

24 December 1972

Dear Harold:

When it is convenient, we should like very much to borrow your copy of the stenographic transcript of Kissinger's Dec. 16 appearance as carried in the WX Post. We shall need it, and haven't been able to get into San Francisco to get a copy of the NY Times for that date (the day following), assuming they carried the transcript. If you can send it, we'll promise to return it after copying, and thanks.

We heard excerpts of it, again noticed the cough and the apparent discomfort, and agree with your interpretation. We also noticed the same thing you did: his frequent mention of Nixon, which we also interpreted to mean he was saying don't look at me, look at the guy I'm working for. Henry's problem, of course, is that now he can't quit. It would look very bad indeed and no telling what could happen to him, and don't think he doesn't know it. On the other hand Nixon has no reason to fire him, which also would look bad, so they are stuck with each other for the time being, of course.

We also think we have noticed many signs that Henry is not the only one pointing at Nixon as the man responsible for the whole thing. This includes the military, which I find particularly interesting in view of the way the bombing of the French Mission in October appears to have influenced profoundly the course of events. The brass in Saigon appears particularly unhappy, and I think I know why. Some of them even are saying it isn't going to end any time soon, and saying it with every evidence of genuine unhappiness. The key to their thinking at this stage may lie in their fondness for new and wonderful T-O-Ys like tactical nuclear weapons and their properly commensurate reluctance to take on any of the responsibility for using them.

There is just enough of the savage left in these overfed country club warriors for them to know instinctively that they're astride the tiger with a real barbarian; that when the North Vietnamese don't cave in under the bombing his only answer will be tactical nukes -- at the least a sanitizing strip of radiated territory along the DMZ, possibly extending through Laos to the west. And when that doesn't work, and when the Chinese, let us say, send in more help, the only next answer will be to extend the war to south China, who by that time may be using tactical nukes of her own. So there's no end, including the standard military nightmare of a land war in Asia which we were supposed to be avoiding all along at all costs. The Army is of course incapable of fighting much of any kind of war now that the draft is ended and the boys all on drugs and verging on mutiny. And the Air Force cannot be too happy about having half of its B52s in the Vietnam theatre, with half of those (around 100) in action daily while another 100 are on the maintenance and/or repair line. The first week shows 11 admitted lost because of the intensive flack they encounter, presumably at the lower level on which they appear to be making their runs over Hanoi and Haphong. At this rate such losses cannot be sustained more than 10 weeks or so without a serious weakening of the reserve strategic bomber force.

We agree with your thought that Nixon is thinking as usual along the lines of another Korea -- that's a concept to which he seems to have returned again and again.

It seems possible -- but only barely so -- that he may be letting the military have their fling in order to bring them up against the realities I've been talking about. But I doubt it. I'm more inclined to think that his judgment, assuming it ever was based on reason and reality, is not what it once was. When even the military grumble about the chores they're ordered to do, something is very wrong.

Let me take care of some odds and ends in your 40 through 42.

About Chinese food: If you cook with electricity, the outlook is not good. I suppose it can be done over the usual heating element, but gas is infinitely better because you can get a hot fire quicker. And you will need a round-bottomed Chinese pan, called a wok in this country. (Comes from the Cantonese ~~wok~~^{wok}, Mandarin kuo, meaning cooking utensil). Much of Chinese cooking is what is translated as stir-frying, which means that the round-bottomed pan (with a turner like a pancake turner with a round leading edge) is pretty essential. All the department stores here carry them, but most are too thin to be really useful and some even have partially flat bottoms --unthinkable. Anyway, if and when you get serious, let us know and we'll try to help you get started with what little we have learned.

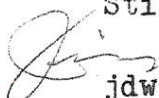
About Jim Schmitt. We never met him, only heard Hal talk about him vaguely. We don't know about the two he mentioned to you, having met both of them only a couple of times. However I would say Bruce probably was vulnerable, as he impressed me as being possibly mildly homo, but he also impressed both of us as being one of the most sincere and hardworking of the bunch. Stan was inclined to be glib, we thought, and we wondered at the sudden way he dropped out.

We'll pass the long story on Fred Malek, thanks. See no need for it at this point, and if such arises we can ask for it.

No, we don't know Peter Dale Scott. If we should happen to run into to him I'll be sure to sound him out on his assassination interest and let you know. Like you, I've heard only good things about his book, and he's impressive on the two or three forums where we've heard him via KPFA.

I think that cleans up the loose ends for the time being, but I don't want to sign this off without thanking you again for the remarkable stuff you've been sending from the Post. Both the Post and the NY Times pull their punches in reporting the war and the political situation it reflects, we all know that, but the important thing is that they pull them in different areas. Many times one or the other has contributed a key bit of information -- probably unintentionally -- which when fitted with other key bits helps clear up a muddled picture. You know how it is.

Still battling the bits and pieces, and best to you both,


jdw