

Thurs, Feb. 15-73.


At long last, an agreement between the U.S. and Cuba -- to crack down on both air and sea hijacking. The new five-year pact formally ratified today -- in simultaneous ceremonies in Washington and Havana.

It provides: One -- that both sides will extradite hijackers or skyjackers. Two -- that both sides will prosecute such persons "with a view to severe punishment." Three -- that each government "shall apply strictly its own laws -- to any national of the other." And four -- that "extenuating or mitigating circumstances" may be taken into account. But that last -- only providing there has been no financial extortion or physical injury.

STATE -- FOLLOW HIJACKING

Secretary of State ~~William~~ Rogers -- who signed for the U.S. -- later holding a news conference. ^{with} ~~However~~ the subject quickly shifting -- from Cuba to Vietnam. A reporter demanding to know how the U.S. could justify rebuilding ~~Vietn~~ North Vietnam -- while still refusing amnesty to U.S. draft dodgers; whereupon -- a rare display of intense emotion.

William Rogers asserting that the rebuilding of North Vietnam -- is essential to the maintenance of peace in southeast Asia. As for amnesty -- saying: "When some fled or deserted -- someone had to take their place -- someone had to die." Adding: "We had forty-six thousand battle casualties -- we can't forget those who lost their lives."

His voice choked now with emotion -- Rogers referring to the valor of American prisoners of war. In binding up the nation's wounds -- said he -- "I don't think we can get off to a better start than seeing those prisoners ^{come} ~~from~~ home. If that doesn't give you pride -- he continued -- "I don't think anything will." 

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And then -- scarcely able to talk -- his eyes wet with ~~moisture~~

-- the Secretary saying: "I think it's time that all of us -- took
a little pride in our country."

PEKING -- FOLLOW STATE

Elsewhere on the diplomatic front -- Henry Kissinger arrived today in Peking. Immediately meeting with Red China's Premier Chou En Lai -- for three and a half hours; the first round in three days of scheduled talks -- with top Chinese leaders.

By the way, Doctor Kissinger's ^{visit} to Peking -- is said to be causing ~~considerable~~ ^{some} consternation in Moscow. Indeed an official Soviet weekly today saying: "The ground is being prepared -- for an American-Chinese alliance."

WHITE HOUSE

The White House -- President Nixon met today with General Andrew Goodpaster, the allied commander in Europe. The President taking this occasion -- to discuss the global effects of the cease-fire in Europe.

The U.S. insistence on "peace with honor" has shown -- said he -- that the U.S. is, quote "a dependable, credible power in the world;" thereby reinforcing the confidence in this country's "steadfastness" -- said he -- in Europe and Asia; also, serving to still those -- said he -- who are saying: "Let's throw up our hands -- turn inward -- and withdraw from our obligations in the world."

The President further expanding on his previous statement -- that "this is the year of Europe." Observing that Europe "becomes very important in both the economic context ~~and~~ and also in terms of the national security context." The President adding that he foresees major discussions this year -- "with our European friends;" discussions especially on trade matters -- which will be "very interesting and at times difficult" -- said he.

ENVIRONMENT -- FOLLOW WHITE HOUSE

As promised, the President sent to Congress today -- a new improved plan for cleaning up the nation's environment. The President urging passage of nineteen pieces of legislation -- which he first submitted last year, but which were never passed; also, urging the enactment -- of eight new proposals. These including a call for the diversion of highway trust fund monies -- to help finance mass transit.



ADD TO ENVIRONMENT

The President saying: "If we dont act on this legislation soon
-- the American people are going to spend the rest of their lives
riding choked up freeways."

LUNCH -- FOLLOW ENVIRONMENT

The President later traveled to the Pentagon -- where he had lunch with Defense Secretary Elliott Richardson. Along the way -- raising a toast to peace in Vietnam. The President observing that: "All the Defense Department ~~is~~ now wants to ^{see} ~~be~~ in the peace force."

On leaving the Pentagon -- the President chatting briefly with spectators. Someone thanked him -- for ~~bringing~~ bringing the prisoners home. Said the President: "No one should thank me -- we should thank them; they wanted to come home the right way -- standing tall and proud." The President adding: "Their sacrifice was not in vain;" and for that -- he continued -- "the American people can take the credit."

PRISONERS

America's first returned prisoners of war -- were literally streaming across the country today. The freed men rushing into the arms of their loved ones -- setting off scores of emotional reunions.

The return of Lieutenant Colonel Harlan Chapman of Fremont, California, perhaps typical. "For over seven years that I was a prisoner" -- said he -- "I never shed a tear. In the last two days -- he continued -- "I have shed many tears -- not of sadness, but of joy."

Another who was almost overwhelmed -- Navy Captain James Stockdale of Coronado, California. On arrival at Travis Air Force Base, Captain Stockdale shouting: "We're home." As he limped down the ramp -- adding: "America, America -- God shed his grace on thee."

LONDON

The shock waves from U.S. devaluation of the dollar -- continued to echo and re-echo today around the globe. Sweden and Finland announcing five percent devaluation of their own currency -- while the Portuguese escudo dropping by three and a half percent.

At the same time -- in London -- a tremendous rush on gold. The buyers -- said to be mainly Asians. In any event, running up the price -- to seventy-two dollars and eighty cents an ounce; thereby breaking the previous all-time high -- which was set only yesterday.

SAN FRANCISCO

From the Pentagon -- a two-part report today; a report dealing with life and love -- aboard the U.S.S. Sanctuary, the Navy's first coed sailing vessel.

Part One -- a spokesman ^{saying} ~~discussing~~ that one of the Sanctuary's women deck hands -- unnamed and unmarried -- has been summarily relieved of duty. Why? Because she's pregnant. The result of a romance -- that took place ashore -- we are told -- before she even boarded the test ship.

Part Two -- perhaps a bit more encouraging though. The Pentagon noting that a male radio man and a female machinist's mate -- are "considering getting married." Just one catch. If they do -- one or both will have to be transferred. The Navy explaining: "there are simply no facilities for married couples aboard."

AGE

This next -- on the subject of old age; in a way, an illustration of the current generation gap -- or is it sex gap?

Anyway, French movie star Brigitte Bardot -- offering a distinctly Gallic definition of old age. "I'll know I'm getting old" -- said she -- "the day I can no longer have the man I'd like."

Incidentally -- and apropos my present trip, age has some advantages. In the past three days, largely because of my years, I've received three plaques -- one in Darke Co., Ohio, where a local chapter of ^{the} a national police fraternal order has been named for me; also a plaque from Mayor Yorty on behalf of the city of L.A.; and one from ^{my} radio, TV and film colleagues of Southern California.

Bill; John Paul Getty, the world's richest man, says: "Age doesn't matter -- unless you're a cheese."

SACRAMENTO

From Sacramento -- the story of William Jennings Harris; a story that seems to have ended -- more than a quarter of a century ago.

Harris mysteriously disappearing from his Indio, California, home -- back in nineteen forty-seven; leaving behind a wife -- and four children. He was later declared dead -- his wife remarrying three times. After her last divorce -- getting word that her original spouse was still alive. Finally tracking him down -- in Arkansas; after an exchange of letters -- sending two of her sons to bring him back home.

And now for the happy ending. The sixty-six year old Harris and his ex-"widow" -- planning to remarry this weekend. When they applied for a marriage license, the clerk observing: "He ³ was the liveliest dead man I ever saw." *And s-l-u-t-m.*