

23 October 1973

Dear Harold:

The attached UPI clip on a gratuitous WH swipe at Dean indicates to us, at any rate, that Dean's switch in pleading last Thursday (Oct. 18) contributed to GL's haste in defying Sirica's disclosure order and the subsequent firing of Cox and forcing out of Richardson and Ruckelshaus. Of course, other things contributed, such as the fact that both Cox and the WG committee were beginning to dig deeper, toward Rebozo, ?San Clemente, the milk deal, and so on. You'll remember that Dean abandoned his plea of innocent and a claim to full immunity and copped a one-count plea of guilty and agreed to bear witness against other White House employes. As always, the WH gets very sensitive about him, and this little blurb about how the tapes will cut the ground from under him is typical of this sensitivity.

We also were intered in today's WH remark that they had "miscalculated" the public reaction to Nixon's defiance of the courts and that therefore was going to be reasonable and make the tapes available to Sirica. The word "miscalculate" tells us a lot. They still labor under the conviction that the WH does not need to obey the law or any court unless it suits its purpose. There is no right or wrong, just accurate or inaccurate calculations.

Enclosed here also is a Hoppe column under today's date which most pointedly sums up the general strategy which we've been suspecting for some time, largely because Nixon seems to go out of his way to invite demands for his resignation or impeachment. Our guess is that he sees the latter as the ultimate confrontation which will produce a situation where the chips are down in a test of strength and will among three co-equal branches of government. In that case, as Hoppe suggests, he can simply say to Congress and the courts what Stalin said about the ~~Q~~ Pope: How many divisions has he got? We don't see Nixon as trying to bring this about in a hurry, just so it arrives in time for 1976, by which time -- if not earlier -- all sorts of national emergencies may be available on which to base imposition of martial law and curtailment of civil rights. The military, as suggested previously, probably will go along. Nobody will be able to do anything about it. But the point is, barring a most plausible national emergency, this ultimate confrontation cannot take place until he has been impeached and convicted and the question then follows: What now? How are you going to put him out of office if he doesn't want to go? This seems to be his goal.

We spent some time this past weekend listening to talk shows and newscasts following the general hubbub that followed the firing of Cox. In general, about 5-1 for impeachment from the hoi polloi. People were genuinely angry and a surprising number spoke openly of fascism and a fear of the developments outlined above, some rather specifically. A gratifying number identified themselves as longlong Republicans, and they were the ones who were really furious. What burnt most of them up was the way the FBI was sent to take over the documents in Cox's office. Many described this, if nothing else, as the action of a police state mentality. This is very healthy. I hadn't expected so many to see it so clearly.

Some even mentioned -- only a few, of course -- that the military could not be counted upon not to obey orders. But this is something new to hear on the air in a talk show on commercial radio. And today, after Nixon sent word he would turn the tapes over to Sirica, there seemed to be a surprisingly quick reaction that this does not mean what it's supposed to mean -- that not only is there a question of the integrity of the tapes, but that there are all the other things involved -- letters, memoranda, and other things Cox had asked for. Apparently no one believed Wright for one minute when he said he had told Sirica that the President would obey his and the Court of Appeals' order "in all respects."

In any case, this has been one hell of a week, and our tongues are hanging out. It takes time to monitor both radio and TV (although there's not too much of the spontaneous on the latter, but you can't ignore because some scheduled programs are rewarding) and the piles of unread and unclipped newspapers are frightful to behold. The STM is still trying to make her own chronology as she goes along, and you can imagine how demanding that is. Yet it must be done; there is no other way to have even approximate recall if you need something.

I've finally finished and set off a thing I've been working on for many months on the implications of acupuncture, something I've mentioned to you very briefly long ago. It's pretty far out and probably won't find a publisher, but at least I've got it down on paper and out of my system for a while. One thing that brought it to a head has been the recent general UFO flap in the southeast, which you may not have heard much about but which has developed into one of the most generalized series of such reported sightings in many years. The flap got serious when two shipyard workers in Alabama or Mississippi (I can't recall which) claimed they'd been taken aboard by a USO and examined by the occupants. Two very hard-nosed scientists, J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern and Jim Harder of UC Berkeley, went down to interview these two guys, put them under hypnosis and still couldn't crack their story and instead got a lot more detail from them. Hynek, once the Air Force's official and hired explainer-away of UFOs who now has reversed his former position, came back convinced the guys had really had some such experience and demanding that the government get on with a real investigation, not another whitewash. Anyway, all this is just one more thing we try to keep track of, and like Watergate, you can't rely on just one ~~mainstream~~ branch of the media to keep you informed -- you have to check them all and compare in order to get even an approximate idea of what is going on.

In the midst of all this I've been helping a neighbor shingle his house before the rains start in earnest. He'll help us rebuild a bulkhead outside the house made of ~~many~~ timbers which we managed to handle 15 years ago but no longer regard so carelessly.

Regretfully, I have to report that we don't have tape for the WG hearings of June 25, the first day of Dean's testimony. Something happened that day, I can't remember what. In any case we found the recorder didn't function and don't have that day in tape. If I hear of anyone who does, I'll try to check the ending for you as you requested.

Must wind this up and get it ready for tomorrow's mail.

Best from us both,

jdw