

Mon., March 26, 1973

SAIGON

In Southeast Asia - U.S. strength and determination again pays off. The Communist side - bowing today to U.S. pressure; ending an impasse on the prisoner issue - by agreeing to release, as of Wednesday, the nine Americans still held in Laos.

These to be followed a day later - by the last remaining prisoners held in Vietnam. One hundred and forty-eight men, in all; the final installment in Operation Homecoming.

KEY BISCAYNE

The news from Saigon drew an immediate response from the Florida White House. President Nixon ordering a resumption of U.S. troop withdrawals - with the last man to be out by Thursday. Press Secretary Ron Ziegler saying: "This does end - the U.S. military presence in Vietnam"

So we have, the nation's longest war fast drawing to a close.

WATERGATE FOLLOW KEY BISCAIYNE

Turning to the domestic front - President Nixon reiterated today - his "absolute and total confidence" in White House aide John Dean. This in the face of published reports ~~that~~ that Dean had prior knowledge of ~~that~~ Watergate, ~~bugging incident.~~

The source of those reports - identified as convicted Watergate defendant James McCord, who is now said to be telling all - to a special Senate investigating committee. But what exactly McCord is telling probers - and how true, ~~well, we'll just have to wait and see.~~ We'll be hearing more on this.

CAIRO

In the Middle East, at Cairo, - a meeting of the Arab Socialist Union - Egypt's only political party. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat ^{there} announcing plans ^{also to take over} ~~to become~~ Premier, ~~as well,~~ succeeding in ~~that job~~ - his one-time chief lieutenant, Aziz Sidky.

^{The idea is} ~~This is order~~ to strengthen Egypt's domestic situation - said Sadat - and also to deal more effectively with Israel. "The stage of total confrontation has become inevitable" - said he - "and we are entering it whether we like it or not." Sadat adding: "We must tell the world that we are here - and that we can dictate our will."

HAIFA

At Haifa - the first six defendants in Israel's biggest spy case ever - were sentenced today to two-to-seventeen years in prison. These including two native Jews - and four Israeli ~~Arabs~~ ^{Moslem Palestinians} all of whom were convicted of taking part - in a Syrian spy ring. As they left the court - all of them also singing an Arab ^{ic} version of the Communist "Internationale."

An additional thirty suspects ~~is~~ still awaiting trial.

JAMAICA

The curtain falls today - on one of the all-time greats of the British and American stage. Sir Noel Coward succumbing to an apparent heart attack - at "Firefly," his winter home on the North Coast of Jamaica.

Noel Pierce Coward - a child prodigy in his native Britain. Then a brief stint in World War One - followed by his first play in which he also starred - at age twenty-one. The incomparable Coward - soon had five plays and reviews running simultaneously in London. Later scoring big ^{here} in the U.S. - with presentations such as "Blithe Spirit" - "Bitter Sweet" - "Brief Encounter" - and so on. Along the way, the composer of songs such as - "Mad Dogs and Englishman go out in the noonday sun." ^{sung so effectively by Bea Lilling.}

He was also renowned as a wit - once saying of a well-known actress: "She moved everything - except the audience." He helped to put together his biography - "A Talent to Amuse" - later observing: "I was fascinated by the subject matter."

His only failure, it seems - a play entitled "Sirocco;" first and last presented - in Nineteen-Twenty-Seven. The catcalls were deafening - the author was even spat upon. "Well, if I'm going to have a flop" - said he - "I like it to be a rouser."

Noel Coward - actor, playwright, producer, director, composer, lyricist and more - age seventy-three.

SENATE

For the first time since he was confirmed as Defense Secretary - Elliot Richardson returned today to Capitol Hill; there attempting to head off any major cuts - in this year's defense budget.

Richardson noting that peace agreements in Vietnam and Laos - "are still very fragile." Adding that fighting continues in Cambodia - the U.S. and Russia are still engaged in an arms race - and both Russia and China are building up their military might.

"Clearly" - said he - "a long and extremely difficult period of negotiations lies before us - in building the structure of a generation of peace!" And just as clearly - he continued - "significant budget cuts now - would seriously weaken the U.S. position."

HOUSE

Elsewhere on Capitol Hill - Chairman Wright Patman of the powerful House Banking Committee - was calling today for another wage and price freeze; also suggesting - possible rent controls. This in place of what he called - the Administration's "toothless series of vague guidelines called Phase Three."

LUMBER FOLLOW HOUSE

One reason for soaring construction costs - soaring lumber prices; said to have added about Twelve Hundred Bucks to the cost of a new house \nearrow in just the past few months. Now - an attempt at a government solution.

Director John Dunlop of the President's Cost of Living Council - announcing plans to permit an increase in tree-cutting in national forests; also, a plan to curb log exports - to Japan; and if need be - ~~to institute~~ mandatory price controls. These last would be effective as of today - said Dunlop - "to avoid any incentive for additional price increases."

BUCHANAN

From a member of President Nixon's "inner circle" - comes today an analysis of the President's landslide reelection victory. This in a booklet ^{entitled} ~~published~~ - "The New Majority." White House speech writer Patrick Buchanan - claiming the President succeeded in capturing the so-called "Roosevelt coalition." Adding that, indeed, Richard Nixon might go down in history - as "the Republican FDR."

Buchanan going on to say: "The President's landslide - was not only a victory of the man over McGovern; it was also" - said he - "a victory of the new American majority; a victory of traditional American values and beliefs - over the claims of the counter-culture; a victory of Middle America - over the celebrants of Woodstock nation." So says Pat Buchanan.

NEW YORK

Just out - Fortune Magazine's latest directory of the nation's biggest business and industrial firms. Also included - a list of sixty-five hundred executives - said to be "highly paid;" which means - Thirty Thousand or more a year. Fortune noting that only eleven of these executives - are women.

Completely omitted though - a number of important women executives - whose firms are not listed in the Fortune directory. Most notably - Mary Wells Lawrence, the head of Wells, Rich, Greene Advertising; who is said to be - America's highest-paid businesswoman. Her total pay - set at nearly Four Hundred Thousand a year.

LONDON FOLLOW NEW YORK

In the same vein - this next from London; where the London Stock Exchange became today - the United Stock Exchange; merging all of Britain's exchanges ~~and~~ into one facility; and thereby clearing the way ~~and~~ for women members.

Stock broker Susan Shaw - age thirty-seven - quick to take advantage of the situation; ^{Bill.} ~~becoming~~ [^] The first stock market woman admitted to the trading floor of the London ~~exchange~~ [^] in all its one hundred and seventy-one years.

CAMBRIDGE FOLLOW LONDON

Reverse side - a divorce settlement reported today from Cambridge, Mass. Mrs. Beatrice Hicks gaining her freedom - but at a price. Agreeing to pay her ex-spouse - a lump sum of Ninety-Five Thousand in cash or marketable securities; plus an extra Twenty Thousand-a-year - for the next five years. The settlement also providing - that Mrs. Hicks shall educate and support the couple's two children.

All this - said to be based on, quote, "the financial position of the wife;" ~~in this case, at least - clearly the bread-winner.~~