

TUES. JULY 16, 1968
(Dallas Townsend)

SENATE

For Associate Justice Abe Fortas, an historic appearance today before the Senate Judiciary Committee - considering his nomination to be Chief Justice. First nominee for the nation's highest judicial post - ever to appear before a Congressional panel. With Justice Fortas himself - quickly setting off the expected fireworks.

Admitting to questioners that he continued to serve President Johnson as a confidential adviser - even after aking his seat on the Supreme Court.

This serving to focus attention on charges of "cronyism" - leveled against the President. Also raising the question of a possible breach - in the traditional separation of the executive and judicial branches of government. Justice Fortas insisting, however, that he had never helped to frame official policy - after ascending to the High Tribunal. His chief role as Presidential adviser - said he - that of absorbing facts - analyzing a situation - then stating

SENATE

"pros and cons:"

Justice Fortas going on to say he had never discussed anything with the President - that might come before the court. Adding that as Chief Justice: "I will continue to vote as my native wit and God gave me the intelligence to do so."

VIETNAM

War news from Vietnam tells today of a coordinated Allied effort - aimed at safeguarding the city of Saigon from any more Viet Cong attacks. The new defense plan - concentrating mainly on the southern approaches to the capital. Resulting in a series of four sharp clashes - in and around the Mekong Delta.

When it was all over - the enemy toll set at some two hundred would-be infiltrators. With the biggest battle - and the enemy's worst losses - in a riverside clash barely sixteen miles from downtown Saigon. U.S. troops all but wiping out the Communists - thanks to what one American officer called a "classic example" of Communist inexperience.

PARIS FOLLOW VIETNAM

In Paris - an airport news conference today for Deputy
Chief U.S. Delegate Cyrus Vance; who told reporters "there is
no tangible progress" in peace talks - "but I am not
discouraged." And with that - he was off to Washington to
report to President Johnson; who is himself getting ready
to fly to Hawaii later this week - for consultations with
South Vietnamese President Thieu.

Arriving in Washington this afternoon - Vance said the
U.S. is carefully watching the current lull in Viet Nam -
to determine if it is related in anyway to the Paris
discussions.

MOSCOW

Yesterday - New York. Today - Moscow. With a Pan American jet - arriving this afternoon in the Soviet capital. Opening the first commercial airline service - from the United States to the Soviet Union. Much the same as an Aeroflot jet - had earlier carried out the first Russian half of the exchange.

Awaiting the Americans - a gala champagne and caviar welcome. Also a standing ovation for PanAm founder Juan Trippe - who had dreamed of such an airline service for thirty-five years. With Soviets and Americans alike expressing the hope - that this "will result in an improvement in relations between our two countries; and also contribute to peace and stability - throughout the world."

UPPSALA

Uppsala, Sweden - the World Council of Churches today approved without reservation - a report entitled "Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs." Recommending - one - that Communist China should be admitted to full membership in the United Nations; and - two - that member churches around the world - should support fully those who "object to particular wars" as a matter of conscience. Of the American delegates present and voting - none publicly opposing either proposal.

POST OFFICE

The U.S. Post Office Department, as presently constituted - a prime candidate for the scrap heap; according to a report today - from the Presidents Commission on Postal Organization; which urges instead the creation of a new self-supporting postal corporation - Federally owned and chartered by Congress.

Reaction from Postmaster General Marvin Watson:

He called it "thought provoking" Watson adding that he will "immediately appoint a top level task force" - which he will head himself - with a view to implementing the commission's recommendations.

President Johnson called the report "sobering" - but he didn't actually endorse it. So chances of adoption by Congress appear slim indeed.

Good Night.