

19-17july71

Dear Harold:

With yours of the 16th and 17th at hand, I'll put down down a few ideas that have occurred to us.

Glad to have your assessment of Garrison's position; we too felt it was perfect for that setting, that he knows his Southerners. This supports what I take to be your general theory that the target is much bigger, perhaps a general discrediting of the whole Democratic apparatus in Louisiana if not in the entire south. Agnew's role as the spearhead of Nixon's southern strategy may have changed somewhat, but the target may remain the same: destroy southern liberalism along with all other kinds of liberalism. It has seemed clear to us, too, that Agnew was visiting New Orleans with suspicious frequency. In any case the withered hand of rightwing chauvinism is apparent in the whole case, perhaps best exemplified in a clipping we are sending you. IN it John Wall makes the statement that Gervais decided to work with the government because his son was a prisoner of the North Vietnamese. To us this speaks eloquently of the mentality at work.

Regarding Milton Brener's book, we always have had the impression that it was ghosted for him. It doesn't read like a lawyer writing, in fact is quite polished, reading more like something written by a pro who is used to working up slick jobs for LIFE or the Saturday Evening Post.

Your theory of federal haste in breaking the charges against Garrison coincides with one we have been developing about the announcement of the Peking trip. They may not be unrelated in that both are part of some overall plan.

We don't have television and neither of us saw Nixon make the announcement. But we taped it from radio, and both thought we detected a certain extra tension in his voice. Maybe a Seventh Crisis? Our net impression is that he may have felt pushed as to the timing. He was going for broke, but he has known that for a year if not longer. We feel he was doing it sooner than he had planned.

It was roughly a year ago that Nixon first used the proper name for the Chinese government, the Peoples Republic of China, in a speech at a dinner in Bucharest, Romania. His press aides made certain that Romanian newsmen noticed it but did not bother to make the same point to American or western newsmen, none of whom reported it at the time as far as I know. He first used ~~in~~ it in this country in a speech in this country in February, ~~where~~ at which time it WAS remarked by American newsmen. This was the same month in which the Laos invasion bogged down and had to be rescued at great cost.

The real purpose of the Laos invasion is, or can be, very important. One interpretation possible is that it was a lesson to the military. Okay, you wanted to do it your way. You have had your chance, and we all know what happened.

The other day Franz Schurman of UC, co-author of The Politics of Escalation, developed an interesting idea. He said that the people who really control the American government, regardless of which administration or party is in power, had decided that the military way demonstrably had failed and that therefore it had been determined to revert to the former policy of covert action via the CIA and other pipelines. If he is right, then the idea of teaching the military a lesson by letting them do their thing and learn the hard way fits right in, and finds further support in the idea that one of the purposes of the Pentagon Papers leak was to demoralize the military, to show them who is running the show and who can blackmail them with more Pentagon Papers any time the military feels like inviting blackmail.

In any case, we now come to the Ping Pong diplomacy bit in April, which can be seen as a sort of trial balloon in both China and the United States to see how the public would react to a relaxation of the hostility that has dominated the policy of both countries for more than 20 years. In China, no sweat. People appeared delighted. And in this country, the response was almost as favorable.

The next major development was the leak of the Pentagon Papers, and in the uproar that followed Nixon sent Laird, Agnew, Rogers and perhaps even Helms ~~to go with~~ Kissinger to explain things to our assorted allies and hangers-on. During this fast shuffle Kissinger traded places with a double in Pakistan and got away on his trip to Peking, which appears to have been kept secret from the military, and one has to feel that only one agency could have arranged that.

Kissinger returns, and after a very short interval indeed Nixon goes on nationwide TV and radio and drops his little bombshell. I repeat, he did NOT sound triumphant. He sounded edgy. We agree with you that he should, and feel the relative silence from the right is ~~is~~ ominous. Not just for him, a potential target. The same people that brought us the Gulf of Tonkin incident could produce just as easily a Gulf of Chihli incident or some other outrage to trigger a fatal American response against that favorite bogey of the right, Red China and its Communist hordes, precisely the threadbare justification for any American adventure which Nixon now proposes to junk.

Our initial reaction was just what you'd expect -- fury that this jackal who has done as much or more than anyone to create and perpetuate the myth of Red China's aggressive belligerency is now using it for his own ends, proposing to emerge a hero by liquidating a threat that all along has been artificially contrived..

Even a jackal has gall, but you correctly see in this gambit a daring that is atypical of our glorious leader. The question is whether it is daring or desperation, and again I think you are on the right track.

A German-Jewish friend told us some time ago that Henry Kissinger was the subject of a long piece in Der Spiegel which depicted him as an admirer of Bismarck and Count Metternich, in other words a schemer who fancies himself in that role and as an advisor and chief counsel to a ruler. This is implicit in American accounts of him, although not openly stated. In addition, he studiously ignores the Asian experts ^{who} whom he used to know at Harvard, men like Fairbank and Reischauer, who know more than Kissinger will ever imagine about the Chinese mind.

In other words, Kissinger is quite capable of conceiving this Chinese gambit in terms of glorifying Nixon and therefore himself, but it remains to be seen how capable he is when it comes to matching wits with the Chinese. If Kissinger is the smartalec he appears to be, he is in far over his depth.

