundity that it boggles the imagination.

One of our problems in judging the Chinese is the fact that most of our experience with China is based on the demoralizing period of foreign aggression and semi-colonialization. It is not easy to think of China as a sovereign nation, which she was not for almost 150 years before Mao took over.

Compared to what they were, the Chinese are free for the first time since the Manchus conquered China by treachery in the early 15th century. Not only are they free to consider themselves as a people and as a nation. Their women are free of the shameful subjugations of the old family system. The young are free of the tyrannical tyranny of the old, and everyone is free of the demoralizing prevalence of corruption. Among other things, this has been a moral revolution.

Chiang and his regime were the end products of the old system. He was only the wildest, the crookedest of the many crooks it produced. That system, the Chinese feel, is now gone. No wonder they feel better. No wonder they put up with rather severe egalitarianism. They know no one is getting rich off their sufferings, which was standard practice before. The PLA has shown exemplary bravery compared with the cowardice and ready desertion by Chiang's troops to which you alluded, precisely because they know they are fighting for something and know what it is.

As for the Chinese ability to achieve the daring and the impossible, I refer you to that newly emerged authority on China, our Glorious Leader, who has begun referring to the Chinese as "creative." Believe it or not, this is the secret.

They not only created the world's most expressive form of writing, its first magnetic compass, its first movable type, its first gunpowder (which they used for ceremonial rockets, not for guns) but also created the concepts of human relationships inherent in ~~Taoism~~ Taoism and the unsubverted portions of Confucianism upon which all human society is based.

These are the principles of moderation in human affairs, an understanding of nature which our ecologists would do well to read, and, rather ironically, the very principle upon which our own Constitution is based. In Chinese this is referred to as the Mandate of Heaven. Unspoken, because it does not need to be spoken to any sensible person, is the corollary principle that when a ruler loses the confidence of his people he thereby loses the Mandate of Heaven.

The Jesuits who went to China during the Yuan Dynasty and later during the Ming were subverted by this and took it back to Europe, where it was picked up by Voltaire, Rousseau and other French thinkers and also by Locke, Hobbes and so on in England. The idea that a ruler who loses the confidence of his people deserves to be overthrown was of course frightfully subversive to Europeans, but because it made so much sense it had a great deal to do both with the French and American revolutions. We wrote it into our Constitution without knowing where it came from originally. The idea that the mandate of government derives from the consent of the governed is nothing if not Chinese. A good book to read on all this is H.G. Creel's Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao-Tse-tung, Mentor paperback MD269.

Because our own history is so brief, we have little preparation in our own experience for judging people with relatively unbroken cultural and political history going back 4,000 years. This is something no other people has to such an extent.

The collective aspects of Communism, in particular, are nothing new to them. As a matter of fact Communism in practice scarcely got off the ground in the Chinese countryside until the Great Leap Forward in 1958 when the ancient Chinese rural institution of the community work gang was reactivated on a mass scale. As you correctly note, the accomplishment of relative wonders is nothing new. There is the Great Wall, although that was done under duress and at the bidding of the Ch'in conquerors. More significant were the water conservancy projects along the Yellow River, where the dikes had been built up so high over the centuries that in 1838 when the Chinese blew them up to frustrate the Japanese the river level was actually higher than the surrounding plain, and this was 500 miles from the sea. There was also the remarkable system of irrigation and navigation canals which the Chinese have used from the beginning.

If the Chinese have a failing it is in assuming that there is no human experience they as a nation and people have not gone through. Mention any new social or political theory to a well-educated Chinese and you are likely to get some response such as "We tried that in the Wei Dynasty. Didn't work," or "Oh, yes. That was going great guns during the later Shang period, but there was a wave of barbarians who snuffed it out and we never got around to trying it again." When you consider that Sun Tze antedated von Clausewitz by 2500 years and Confucius tossed off the Golden Rule at least 500 years before Christ, you begin to sense that these people might just have some substance behind their tendencies toward a superiority complex. Remember Henry Wallace's "ever normal granary" of the 1930s? Lifted bodily from Wang An-Shih, a T'ang Dynasty prime minister of the 11th century, as I recall it.

The Chinese I knew as students and colleagues in China were universally humiliated by the unequal treaties and other symptoms of aggressive inroads upon their nation, and there was widespread confusion at the breakdown of morals and traditions caused by the impact of western ideas on a crumbling society where Confucianism had been turned into nothing but an instrument for maintaining the status quo, or what people hoped was the status quo. Yet even these people always showed brilliant insights, a kind of intellectual elan that was irresistible to a country boy like myself. It wasn't arrogance; just a kind of inner self-confidence that given the facts and the bargaining position, no Chinese need fear anyone. I might add that Chinese rarely bother with poker. Too simple.

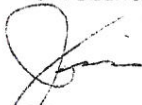
And I should add that Chinese creativity extends down to the simplest things. They, if anyone, have reason to know that necessity is the mother of invention, as evidenced by their magnificent cuisine. They make the noblest dishes from the humblest things, such as noodles. Their vegetables, I am quite confident, have no equal anywhere on earth. They use a lot of things for food we wouldn't dream of, simply because they've had to in the past during hard times.

I don't wish to idealize the Chinese, but we MUST understand that they have their own flair when it comes to intelligence, and that this flair extends through all ranks, from top to very bottom. Mao is acutely aware that no matter how isolated and unformed some of his people are, their minds are going to work in a certain way. It's something he can and does count on. You are, I think, quite right in your insight that what is going on is without parallel in history.

I also agree with your opinion that we are getting into very deep water if we think we can exploit Sino-Russian differences. It's inevitable, of course, that we move out of the bipolar idöocy of the Cold War, but to assume that we'll know what we're doing in trying to dominate a tripolar situation is to overlook whom we're up against. Not only the Chinese, but the Russians too are far more experienced than we are. And you are absolutely right that the Sino-Russian mutual defense treaty is very much alive and kicking without so much as a mention by either party since along about 1960. Either side would observe it to the letter if the other were attacked, particularly by us. I agree that it's been one of the few things that has restrained our more venturesome types. A good deal here depends on Ksssinger's frame of mind. If he thinks he can outmaneuver either the Russians or the Chinese we are in for big trouble. Either would be the LAST to be taken in.

When I was speaking about how behind we are in our work, if I seemed to be complaining it was not meant that way. It is simply that we know our limits and recognize them. When we compare what we have to put up with and what we are trying to do, with your own situation, we are humbled to the point of being tongue-tied. We are acutely conscious of your many difficulties, and are appalled at the things that happen, such as Mrs. Weisberg's knee and now her eyes. If we do not seem to respond sympathetically it is simply because we have no words for such things. And if we're overwhelmed at this distance, how must both of you feel?

I shall deal with other matters elsewhere, probably a little later. Meanwhile all the best to you both, from both of us.



John