

L.T. - GM - BROADCAST, Dec. 20, 1954

(Charles Collingwood substituting)

C.C.: Good evening! Premier Mendes-France won a vote of confidence in the National Assembly today, an overwhelming vote, on the question of the Indo-China budget. Last week, the Premier sustained a defeat on that Indo-Chinese issue; today, a complete reversal of that. There was a vigorous debate, with Mendes-France pointing out that the United States will spend four hundred million dollars in French Indo-China next year. While the budget he proposed came to far less than that; only two hundred and twenty-three millions. If the Premier had been defeated, it would have been bad for the Paris accords - rearming West Germany. The question of ratification is scheduled to come up immediately after a vote on the Indo-Chinese budget, ~~which~~ which could not have been the case if the Mendes-France government were overthrown. That angle explains the magnitude of the Premier's victory today; a vote of ~~xx~~ confidence by 310 to 172, possible because the Popular Republicans abstained. They're the chief opponents of Mendes-France, but at the same time they're strongly in favor of Western European defense and didn't want to ~~xxx~~ impede ratification of the

Paris accords. So the Popular Republican Party abstained from voting. Immediately following the decision, the National Assembly began the debate on that all-important issue which combined West German rearmament with the settlement of the Saar Valley dispute between France and Germany.

SOVIETS

Soviet Russia handed a communication to Great Britain today threatening to cancel the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1942 if the Paris accords for the rearmament for Western Germany are ratified. Today's diplomatic note is a virtual duplicate of the one the Soviets sent to France last week when they threatened that they would abrogate the Franco-Russian treaty of 1944 if the pact is ratified. The Moscow warning to Paris was intended, obviously, to influence the French National Assembly, which is now debating the Western agreement on German rearmament after having disposed of the Indo-China issue. Today's admonition to Britain, however, has no such obvious point, because the British ~~Parliament has already ratified~~ Parliament has already ratified; so, what's it all about?

In Moscow, newsmen took the question to the Soviet Foreign Office, where the press chief pointed out one phrase in the Soviet note: "If the act of

ratification is accomplished. . ." This is interpreted as meaning that if the Paris accords, upon being ratified, are put into effect with actual West German rearmament, in that event Moscow would consider the Anglo-Russian treaty nullified. Back in the days of World War II, both Britain and France concluded mutual defense treaties with Soviet Russia, these providing that the contracting parties would not negotiate separately with Germany and would support each other in case of hostilities with Germany after the war. All of which sounds rather obsolete these days.

AUSTRIA

The Soviets, by the way, made a surprising move in Austria tonight; calling an extraordinary session of the Big Four allied council in Vienna, for a meeting tomorrow. Just what the Russians want to talk about in such urgent, formal style, is not known. It's the first time since 1946 that the Soviets have requested a special meeting with the British, French and American representatives in Vienna.

DEFENSE

President Eisenhower has ordered a speedup in the reduction of military manpower, so stated by Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, who today told a news conference that the cut in the number of men in uniform in the next six months will be hundred

thousand more than originally planned. The figures for men called up in the draft will be less than half as originally planned. Secretary Wilson explains that the cutback is in line with Administration belief that the threat of global atomic war has diminished in recent months. The military manpower question is to be answered by a program of modified universal military training, which will be placed before Congress, the idea being to build up a great national reserve, to face a long-drawn-out cold war. Secretary Wilson says the manpower cut will save the Treasury about six hundred and twenty-five millions during the next fiscal year.

PROTEST

The United States has rejected a communist protest because of - balloons. In the skies over Communist Hungary, balloons have been drifting, releasing showers of leaflets; a campaign begun last October by the Crusade ~~for~~ for Freedom and Radio Free Europe. The balloons are releasing fifteen million leaflets a month, each one propounding the cause of liberty, free democracy. The Reds don't like it, and put in a complaint through diplomatic channels, calling the balloon campaign "slanderous and seditious." The United States Government replies that the leaflets

merely remind the people of Hungary of the rights which were explicitly guaranteed them under the treaty of peace; rights also included, theoretically, in the Red constitution of their country - but. only, theoretically. The note of rejection adds: "The United States Government hopes that the day will come when balloons will be no longer necessary as a means by which people of one country may freely communicate with peoples in other lands."