Let me say something about the Chinese mind as I have experienced it. Allowing for all its hangups, it is the nearest thing to unfettered intellect I have heard of in our species, and certainly its best current representatives are Mao Tze-tung and Chou En-lai. Whether clowns like Nixon and Kissinger know it or not, they are up against the first team. The Russians, who are no slouches themselves when it comes to brains, are well aware of this and habitually avoid negotiating ~~it~~ with the Chinese except in dire circumstances because they know from nearly 500 years experience that the Chinese always are two or three steps ahead of them.

You mention to your friend Howard that the Chinese took the initiative. I'm not sure in what sense you mean that. I find no evidence to that effect ~~but~~ but do find evidence they created a situation in which the Kissinger-Nixon team saw the bait and took it. But the Chinese made no overt move outside their own sphere. If they were hospitable to the pingpong players, don't they have a reputation for being perfect hosts ?

As you sense, if the Chinese laid a trap for Kissinger and Nixon sent him walking into it, it was Kissinger who did the walking and Nixon who sent him.

The question is the price Peking is ~~going~~ going to charge. Our suspicion is that the price Kissinger brought back from Peking would ~~shock~~ shock the daylights out of the military and the right if they knew it. But he also may have brought back ~~with~~ with the realization -- too late -- that once you start this sort of thing it is not easy to back out, and that any reversal is going to make Peking look good and Washington look bad. Hence Nixon's nervousness, if it was that, when he made the announcement. In some way, too, the Chinese may have insisted on announcing it sooner than Nixon had planned to.

A vital question is why Peking bothers. They have no debts, the country is stable and unified as never before in history, the people approve of their government more than they disapprove, and they are doing relatively well.

In the aftermath of the pingpong visit I heard a friend talking from London who said Ed Snow and Wilfred Burchette were agreed, along with many others in Europe, that the Chinese are convinced Nixon MUST liquidate the adventure in Vietnam somehow and are determined to be in on any general settlement for Southeast Asia. This figures. Their history almost dictates it. In addition they are concerned about Japan and Russia, both in the nuclear sense, and new contacts with America could help in both situations.

Add to this their talent and tradition as traders, and the unquestionable fact that some time they must escape the image of partial isolation into which American policy has forced them since 1949 (which was not altogether a handicap at times from their domestic political standpoint). These are all good reasons. The question is whether they are good enough reasons to persuade the Chinese to deal with a man like Nixon. That judgment is up to them, and I'm sure their private answer is that he's just another hairy barbarian. They've been dealing with barbarians for centuries, outwitting them when circumstances were anything like equal and bending like the bamboo in the wind and absorbing them when they swept in overwhelmingly as conquerers. You win some, you lose some.

Of one thing you can be sure, besides the intelligence factor I discussed above. If there is one constant in the Chinese analysis of American political behavior it is the unshakable conviction that little ever happens in this country without domestic politics being at work if not operating as the determining factor. The truth is, the Chinese probably know better than Nixon himself what he needs for 1972 and how much he'll pay to get it. They know how much to ask and how far to press, and when. Far more than most Americans, they know well how Nixon must be the man they must deal with, simply because he has made a career of preventing anyone else from moving toward them. If Nixon seemed driven in his announcement, it is possible but not likely that the Chinese leaned on Kissinger in some way. That would not be typical at this stage. I suspect as more likely the possibility that Nixon was rushing out the news before Kissinger's security screen dissipated and the military got any bright ideas, ~~before~~ *A fait accompli* made any military action impolitic at this time. The generally favorable reaction to the idea of the visit suggests that if this was the Kissinger-Nixon judgment, they were right.

When we speak of the Chinese as isolated we fall for our own propaganda. The people, sure; the government leaders, no. If anyone is isolated, we are. At least 500 B.C. Sun Tze, the Chinese sage of war and politics (Hi there, von Clausewitz) codified the folklore of his time. Its central theme was an eight-word couplet usually translated something like this:

Know yourself, know your adversary;

In a hundred battles win a hundred victories.

Kissinger himself has remarked upon how well informed Chou En-lai showed himself. Too bad for us that the same can't be said with certainty about Henry.

The Chinese approach toward conflict and contention is still based upon Sun Tze, which is still part of the folklore, part of the psyche of every Chinese regardless of whether he has heard of Sun Tze or not. No Chinese ever consciously fails to leave himself a way out, nor one for his adversary, but the adversary has the responsibility of recognizing it and of not taking on the Chinese in the first place. A Chinese may speak the words of Marx, Engels, Kant, Hegel, Lenin and Stalin and, of course Mao, but he's still Chinese and using them for a Chinese purpose.

If anyone can make that claim, the Chinese is realism personified. We underestimate him at our risk, not his. We can overestimate him because of our ignorance, but not in terms of brains. His intelligence is the product of a very different and very old culture. When men like Owen Lattimore and John Fairbank try to tell us how it's different, and why, and what it means, we call them commies and tend to banish them. There is more money in war and the threat of war, real or manufactured.

Our glorious leader, whether prodded or persuaded by the upstart Kissinger or not, has decided this treasure trove of fear and hatred must at last be turned to his own advantage because 1972 is the last chance he will have to do so and it would be profligate to allow anyone else to ride this particular tiger. Whether he meant to or not, he's gone for broke. He's in grave danger, and so are we all.

Best from us both,



jdW

P.S. --It may mean nothing, but we note that Frey led the vice squad that put the arm on Judge Haggerty.

We feel sure we have nothing on the early use of RB47s, an idea which we find quite new. We'll bear it in mind.