

February 24, 1970
Dallas Townsend

WHITE HOUSE

The White House - a visit today from French President Pompidou; calling forth a red-carpet welcome - complete with blaring trumpets and fancy-dressed honor guards. President Nixon telling his guest: "We recognize that France is our oldest friend - our oldest ally in the world." And we shall continue "to work together" said he - "toward the goals of two hundred-years ago - liberty and independence for all people." Pompidou, in turn, expressing his belief - that "nothing fundamental will stand between us."

After which - two hours of private talks - said to have touched virtually every base in the present world situation. The White House later professing fullest confidence - that Pompidou visit will prove a complete success. This in spite of a partial Congressional boycott - threatened for tomorrow because of resentment over France's Middle East policy. White House Press Secretary Ron Ziegler observing - "there had been some differences" between the

*U.S. and France in the past; but now - we seek the same
thing - said he.*

LONDON

The latest on the Middle East crisis - comes today from London; where ground crews at Heathrow Airport - have imposed a complete work ban on all Arab airlines. This the first direct "job action" - resulting from the terrorist bombing of that Swiss airliner last week. At the same time, a meeting of the chiefs of all fifty-three carriers using Heathrow - aimed at beefing up security precautions.

At Amman, Jordan - Arab guerilla leader Yassi Arafat today held his first news conference - since returning from Moscow. Along the way - asserting that "we" - meaning the commandos - "have relations with the black forces in the United States - and we are proud of such relationships." Beyond that though - he refused to elaborate.

**(SUGGESTED LEAD-IN TO THOMAS TAPE SLUGGED
"CHURCHES")**

While Lowell Thomas continues his pursuit of
"high adventure" - up near the "roof of the world" -
another special report he left us. Subject for tonight -
church-going in America. Lowell...

740

CHURCHES

Good evening everybody: Appropriate to the lenten season comes a report today - on the state of current church attendance in these United States; and it discloses figures a bit surprising - and to some, no doubt, rather disquieting.

For example, the Catholic Church in America report a membership gain of one per cent during the past year - and that's the smallest since the Great Depression. And during the same period - the nation's Lutheran bodies gained only two tenths of a per cent; while the membership of the United Methodist Church - was actually dropping two per cent.

But take the reverse side - a group called the Assemblies of God - referred to as America's largest Pentecostal body - it posts a membership gain of nearly nine per cent. Likewise - the Fundamentalist Churches of Christ. And then the Mormon Church - no doubt you've heard. It has been establishing new congregations at the rate of one a day.

CHURCHES - 2

The reasons for this - many and varied, of course, Perhaps worth noting though - the fact that many of the churches registering down trends are those in the throes of change - change in doctrine, in liturgy, in social attitude and so on. According to at least one observer - this suggests that Americans in their church affiliations as in other areas of life - are seeking now as never before "a heaven of certitude, a feeling of continuity with the past, the comforting assurance of old familiar ways." Perhaps so. Which may be good or bad - depending on your point of view..

Solong....

(SUGGESTED FOLLOW TO THOMAS TAPE SLUGGED
"CHURCHES")

Thank you, Lowell. Back to the news...

140
130

310

CAPITOL HILL

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird had another go-round today - with a joint session of the Senate Armed Services and Appropriations Committee. Laird seeking approval for the establishment of a third Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile site - at Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. This in addition to the two sites already approved - at Malstrom Air Force Base in Montana - and Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota. The Secretary also asked for additional funds - to explore the possibility of establishing five more ABM installations. Potential sites including the Washington, D.C., area - the Michigan-Ohio border area - the Southern New England area, possibly Massachusetts, the Upper Northwest, probably Washington State - and also Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming.

VIETNAM

In Vietnam - U.S. intelligence reported today - a "tremendous" flow of enemy war materials; as reflected in a sudden traffic increase on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which funnels men and supplies into South Vietnam. Indeed, U.S. sources calling this the heaviest such movement - in the entire war. But the why of it - that we can only wait and see.

North Vietnamese troops in Laos have reportedly captured Muong Soui - a key road center near the Plain of Jars. They are also said to have surrounded - a nearby military airfield. Repeated air strikes by U.S. fighter-bombers - apparently failing to turn the tide.

RECKINGEN

The death toll in that Swiss avalanche - continues to mount - a wall of snow thundering down the slopes of Blinnehorn Mountain; engulfing part of a Swiss army camp - at the village of Reckingen. In the hours since - rescue workers recovering eleven bodies - at last report; leaving another eighteen - still unaccounted for. A police spokesman admitting sadly: "We have very little hope for the missing."

DETROIT

*The name of Hall of Fame pitcher Dizzy Dean -
popped up again today in that Detroit crackdown on big-time
gambling. This in connection with a Federal indictment -
charging ten persons with taking part in a gambling conspiracy
"Ol Diz" cited as one of five alleged co-conspirators - which
means he will probably be called to testify as a government
witness.*

MIAMI

From the director of the National Hurricane Center at Miami - an optimistic report ~~by~~ Dr. Robert Simpson predicting that U.S. scientists will have the ability - within five years - to "de-fuse" hurricanes before they hit land. Probably to the point - said he - where "a hurricane approaching the coast with hundred-knot winds" - would have them "reduced to seventy knots or less;" in which case the height of approaching tides would also be cut back - perhaps as much as fifty per cent. Dr. Simpson observing: "If we reduce the height of this storm surge - we reduce the greatest destroyer of lives and property."

The doctor emphasized, however, that U.S. scientists have no intention - "of trying to divert or kill" hurricanes. "Don't forget - we also benefit from hurricanes" - said he. Adding that fully one-third of the rainfall "necessary for Florida - comes from storms and tropical depressions."

POMPIDOU

It happened this afternoon at the National Press Club, where President Pompidou was the speaker of the day - and proved to be something of a conservative, or a romantic, and certainly a diplomat, on the subject of women's dress styles. Question from the audience - "Are fifty million Frenchmen as confused as most American males about the shifting hemline? Tell us - is it Mini or Maxi?" To which President Pompidou confessed that he was somewhat confused himself - adding, however, "As for as I am concerned, I must say I have known the era of long dresses, and I believe they added mystery to love." Ah, the French! Dallas Townsend saying goodnight.