

7 September 1945

Dear Ones,

The last day of the old year and here I am at 0708 ( by coincidence that is the time and the A PO ) in the depot, wondering what the point is in getting up this early. Last night we saw a rare MGM stinker called The Princess and the Bellboy which wasted the talents of Lamarr, Walker, and Allyson. Afterward we played poker and as a going away present we let(?) Art win all the money! This morning I struggled into the mess hall at 0635 to find the two QM officers ready to gripe with me; it seems that there is a Gestapo at work to make sure that these new hours are kept. You can imagine the gist of the conversation - one of the officers, a lieutenant, has already a first class blow-up with the S-4, Major Moore, whom I described to you in an earlier letter.

I enjoyed the Craig column on the red light district of Casablanca - it was a good picture and an intelligent discussion. Marquis Childs writes a good column, or perhaps I am just sympathetic to his point of view. He raised the very critical point that "the word 'plan' seems to frighten many people. But the alternative to planning may be chaos." It is the old idea of constructive criticism and the requirement of an alternative to meet the situation. But so many critics forget it. It would seem to me that support for the Murray Bill is pretty widespread from Bishop Oxnham through the National Farmers Union, as well as the various individuals on the CED; surely the nature of this support is some indication that the Bill is better than the alternative of not having such legislation and that it is a positive aid and logical step in our national economy. It seems as though every letter brings another clipping reflecting the difficulty of equitable handling of the displaced-persons problem in Europe, especially the Jews who have no place they can or want to return to. The problems of rations, clothing, shelter emphasize more and more the need for the solution of Palestine - if from no other point of view, it should be clear that the few people to be fed from the limited continental stocks the better.

Using the TIMES report of the Brownell speech as my basis, I do not see anything in the Republican approach which even hints of a positive policy. First of all, in the request for clarification of our commitments, there is the assumption of secret agreements which compromise the Senate; and on the home front, Brownell has clearly come out against deficit spending and presumable the Murray Bill and its supporting measures. Now I am all for understanding and explanation of our foreign commitments, I am for national economy consistent with our national needs, I am for free enterprise, and I am for administrative reform as much as Brownell is - but that is no positive program. The Republicans, unfortunately for them, ( or should I say "us?" ) have still to show that they can present an effective and logical way of bringing about what they pay lip service to. They have supported principles and then backed down at the ramifications of accomplishing their ends. They cannot be judged on a negative approach alone - they must offer in practical terms of legislation the good old alternative. Last night the news brought word of the shelving of the Army-Navy report which favored one department of Defense; the Navy and Air Forces attitude is another proof to me of our need for reform. The Navy, The Air Forces, the Army have not a single 'interest' per se. What is best for the country is best for the Navy and the Marines. I do not believe that FDR made any blanket promise to Ibn Saud; it hardly seems logical especially in the light of the Arab claim that it was received as a result of a threat of war.

It is now 11 o'clock - just heard the news of the Truman address, which apparently was a very comprehensive outline of the national problem; we are entering one of the most critical Congressional sessions in the history of our country. The news also had the point score at 85 for junior officers - no change in status for me. May 1946 is when I start to complain. Professor Peffer's new book on America's role sounds like pretty good reading; all the reviews credit the Columbia teacher with an intelligent, realistic approach, which questions a lot of our thought-cliches yet is not cynical or pessimistic. A PM editorial touches on the problems of controlling Japan through the Emperor; we discussed this last night at supper - there must be no confusion of the fact that while we use the emperor as a mean to our ends, as a messenger boy, as a medium of control with no independent authority, the complete exercise of power over every phase of Japanese life rests with MacArthur. His job is not only to use that control but to use it so that eventually he breaks down the medium



itself. It is a very delicate and long-run policy and it will necessarily be a long time the affects become clear. The first phase will be accomplished I imagine when the people begin to realize that in fact MacArthur is ruling them; it remains to be seen when that will begin to sink in. The PM report paints Hong Kong as hardly a Jewel in the liberal (?) record of British Imperial policy. Yet if I recall, Chiang agreed to British reoccupation and in fact no Chinese representative participated in the Hong Kong reoccupation - ( I may be wrong on that detail.) There is no reason why Hong Kong need be made a major issue now; as I said yesterday, it is to be hoped that eventually the island city can go through trusteeship and self-determination to return it to China. But in a world of peace and unity it should not be a major stumbling block.

OK for now - it is raining out and I feel quite depressed; perhaps the break in the routine with the holidays will help me snap out of it.

Regards to Doris.

Love,

Sumner