

Wed. Feb. 26, 1969
(Dallas Townsend)

BONN

For President Nixon - a thunderous welcome today at Bonn. Including a standing ovation - from the West German Parliament; where he became the first foreign head of state - ever to address that assemblage.

In return, the President saying he had never received a "greater honor" - in his long political career. And then he urged a strengthening of the NATO alliance - in this critical period of East-West relations. For coming negotiations, with Russia "to succeed" - said he - "it is essential that we maintain the strength - that made the negotiations possible."

VIETNAM

On the war front - Vietnam - the latest "Battle for Saigon" may have just begun. With enemy forces seizing two villages today - barely twenty miles northeast of the capital; in the wake of a pre-dawn guerilla raid - on a nearby U.S. base camp.

Allied troops and tanks - quickly surrounding the occupied villages. Blasting away at the enemy - in conjunction with massive air and artillery support.

As for that earlier guerilla raid - it claimed at least fourteen American lives; also - millions of dollars worth of helicopters. However, the enemy paid early too - losing some thirty dead as well as a number captured.

PARIS FOLLOW VIETNAM

Paris - the new Communist offensive having additional effect - desired or otherwise. Chief U.S. negotiator Henry Cabot Lodge - conferring today with South Vietnamese Vice President Ky; the latter - newly-returned from Saigon.

Purpose: To discuss the possibility of an official protest - when peace talks resume tomorrow. A possibility - that now seems almost a certainty.

As to the final decision, though - both men are keeping their own counsel. For the record - Lodge simply telling reporters: "While the progress in these talks is not very rapid - I feel there is some progress."

MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East - again at the brink of crisis tonight; following the sudden death - of Israeli Premier Levi Eshkol.

Not the least of disturbing factors - conflicting reports on the cause of death. Jerusalem saying - it was a heart attack. Arab sources claiming he actually died of injuries sustained in an Al Fatah Arab commando raid.

Be that as it may - the entire State of Israel plunged into mourning. Government officials going so far as to delay Eshkol's funeral - beyond the normal limit of twenty-four hours. This to permit the nation to pay full honors - to its fallen ~~XXXXXX~~ Leader.

Levi Eshkol - dead at seventy-three - succeeded as acting Premier by his deputy

CAPE KENNEDY

Here at home - on the space front - it was a "cold" day at Cape Kennedy - three times over. Astronauts James McDivitt, David Scott and Russell Schweikart → all coming down with a three-way case of the sniffles and sore throat. Threatening a temporary delay - in Friday's scheduled launch of the Apollo-Nine. *✓* Although space officials say - there will be no decision on that - before tomorrow.

SATELLITE FOLLOW CAPE KENNEDY

Elsewhere at Cape Kennedy - scientists checking on a problem in the flight of that new storm hunter satellite - expected to provide a weather watch for Apollo-Nine, if and when.

The Essa-Nine - as its called - quickly achieving a hard-to-reach polar orbit, as planned. However, the craft spinning in orbit - at double its scheduled R.P.M.; and it could take an extra week - before they can slow it down.

WEATHER FOLLOW SATELLITE

Getting back to earth again - no need for a storm-hunter today - on either the East or West Coast. For the evidence of winter's rampage - was all too apparent.

Here in the East - New England suffering through the third day - of a crippling snowstorm. With the resulting death toll - now set at around twenty-five. The city of Boston - among the hardest hit; with snow accumulations there - coming to three feet or more in some areas.

Indeed, a private forecaster calling this week's storm - the worst ever in nearly a century of record - keeping.

While across the continent - the "last dying gasp" of a disastrous storm - was sweeping over Southern California. Scarring the countryside - with flash floods and killer mudslides. Leaving a trail of at least fifteen dead - with the threat of still another storm to come - this weekend

HOUSE

Chairman William McChesney Martin of the Federal Reserve Board - chief witness today in fiscal hearings before the House Ways and Means Committee. There predicting - a gradual easing of inflation. Warning, however, that tight money and high interest rates - are here to stay for the rest of the year, at least.

Next up - Committee Chairman Wright Patman. Calling Martan - "the most costly public official in the history of the world." On the grounds that board decisions under Martin's leadership - have doubled the cost of government bonds. Patman declaring: "The interest on the national debt is now Sixteen Billion ^{dollars} a-year" - when "it could have been only Eight Billion."

WALTER REED

The news from Walter Reed Army Hospital - continues good. With former President Eisenhower - still progressing nicely. "His vital signs have remained stable - there has been no change in his cardiac status" -said the doctors. Adding: "His post-operative course has to date - followed the expected pattern."

DETROIT

The biggest auto safety callback to date - reported today from Detroit. General Motors - recalling nearly five million cars and trucks. Nearly half connected with a defect - that ~~could~~ could permit the entry of exhaust fumes into the passenger compartment.

However, G. M. emphasizing - that "very few" of the cars are actually considered unsafe. A company spokesman observing: "It is like calling in the haystack - to find the needle."

Get the point Warren??

NEW CASTLE

At the New Castle correctional institution in Delaware - an intensive search is under way - not for a missing prisoner, but for a missing book. Guards scouring the prison for a volume entitled "The Great Houdini - Magician extraordinary" - a biography of the late renowned escape artist - the man who could work himself loose from almost any combination of chains, handcuffs and padlocks. The reason the authorities are so anxious to get the book back is that the last chapter outlines many of Houdini's escape tricks. And prison officials are afraid that one or more of the inmates, with a literary turn of mind, may come across the last chapter, and read it very carefully.

Dallas Townsend saying Good Night.