

L.T. -- THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1967

(Dallas Townsend substituting)

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

More than two years in the making -- dramatic proof today of improving East-West relations. The Senate finally approving that long-pending Consular Treaty with Soviet Russia. Providing increased protection for some eighteen thousand Americans -- who travel annually to the Soviet Union.

This, the first bilateral treaty -- between the world's two greatest powers -- requiring Senate approval. The final tally -- sixty-six to twenty-eight. Those votes more than the required two-thirds majority of those voting.

Republican leader Dirksen left his hospital bed to cast his ballot in favor of the treaty. President Johnson issued a statement praising the Senate's action. The impressive vote for ratification, he said, was the product not only of strong bipartisan leadership, but also of

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responsible action by the membership.

The treaty must be ratified by the Soviet presidium before it goes into effect.

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in Moscow twice before -- the first time in 1959, when he

conducted his famous kitchen debate with Nikita Khrushchev.

The second time in 1965, after Khrushchev had been deposed.

Nixon appeared annoyed when he got there today for his third

visit. Noting the lack of an official welcome, Nixon said:

"Apparently a government without an opposition is not willing

to recognize the opposition in another country."

Earlier today, Nixon met with Pope Paul at the

Vatican, and they discussed Vietnam.

NIXON

Richard Nixon arrived in Moscow late today -- hoping for talks with Soviet leaders. But they snubbed him -- not a single Soviet official was at the airport to greet the former Vice President. He was welcomed by Ambassador Lewellyn Thompson, who'll be his host while he's there. Nixon has been in Moscow twice before -- the first time in 1959, when he conducted his famous kitchen debate with Nikita Khrushchev. The second time in 1965, after Khrushchev had been deposed. Nixon appeared annoyed when he got there today for his third visit. Noting the lack of an official welcome, Nixon said: "Apparently a government without an opposition is not willing to recognize the opposition in another country."

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VIET NAM

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In Viet Nam -- a fierce battle is raging tonight in the Central Highlands -- near the Cambodian border. U.S. infantrymen -/ attempting to beat back a large attack force; North Vietnamese troops who apparently struck suddenly from their sanctuary -- across the frontier.

American reinforcements -/ rushed to the scene by ~~the~~ helicopter. / However, the outcome still in doubt -- at last report.

WHITE HOUSE

President Johnson today signed a bill -- providing an extra four-and-a-half billion dollars to fight the war in Viet Nam. At the same time -- the President praising Congress for attaching a rider, fully endorsing U.S. policy in Viet Nam. Said he: "We shall persist -- both on the battlefield and in our pursuit of an honorable settlement.

A few hours later -- the House voting an additional twelve billion dollars in war funds. Raising total defense appropriation for the year -- to some seventy billion dollars.

LODGE

Back in Saigon -- a statement today from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge -- that he is leaving Viet Nam "for personal reasons." Lodge stating flatly, however, these these do not include -- any idea of running for political office. In fact, the Ambassador calling himself -- an "irrevocable non-candidate."

As for an assessment of his second tour of duty in Viet Nam -- Lodge saying: "We have not achieved a satisfactory outcome yet" -- but we're much further along than "we ever have been" before. He said: "They cannot win - we cannot lose."

This leading to speculation from informed sources -- that "something is afoot."

A spokesman for the State Dept later telling newsmen -- there is nothing definite "at this time." He said, however, "there might be something" -- especially soon.

UNITED NATIONS

A report at the United Nations -- that a new Vietnamese peace effort is currently underway -- through "secret diplomacy." The report following a series of quiet consultations this week -- by U.N. Secretary General U Thant, on return from his recent meeting with North Vietnamese diplomats -- in Rangoon, Burma.

Thant conferring individually -- with U.S. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg -- Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Fedorenko -- and the envoys from both Canada and Poland; two of the three members -- of the Viet Nam International Control Commission. This leading to speculation from informed sources -- that "something is stirring."

A spokesman for Thant later telling newsmen -- there is nothing definite "at this time." He said, however, "there might be something" -- hopefully soon.

SUGGESTED LEAD-IN TO THOMAS TAPE

Lowell Thomas is roughing it tonight -- in the wilds of Wyoming. In the meantime, a special report he left us -- on his favorite passing: Skiing.

MERGER

The Federal Communications Commission has ordered new hearings on a controversial project -- the proposed merger of the American Broadcasting Company with International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation. The hearings will commence March Twenty-seventh. They'll give the Justice Department a chance to present its argument to the FCC if the FCC failed to consider fully the possible anti-competitive aspects of the consolidation.

Four of the seven members of the Commission voted for the new hearings. The other three abstained. They, and Chairman Rosel Hyde, voted last December in favor of the merger of ABC and ITT.

INCENTIVE

The House of Representative, late this afternoon -- approved immediate restoration of tax incentives for business and industry. The roll call vote was three hundred and eighty-six in favor -- only two against. It came exactly one week after President Johnson requested the move -- as a shot in the arm for the American economy. In anticipation of the action, the New York Stock Exchange had a big day -- staging a sizeable advance on heavy volume.

LABOR

The U.S. labor market remains firm; according to figures announced today -- by the Labor Department. The nation's unemployment rate holding steady -- at three-point-seven per cent during February; the same as January -- and also December.

The government conceding that some economic indicators -- have shown a tapering off of rate. Insisting, however, that job figures -- are "the most important reflection of current economic activities;" and they are "holding up very well" -- said a government spokesman.

Be that as it may -- U.S. industry in February suffered its sharpest setback in twenty-eight months; according to word from the Federal Reserve Board. The nation's total industrial output -- falling two-point-one per cent; due mainly to strikes, snow storms and falling sales -- cutting deeply into auto production.

ATHENS

Twelve Greek army officers were found guilty today of high treason and mutiny -- for plotting the overthrow of King Constantine. Their sentences -- ranging from four-to-eighteen years. Three others sentenced to two years apiece -- for failing to report the plot.

The disposition ending a four-year trial -- with great political repercussions; leading to the downfall -- of former Premier George Papandreou. Papandreou's Harvard-educated son -- Andreas -- was one of those implicated in the alleged plot -- though he was never brought to trial.

BOSTON

Richard Cardinal Cushing -- planning to retire as Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston. He said so today -- setting the date as August Twenty-fourth, Nineteen-Seventy -- his Seventy-Fifth birthday. The Cardinal adding he will go to Peru -- as a Catholic missionary -- after his retirement.

HOPE

A footnote to the war in Viet Nam -- disclosed today with publication of a captured Viet Cong document.

A letter highly critical of terrorist bomb squads -- operating in South Viet Nam. Specifically citing, among others, the case of a bomb that exploded ten minutes ahead of schedule -- in Saigon, on Christmas Eve, Nineteen-Sixty-Four.

The bomb killed two Americans -- and wounded fifty. But if it had gone off on schedule -- said the Viet Cong -- it would have coincided with the arrival of Comedian Bob Hope and his troupe of entertainers; probably killing -- many more.

Bob Gope was informed of the letter -- at his home in Palm Springs, California. Said he: "This isn't the first time -- people have tried to do away with me. The same thing happened -- with my vaudeville act."

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First chance we get, Lowell - we'll be out there, to join you on the slopes.