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(Mike Wallace)

FUTURE

A look at the shape of things to come - in this next from New York consulting engineer Lawrence Lerner. Predicting the birth of a new civilization - by the year Twenty-One Hundred. A civilization to be built - we are told - on cities that are vertical rather than horizontal in concept.

How so? Easy - says Lawrence Lerner. Forseeing the construction of entire city blocks - eventually, entire cities - with only the central core of each building touching the ground. The people who will live in these buildings - to live literally on "islands in the sky"; having conquered the problems of the present workaday world - up to and including the problem of pollution.

End result: "The earth will be largely reconstituted to its natural state - with trees, streams and wild life." All this - if we can just last it out to the year Twenty-one Hundred.

APOLLO

Perhaps one of the most memorable Christmas days in the lives of all persons living, is drawing to a close - memorable and historic because three daring astronauts are speeding through space tonight on their return voyage from the Moon. The Apollo-8 spaceship - still performing like a carefully planned miracle - has already re-entered the earth's gravitational field - and that alone will eventually accelerate the apollo's speed to nearly twenty-five-thousand miles an hour before the triumphal splashdown in the Pacific Ocean on Friday. The three astronauts - Borman, Anders and Lovell - are relaxed. And they've been that way since, several hours ago, the Apollo's main engine again functioned perfectly and pulled them out of that orbit around the Moon. At that very moment was heard Lovell's voice over the radio - "Please be informed there IS a Santa Claus!"

The weather, of course, will be a key factor in

an efficient recovery of the spacecraft and its heroes - and "satisfactory" conditions are forecast for the Pacific recovery area, along the Equator, despite the possible presence of scattered showers. It seems likely that the Carrier Yorktown will be the prime recovery ship, although the destroyer Cochrane and the communications vessel, Arlington, will also be in the area, competing for the honor of bringing the astronauts back home.

SOVIET

In Washington, the Soviet Embassy issued a statement today - congratulating American scientists for their achievements and wishing the three astronauts a safe landing on their return to earth. The statement was signed by Boris Petrov - a leading space scientist - who assures us that "the Soviet people, as indeed people in all countries, are following with great attention the flight of the American space ship." Concerning the Soviet Union's immediate plans, Petrov revealed little that was new, saying only that "Russia is likewise engaged in a large-scale program of space exploration ...involving our closest neighbors - the moon, Venus, Mars - and later on, more remote planets." But he said for now, at least, Russia would continue to emphasize the unmanned exploration of space.

VIETNAM

The Apollo astronauts are on their way home - the men of the Pueblo are celebrating Christmas with their families (and they're still telling horror stories about their captivity, by the way) - but three American war prisoners in Vietnam are bitterly disappointed tonight. The Viet Cong apparently has decided not to release them on this Christmas Day. In fact the first unarmed battlefield conference between the Viet Cong and Americans, seeking the release of the three prisoners, failed to bring immediate results today - perhaps because the Viet Cong wants official recognition.

As a 24-hour Christmas truce came to an end, a communist surface-to-air missile was again fired at an American reconnaissance plane over North Viet Nam - the rocket missing and plunging back to earth. And in Thailand, Communist guerrillas used mortars or artillery for the first time - killing nineteen persons and blowing up an armored personnel carrier.

CZECH

A report from Prague tonight - quoting a top Communist official - says the Czech Communist Party has agreed to fire its popular parliamentary chairman, Josef Smrkovsky, who has been under attack from the Russians. Mainly, because he fought to retain many reforms brought about recently in the Czech government.

PLOT

The Cleveland, Ohio, - Plain Dealer - says a federal grand jury is investigating an alleged plot to assassinate all nine judges of the U-S Supreme Court with high explosives. In quoting unidentified sources close to the grand jury, the newspaper says five men intended to carry out the plot last November Eighteenth, but it was postponed for unknown reasons. The would-be assassins are said to dislike the court's liberal leanings. The plan reportedly called for the use of plastic explosives and hand grenades in the courtroom at Washington while the high tribunal was in session. The F-B-I reports no arrests in the case - and the Plain Dealer says names of all suspects are being withheld until the investigation is completed.

HUMPHREY

Vice-President Hubert Humphrey today became a dropout from the Electoral College. He called for a constitutional amendment that would render electoral votes meaningless, and the presidential candidate who got the most popular votes would definitely win the election. However, Humphrey's proposal would not have had any effect upon the recent presidential election for he lost to Mister Nixon by more than five-hundred-thousand votes out of nearly seventy-three-million cast.

GRAHAM

Evangelist Billy Graham - for the first time in his twenty-five years of preaching the gospel - now has a case of laryngitis. He was slightly hoarse, leading a Christmas service today at an air base near Saigon. Seven hundred or more American troops - sitting on the grass and listening to his sermon while supersonic bombers roared over head. Afterwards, Graham told newsmen - "I started losing my voice two days ago - talking to small groups of men for sixteen hours at a stretch." Warren, do you suppose Billy Graham caught the Hong Kong flu in Saigon?

HOPE

Bob Hope is also touring Vietnam this Christmas, as usual, having no trouble whatsoever with HIS voice. Going through his routine on board the Carrier Hancock, he told fifteen-hundred seamen - "This must be the biggest Chris-Craft in the world - it looks like Wake Island with a rudder."