

15 November 1973

Dear Harold:

First, to dispose of a minor detail: We shall hold Vols. I and II of the hearings until you say to send them to someone, or to yourself. No one here we can think of who needs them. (We now have I through IV, and I expect to pick up V and possibly VI soon at the bookstore in town. Vols I and II which you sent are extra.

We of course haven't yet seen the Post for 11 November (it will be three or four days until it arrives) and so don't know whether we've seen anything by an LA professor about Nixon, to which you refer. We recall nothing like that from the LA Times, which we rarely see.

In the meantime I attach here some stuff about Prof. Barber of Duke which seems to be along the same line and which might be helpful. You'll note Barber's recurrent reference to the likelihood that when Nixon gets up against the ultimate frustration he is likely to do something drastic. I think this is both on the beam and the sort of thing you're interested in.

In this connection we had a projection session a couple of weeks ago and evolved a tentative theory as to his strategy which thus far appears to hold up, and I'll outline it briefly. In a word, he seems, in everything he has done since Kleindienst first bearded Congress in its own den last April and dared them to impeach Nixon, to be striving consistently for an early decision on impeachment. The sooner this can be brought about, the more likelihood there is that Congress will back down and fail to vote impeachment, thus giving Nixon a clear victory. This is especially true in the light of what you point out: the likelihood of still further disclosures. It also is true in the light of the concerted PR push Nixon and the White House crowd began a week ago. To put it another way, the longer a decision on impeachment is delayed, the less likelihood of a favorable decision from Nixon's standpoint. But if he wins, he'll be in the clear, barring the possibility you suggest: that the people with the real power will see that he's removed. If in the clear, he can go on about his real business of organizing the takeover.

I agree with you that conditions are changing, but the main change is the fact that we are only beginning to feel the effects of the same world-wide inflationary wave from which all other so-called Free World countries (except Canada) have been suffering for years. Where has this produced serious civil strife? Not in Japan, nor anywhere in Europe. True, in Greece and several South American countries there have been rightwing takeovers, but they reflected local conditions more than a reaction to inflation and other symptoms of the scarcities which typify the partial breakdown of the capitalist system. My personal feeling is that we have quite a distance yet to go along this road before it can add up to serious rebellion, although there may be local situations where there'll be trouble.

No doubt fuel shortages will do as much as anything to hasten our arrival at a more rebellious stage, but I don't see it contributing much just yet to any fundamental change in the situation.

The fact that Nixon himself proclaimed the energy crisis is fairly good assurance that he expects to use it for his own purposes. He seems to be determined to use anything and everything to assault Congress and the public with ever more outrageous situations and choices. A clear example is the business of the missing tapes, which appears to have had a profound effect on public opinion and which may represent a miscalculation on his part, but that's something on which I'm by no means convinced.

Another example is today's (Nov. 15) Jack Anderson column in the Chronicle about the plans, dating from 1969, for a takeover. (I assume the Post used the same column, but know that sometimes the Post just drops Anderson for its own reasons). Of course, we've all assumed there have been such contingency plans all along, dating from well before Nixon, but this one is named and is clearly on the upper level, not just a Pentagon project. ~~xxx~~ If Anderson is using a White House plant, it would be just another Nixon tactic and entirely typical of his method. If this does represent a plant, it means that Nixon not only wanted it known, he wanted it known now. The other possibility is that someone else let it go in order to embarrass Nixon. Who? To what further purpose? My feeling is that it's more likely his own doing, that it's another step in his plan to keep everyone off balance and fundamentally on the defensive. And he can always say later, you were warned.

Meanwhile, remember what Barber says, that this man invites the crisis so that he MUST act to respond to it. As you point out, the danger of his subordinates having to desert him as they go on trial in order to save their own skins draws nearer every day and constricts him in a narrower time frame. His best bet is to force an early decision on whether to impeach, and to do it in time for the decision to be negative. He cannot fail to have noted what we all know, that Congress cannot bring itself to get into this process as long as it can find the slightest excuse to avoid it. And even though the people are changing their attitude and talking a good deal, not enough yet have changed to force Congress to do what it should. Talk of resignation basically is a copout. There is but one weapon for this situation: impeachment. If he can get us to give it up, he's got it made. Tune in tomorrow, dot dot dot.

Best,

  
jdw