

Thursday, April 17, 1969

Los Angeles

Los Angeles - as you no doubt have heard by now - Sirhan Bishara Sirhan guilty of murder in the first degree; - in the slaying of the late Senator Robert Kennedy.

Today's verdict capping a fifteen week trial - followed by three days of deliberations. The jury, in effect, rejecting a defense contention - that Sirhan was too sick mentally to know what he was doing. The stage is now set for a climactic moment next week when this same jury will decide on Sirhan's sentence - either for life, or death.

*Plans for a massive new study of the entire U. S. "defense community" - announced today by Defense Secretary Melvin Laird. It's purpose - said he - to rate present performance as well as future needs. Also, to steady certain "valid issues" - in connection with the so-called U. S. military-industrial complex."*

*Melvin Laird further promising: "There will be no cover up - no concealment - no distortion." And to make sure - said he - the study will be conducted by a special "blue ribbon panel." The secretary adding: "we intend to put a lot of land-fill - in the credibility gap."*

Middle East

*In the tense Middle East - for the fourteenth straight day - Jordanian and Israeli forces traded gunfire across the Jordan River. Cairo also telling of a "strong" artillery duel - across the Suez Canal. While in New York - another "Big Four" meeting aimed at achieving a Mid-East peace formula. The parley spurred on by King Hussein's warning - that there is "very, very little time left" to prevent a general war.*

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Sea of Japan

*The bodies of two crewmen from that downed Navy reconnaissance plane were recovered from the Sea of Japan today forcing the Pentagon to concede - there is virtually no hope of finding survivors.*

*Meanwhile, the White House was asserting - there could have been no valid reason for the North Korean attack. Press Secretary Ron Ziegler saying: "it was an unarmed plane - on a routine reconnaissance mission - in international waters." More on that, no doubt, when President Nixon holds his next broadcast news conference - at 11:30 tomorrow morning.*

SAIGON - PARIS

*On the warfront - Viet Nam - big U. S. B-52's  
pounded a jungle area today less than thirty-five miles  
from Saigon; attempting to wipe out a nest of Viet Cong -  
who had already suffered heavy losses trying to ambush  
a U. S. armored column.*

*Back in the Capitol itself - casualty figures  
for the past week. With battle deaths on all sides lowest  
since the start of the current Red offensive. Which would  
seem to indicate something - although at Paris - again -  
officially the word - "no progress."*

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POSTAL

*In Washington - a major reorganization today at the U S. Post Office Department - starting with the appointment - of three new Assistant Post Masters General; two of whom will head new bureaus - aimed specifically at improving mail service.*

*Incidentally, the trio of new appointees includes thirty-six-year-old Professor Ronald Lee of Michigan State University; who now shares equal rank with James Farmer - as the top Negro office holder in the new Nixon administration.*

SOUTH BEND

*In the midst of spreading campus chaos - a voice of anity was heard again today from South Bend, Indiana. Notre Dame President Father Theodore Hesburgh - addressing an international conference of college administrators, reminding delegates that "their great junction - is to unite all the component parts of a university;" to guide its institutions - along the paths of "reason and civility."*

*This often difficult - he admitted; especially in the face of faculties that "have forgotten that the most important function of a professor is to teach;" in the face of students - who have carried dissent "to a point of violence and boorishness." But it must be done and it can be done - said Father Hesburgh - if college administrators will only stand steadfast; if they will only defend their "goals and values - against all internal and external forces that would pervert or denature them."*

PRAGUE

*At Prague - Czech Communist Party leader Alexander Dubcek calls it quits. The chief architect of Czechoslovakia's new reform program - resigned today under pressure from the Kremlin. His successor - the more conservative Slovak Gustav Husak.*



MOSCOW

Moscow - the rehabilitation of Josef Stalin - was carried another step forward today. This with publication of the Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov - Russia's greatest war hero; who says, among other things, that Stalin was a vigorous and courageous wartime leader - also, a wise diplomat.

What about past charges - mainly by Khrushchev - that Stalin was a bungler, intolerant, panicky, incompetent. Not true - says Zhukov. Adding that Stalin was "a polite person - who allowed arguments and conversed freely on various topics." In other words - a real "sweetheart" of a guy - says Zhukov.

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*The winner and new champion - psychologist-turned-pilot Alvin Marks. Returning home to Sacramento, California with a new round-the-world speed record for light planes. Completing the trip in just over fourteen days - thereby cutting in half the old mark held by Britain's Sheila Scott. Sheila, an attractive English gal, was the first European of either sex to fly around the globe solo. Her book: "I Have To Fly" is just out.*

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*Before Alvin Marks took off he was calling his global flight - "sort of my mountain." As to his future plans - he said today: - Warren - "guess I'll have to find another mountain." In which he and Sheila seem to have much in common.*

*From Ann Arbor, Michigan; headquarters of a new all-male organization - called SEAM." Co-founder Kahlil Samra - of Lebanese descent - asserting that SEAM's goal - is to get women back in the home where they belong; "to re-establish man in the role that is naturally his - that of taking charge." Hence the name SEAM - which stands for "The Society for the Emancipation of the American Male."*

WHITE HOUSE

*At the White House - a ceremony today saluting the League of Women Voters on its fiftieth anniversary. President Nixon taking the opportunity to note that women now serve as Prime Ministers of India, Ceylon, and Israel. Adding that American women have also shown - "that a woman can and should be able to do any political job that a man can do." All of which leads to the inescapable conclusion - said he - that we in the U.S. will also "see a woman president - certainly in the next fifty years - maybe sooner." Well ---*

*So Long Until Tomorrow!*