ATOMIC

In Detroit, a group has been formed to further President Eisenhower's atoms-for-peace plan, an organization of prominent business men and scientists, called Fund for Peaceful Atomic Development. They say their purpose is to mobilize information and talent to back the President's program - atoms-for-peace.

NUTTING

The British Government is backing Anthony Nutting, British chief delegate at the UN. He's back at London today, on a visit, following a storm in British Parliament and newspapers because Anthony Nutting was quoted as saying that Britain would help the United States to defend Formosa against a possible Chinese Communist attack. The Labor Party demanding was this a new development in British foreign policy? The Churchill government, in a hesitating mood. Today,

however, the London Foreign Office backed up its delegate to the UN all along the line, saying he had been misinterpreted, pointing to what he actually said. His statement on a television program in New York was as follows: "A Chinese Communist attack on Formosa would be an attack on a member of the UN, and would, no doubt, call for collective action by the UN, in which we would," said Mr. Nutting, "of course, be involved as a member." This, says the Churchill government, states no more than what is implied by the membership of Great Britain, in the United Nations.

SHEPARD

The judge in the Dr. Sheppard murder trial has decided to let the jury keep on trying to agree on a verdict. The seven men and five women have had the case for more than 78 hours now and have shown no signs that they're even close to a verdict. The judge told them to keep at it after conferring with ~~attorneys~~ attorneys of both sides.

GLEASON

They're saying ~~that~~ the Jackie Gleason contract is the biggest financial deal in TV history. The six million dollar agreement, for two years of television shows on CBS, sponsored by Buick. Hitherto, Milton Berle has appeared for Buick; now Jackie Gleason, the one-time Coney Island barker who became a headline comedian.

Tonight we have a report from Lowell Thomas who's off on several weeks of travel in Africa and Asia. When he took off aboard a Trans-Atlantic airliner, he promised to come in on this program at frequent intervals with recorded stories from far places. Lowell is prompt about it, and here flown back across the Atlantic is his first report.

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L.T.: Right, Charlie. As I sit here by my magnetic recorder talking to you, our Pan-American Clipper, the Seven Seas, that's the name of it, is far out over the Atlantic Ocean; Greenland off to the north of us. I haven't picked up anything hot. Mr. Dulles isn't on board, but I can give you a feature if you're not loaded with late news.

Shortly after the Seven Seas took off from Idlewild, I discovered that her captain was an airman that I had known for some time. In fact the last time we were together, I happened to be toastmaster at the fiftieth anniversary banquet of the Explorers' Club, in New York, and although he was sitting out on the floor that night, not at the head table, I singled him out from more than a thousand rather distinguished

men, and I had him stand up so that all might see the only man who ever flew solo across the North Pole, for that's what Captain Charles Blair did. It was in a P-51, a World War II fighter plane, with special gas tanks. He did this unique flight from near Comso Fjord in Norway to Fairbanks, in the heart of Alaska, in order to demonstrate his own new theory on the way to use celestial navigation, that is to use it in remote regions where there're no radio aids. He's tall, handsome, gentle and gay. He looks like a youngster and here's his record: more than twenty-two thousand hours in the air, more than four million miles in the air, and he has piloted planes across the Atlantic more than six hundred times.

Now I've always been interested in what unusual people do when they're not doing what they usually do. As the captain of a trans-Atlantic airliner, Charlie Blair is in the air approximately two weeks out of every month, and what do you suppose he does the rest of the time, the other two weeks? I'll wager that you would never, never guess. He flies jets, the latest Sabre jets; he has over six hundred hours in them, and recently he checked out in the huge B-32,

that's the six-engine super-jet. He just likes to fly and especially fly in jets. Since that solo flight that he made across the North Pole, he has been a special consultant to the U.S. government - and no wonder, and a consultant to the Strategic Air Force.

Except for the throbbing of the four motors driving this plane through the sky at 300 miles an hour, there isn't a sound up here in the sky at this moment. The Atlantic Ocean far, far below us. And I suppose that I am the only one on board who knows the record of the skipper of this clipper; but if the others did know I am sure it would make it much easier for them to sleep. / Don't you think so, Charlie?

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C.C.: I certainly do, Lowell! Well, Hugh, it sounds as though Lowell had a comfortable flight, doesn't it?