

VIETNAM

In Vietnam - a major battle is apparently fast building tonight - at Khe Sanh near the D.M.Z. With Communist forces taking advantage of a gaping hole in American defenses - pouring in men and equipment from nearby Laos.

Rallying point for the expected Red offensive - at newly-captured Lang Vei. Forcing a rare strike by U.S. Navy pilots - who normally operate North of the D.M.Z. Navy jets blasting an enemy column of trucks and tanks - even as U.S. artillery launched a fearsome barrage. An attempt to plug the hole - at least, temporarily.

Back in Saigon - American airborne troops [REDACTED] were landing in force today - at the city's Phu Tho race track. Trying to knock out a brigade of Viet Cong - who have dominated the area for nearly a week. While at Da Nang - a black leather-jacketed Marine - trying today to hi-jack a commercial jetliner. Luckily though - he was finally disarmed - and no casualties.

SACRAMENTO FOLLOW WHITE HOUSE

*Across the country - at Sacramento, California -
a warning today from Draft Director Lewis B. Hershey;
about a possible step-up in Selective Service - to meet
current crisis conditions in the Far East. In Hershey's
words: "Anytime anything happens any place - we ought to
brace for higher draft calls."*

A later report: McCarthy's office saying - he was

WHITE HOUSE

Here at home - the White House was taking strong exception today - to a statement attributed to Senator McCarthy of Minnesota; a statement to the effect that a request has already been made - for possible use of tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam.

Not true - said White House Press Secretary George Christian. Asserting that President Johnson - who is the final authority - "has considered no decision of this nature." Christian adding that "irresponsible discussion or speculation" on this subject - is "a disservice to the country - also unfair to the armed forces."

A later report: McCarthy's office saying - he was misquoted.

GRENOBLE (Lead in to Thomas tape)

In the Winter Olympics at Grenoble, France - a combination of tears and cheers today for U.S. entries. The tears for skiers Jim Barrows and Jere Elliott - both of Steamboat Springs, Colorado - both injured in the glamorous downhill event; trying but failing to match the winning time of France's Jean-Claude Killy - otherwise known as "Le Superman." The cheers for a trio of American girls - including Dianne Holum of Northbrook, Illinois - Mary Meyers of St. Paul, Minnesota - and Jenny Fish of Strongsville, Ohio - who scored the first triple tie in Olympic history; coming in second en masse - in the Five Hundred Meter speed skating event.

Coincidentally - the U.S. ice hockey team today was losing its third straight game; this one to Russia - by a score of tent-to-two. A rough-and-tumble affair - with three Americans sharing the penalty box at one point.

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Elsewhere at Grenoble though - it's all "peaches and cream;" and here's Lowell Thomas again - to tell us all ~~about~~ about it. Lowell....

SUGGESTED FOLLOW UP TO THOMAS TAPE

Thank you, Lowell. Now if only someone would just tell Jean-Claude Killy.....

NEW DELHI

Meanwhile, at New Delhi - news today that visiting U.N. Secretary General U Thant - has conferred privately with North Vietnam's consul general in the Indian capital. Subject, of course - the war. As to results - a U.H. spokesman later saying only - "the talks were useful."

At the same time - the Kremlin also getting into the act. Urging the United States to accept Hanoi's latest proposal for talks - now - before it's too late. Further warning that any additional escalation of the war by American commanders - would lead solely to heavier Communist attacks in return.

GENEVA

More on the war - from Geneva; where the International Red Cross denounced so-called "inhuman acts" - allegedly committed by both sides. Citing, in particular, attacks against civilians - including air raids, summary executions, torture and reprisals. Also demanding "that the lives of those captured in combat - be spared; that the wounded, sick and those giving medical care - be respected."

The Red Cross mentioning no single incident - nor any country or fighting force by name. Adding though that all belligerents are equally bound - "to observe the basic rules of humanity."

SEOUL

Latest in the Pueblo affair - a report today from Seoul; stating that crew members of the captured U.S. intelligence ship - have just been moved to the North Korean city of Kaesung; which is only about ten miles from Panmunjom - where U.S. and Communist authorities are trying to ~~decide~~ decide their fate. The idea - supposedly - to have the crew close by - in case of an early agreement.

However, all this - attributed to unnamed sources in the South Korean government. And as yet - nothing official.

PEKING

Here's one - food for thought. From Peking - a report today on the latest use for the thoughts of Chairman Mao; as psycho-therapy - in a Red Chinese mental hospital.

"At first" - said Peking - "certain patients misbehaved" at the start of daily lessons. Laughing - dancing - and making "various bad noises." "But now" - we are told - "the patients study Mao's thought even on Sunday; and they "love to chant quotations and sing songs - made of Mao's quotations." In short - reaction to Mao inside the asylum - said to be pretty much the same as that outside the asylum.

Warren - do you suppose there's a message there somewhere?

MOSCOW

Moscow - for the first time in history - the Soviet people were presented today with a cold, hard look at the economic facts of life. A government newspaper spelling out - item by item - the marked contrast between [redacted] production of consumer goods - East versus West.

For example, U.S. production of clothes - more than double that of Russia. U.S. production of autos - nearly fifteen times that of the Soviet Union. The margin even greater - in production of refrigerators, ranges and other household appliances.

The story thus proving what many Soviet citizens have long suspected - that Russian Communism still has a long way to go to match American-style capitalism. Or as Khrushchev was once heard to remark - after visiting the United States: "I have seen the slaves of capitalism - and they live very well."