

Wednesday, January 31, 1973

WHITE HOUSE

The White House - President Nixon called a surprise press conference today; as you probably know by now - his first in more than four months. The President confirming an earlier report - that Henry Kissinger will journey to Hanoi next week. Purpose - said he - to discuss the subject of post war aid. The President adding that ~~he~~ himself - will confer later on with South Vietnam's President Thieu.

Beyond that, the President also serving notice that he begins his second term - in full fighting trim. At one point, telling the news men present: "We have achieved a peace with honor." Adding: "I know it gags some of you to write that phrase - but it is true." The President further accusing militant anti-war spokesmen of voicing the loudest criticism of the peace agreement; wondering aloud - "if they really want the wounds healed."

The President going on to say: "If the agreement is kept - there is no question that we will have a peace; not only in Vietnam - but in Indochina - for a very long period of time."

The President again assuming an adversary role - in discussing possible amnesty for deserters and draft dodgers. "I have sympathy" - said he - "for any individual who makes a mistake. We all make mistakes; but certainly - we have to pay a price for our mistakes; and that price is a criminal penalty for disobeying" - and not "a junket in the peace corps".

And then - perhaps warming to his subject the President saying: "The war had very little support among the better people in the media, intellectual circles and some members of congress; but it did have the support - of a wide majority of Americans." These - said he - including many Americans who paid a high price; some with their lives - some in prisoner of war camps for two or three years."

And later on the President accusing some of his chief critics in the press and in Congress - of "flip-flopping on the issue of"executive privilege." "I do not want to abuse executive privilege - we are not going to use it as a shield" - he continued. But where necessary - said he - it would continue to be invoked.

In response to subsequent questions - the President also discussed a broad range of subjects both foreign and domestic.

On his decision in certain cases not to spend funds already appropriated by Congress - the President saying he was following in the footsteps of three eminent Democrats, Jefferson, Jackson, and Truman. "It would be pleasant to have a sharing of the responsibility with Congress" - said he; "but if you're going to share responsibility - you have to be responsible."

On the shooting of Senator Stennis - who remains in serious condition: "a senseless act" - said the President.

Adding that the Senator from Mississippi had been indispensable - in helping to achieve peace in Vietnam. He also said that he had asked Attorney General Richard Klindenberg - to "give us a formula; one that can get through Congress - to keep guns out of the hands of criminals - but not impinge on those who have a legitimate right to have a gun."

About the Watergate bugging conviction? He was not asked.

WASHINGTON

Some seven weeks ago you may recall - a government notice of complaint was filed with the giant Xerox company. The Federal Trade Commission accusing the firm - of monopolizing the one-point-seven-billion dollar office copying machine business; also, urging Xerox to agree to a so-called consent procedure - to cease and desist. Except that negotiations aimed at achieving an out of court settlement apparently getting nowhere.

At any rate - the F T C today dropped the other shoe; filing a formal complaint - and assigning the case to one of its law judges; a case that will now probably drag on - for years and years.

VIENNA

Today at Vienna - the start of "exploratory East-West talks - on the possibility of mutual troop cutbacks in Central Europe. Right at the outset - a note of confusion. The Soviets apparently pressing for equal troop reductions - while the U.S. seeking "balanced reductions."

Jonathon Dean, for the U.S. stressing, however - this is "only the beginning." "We understand that it will be a complicated and difficult affair "- he continued - "but we are going to do our best for a constructive outcome."

BELFAST

In Northern Ireland - Belfast - the bodies of two Roman Catholic teen-agers were found today; each shot through the head a single time - execution style. Police saying the two murders could have been "Protestant Catholic vengeance killings - or they could be punishments by the I R A. In either case - the death toll in the latest flareup in northern Ireland now five in less than two days.

REYKJAVIK

From Premier Olafur Johannesson of Iceland - a public pledge today to rebuild the town of Vestmanneyjar; and do it - "as soon as possible;" to permit the return of an estimated five thousand of its former inhabitants who are now homeless refugees.

Even as he spoke though - Helgafjell volcano was continuing its eruption for an eighth straight day; spewing forth additional streams of lava - and additional vast clouds of volcanic ash; making nearby Vestmanneyjar and the entire island - a virtual no-man's land.

The volcanologists there are saying - it may be weeks or months - or years - before the eruptions cease. Perhaps years before the island will again be habitable.

SUNGEI PAGANI

From the Sungei Patani in Malaysia - the story of one Abdul Gani - age twenty-three - who took a few friends fishing - and ended up in jail. Explanation - as follows: Abdul Gani choosing as his "fishing hole" a branch of the Sungei Pagani Malayan bank. While his friends diverted a cashier's attention - casting his line over a partition - into the till; using as his fishing rod - a transistor radio with a long antenna; actually hooking a bundle of cash - when the cashier finally spotted him and sounded the alarm.

In the end - Abdul Gani proving "the big one" - who didn't get away.

LAKE PLACID

***In the search for a suitable site for the Nineteen
seventy six winter olympics - exit Salt Lake City -
re-enter Lake Placid, New York. The latter today submitting
a new bid - to the U.S. Olympic Committee; the same as
before - a bid predicated on the receipt of "sufficient
state and Federal funds for proper financing." Do you think
Lake Placid will get it?***

TITUSVILLE

Never underestimate the power of a woman !- Isn't that the way the saying goes? Case in point - Titusville, Florida. Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Lynch - returning home from an evening out surprising a burglar in the act of looting their house. The burglar promptly slamming Mr. Lynch in the stomach - doubling him up. This leading Mrs. Lynch to believe he had been stabbed - whereupon she leaped into the fray. The blow by blow - later relayed to police.

"I knocked him down" said Mrs. Lynch - "and he got up and tried to fight so I knocked him down again." She then socked him a few times - "she went on; in the process - ~~xxxx~~ tearing off parts of his shirt and jacket; letting up only when it became apparent her husband was okay. Mrs. Lynch adding: "When he left here - there was blood all over and blood all over him."

By the way, Bill, I forgot to mention: Mrs. Lynch's occupation? A professional wrestler. Also holder of a karate black belt.

SOUTH AFRICA

In the Union of South Africa - where it's summer now - there's a serious drought - like one three years ago forcing the slaughtering of tens of thousands of cattle. But one rancher, Hermann Michaelis, who lives near Johannesburg says he beat the drought three years ago and he intends to do it again. How? By feeding his cattle stacks and stacks of newspapers - spiced occasionally with magazines. Old telephone directories and cardboard boxes. All of which have sufficient water and nutrients - he says. A copy of say The Cosmopolitan or Playboy would even make a South African cow feel frisky!