

May 26, 1969
Dallas Townsend

Final word on the flight of Apollo-Ten - bullseye! - as you no doubt have heard by now. After eight days and a few minutes in space - the trail-blazing moonship returning home to a perfect landing. Floating gently to the waters of the South Pacific - barely three-and-a-half miles from the waiting helicopter carrier Princeton. A thrilling spectacle not only for the participants - but also for countless millions watching the world over by television. Summing up for one and all - Astronaut Gene Cernan declaring - "Beautiful - just beautiful."

Back at Houston - cigars all around. Flight Director Glynn Lunney calling the flight of Apollo-Ten - "one hundred and ten per cent successful" - the most successful space flight ever. Dr. Thomas Paine - who heads the U.S. space program - adding: "We know how now we can go to the moon - and we will go to the moon."

For Astronauts Stafford, Young and Cernan - a job supremely well done. And for Astronauts Armstrong,

Aldrin and Collins - waiting in the wings - an all but official green light. With the target date for that manned landing on the moon - late in July.

As Tom Stafford put it earlier: "Man has certainly progressed a long ways - in such a few short years." To which Cernan added enthusiastically - from here on out, "nothing is impossible."

VIETNAM

On the war front - Vietnam - two new American drives were disclosed today. Including one - a Marine strike near the D.M.Z. Also, an Army sweep of some three thousand men - through the Tam Ky area south of Da Nang.

This last perhaps most noteworthy - for turning up a surprising number of women among the enemy's front-line troops. Viet Cong women - who are said to be just as dedicated and just as deadly as their menfolk; which suggests, however, that the men are becoming - increasingly in short supply.

On the political front - South Vietnamese President Thieu leaving for a visit to South Korea - and then Nationalist China. Something of a warm-up - en route to his meeting week after next with President Nixon.

TEHRAN

The capital of Iran - today's stop for America's globe-girdling William Rogers. The Secretary of State addressing an opening session in Tehran of the Central Treaty Organization - commonly called CENTO. Asserting: "It could be - as President Nixon has said - that we may be moving out of an era of confrontation - into an era of ~~is~~ negotiation." Adding: "We hope so - and we are doing our best to make it so."

But that "does not mean - that the non-Communist world can relax its vigilance" - said Rogers - for the result could then well be - another Czechoslovakia - another Vietnam - another "armed insurgency."

WHITE HOUSE

The war on poverty gets a new general: Thirty-six-year-old Donald Rumsfeld - a former Congressman from Illinois - newly-appointed director of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity. Taking the oath of office today in a special White House ceremony - President Nixon presiding. The President observing that Rumsfeld will hold a job - "of very great importance to this Administration and the nation."

Just how great - later emphasized by New York's Mayor Lindsay - who was also present. The Mayor telling a subsequent meeting of the President's Urban Affairs Council - that action must be taken to "change the welfare system this year."

SUPREME COURT

Another decision day at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Including one decision that made headlines - although it was, in effect, no decision at all.

This in a case from Arkansas - dealing with the basic Constitutionality of the death penalty. A case in which the court refused to rule - at this time; instead, ordering a reargument of the issues - in the court's coming fall term.

As usual - no reason given. However, observers speculating that the resignation of Abe Fortas - may have left the court split four -and-four; so the case was put over to the next term - when there will be a new Chief Justice, succeeding Earl Warren. Mr. Nixon has nominated Judge Warren Burger to that post - and also a new Associate justice, succeeding Abe Fortas.

MEMPHIS

For James Earl Ray - another losing battle today at Memphis. The convicted killer of Dr. Martin Luther King - turned down flat in his request for a new trial. Judge Arthur Faquin ruling that Ray's first trial - was perfectly valid. Asserting that the defendant - "knowingly, intelligently and properly" pleaded guilty. And so his ninety-nine-year sentence - still in effect. But Ray plans to continue his fight for another trial.

MOSCOW

~~Overseas again~~--France and Russia have entered into a new trade agreement; one that will double the trade between those two countries--within a period of five years.

Formal signing--today in Moscow. / with the French signatory--Foreign Secretary Jean De Lipkovski--paying special tribute to Charles DeGaulle for initiating the deal. De Lipkovski calling this an agreement "that embodies the spirit of fruitful Soviet-French cooperation --that the people of the two countries are striving for."

~~By the way~~, the Russians have recently signed similar trade deals--with Japan, India and Pakistan. In effect, building bridges--East and West.

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The last story tonight concerns another aspect of the first one - the triumph of Apollo Ten. Reaction to it - overwhelming, around the world. Foreign leaders rushing to send President Nixon their congratulations. Sir Bernard Lovell - head of the British space laboratory at Jodrell Bank - calling it "a nearly miraculous achievement, only attainable by the finest technology and engineering. Secretary General U Thant saying "It is refreshing to have been able to turn for a moment from all our troubles of earth to this magnificent spectacle of man's extraordinary capacity for achievement and peaceful quest."

Warm congratulations also from the Russians - who twice today mentioned not only the courage and skill of the astronauts - but also their sense of humor. A sense of humor - always a valuable asset - perhaps more so in space than anywhere else.

Dallas Townsend saying Good Night.