

Monday, April 23, 1973

KEY BISCAYNE

President Nixon flew back to Key Biscayne today - following an overnight stay at Grand Cay in the Bahamas. The President's return coming in the midst of another flood of Watergate rumors. Those who claim to be in the know are predicting an imminent shakeup in the President's personal staff. But all deny.

WASHINGTON

In Washington - the Watergate affair was still topic A. The Washington Post charging today that the President was warned as early as last December that some of his staff may have been "deeply involved." The Washington Star also charging that President Nixon's personal lawyer was the care-taker of a secret half-million dollar campaign fund; some of which was said to have been used - "for political spying and disruption." Another development - the attorney for key² Watergate defendant G. Gordon Liddy attempting today to withdraw from the case, Thomas Kennelly explaining that Liddy has constantly refused his advice - to tell all that he knows. "He's a man of singular fortitude" - said Kennelly; "he's going up the river but he's not taking any captains or lieutenants with him."

TOKYO

The Watergate Affair is news not only in the U.S. - but also in Japan, it appears. At any rate, Japan's Minister of International Trade - Yasuhiro Nakasone - holding a press conference today; he was asked about the possible effects of Watergate on U.S. and Japanese relations Nakasone saying: If country's broke diplomatic relations over political scandals we wouldn't have diplomatic relations with anybody." But, I sure hope - he added - "they didn't use machines from Toshiba or Sony."

SAIGON

In Southeast Asia - a convoy of eight ships - including six tankers - fought its way up the Mekong River today in Phnom Penh. This the first river convoy to reach the Cambodian capital in eight days.

In Vietnam - enemy forces were pressing closer to Hue. There was also more fighting at Tau Chau - where river convoys normally assemble. Saigon - nevertheless, reporting that troop violations - have now dipped to their lowest level since the cease fire agreement first went into effect.

NEW YORK

For Henry Kissinger - a brief trip to New York; where he addressed a group of newspaper publishers on the subject of U S policy in Europe. Kissinger saying the President "is adamantly opposed - to unilateral withdrawals of U S forces from Europe - but we owe to our people" - he continued - "a national defense posture, at the safest size and cost" with burdens equitably shared: and that - said he - the question of sharing - will be the main thrust of the President's talks with foreign leaders - when he travels soon to Europe.

MERIAN COOPER

As I no doubt have mentioned from time to time I've been ~~the~~ most fortunate in that my work has given me an opportunity to come in contact with, and make friends with, many of the remarkable human beings who have bestrode this planet in the past half century. High on my list, even above potentates and other notables, I'd put Merian C. Cooper who died this weekend in San Diego.

It gave me a jolt when I read this morning's New York Times. Their opening lines read: "Merian Cooper, the writer, director, producer and author who created King Kong." and so on.

Yes, he does deserve much credit as creator of one of the most unusual motion pictures ever made. But, I always think of him mainly as an Air Force General, Chief of Staff to Flying Tiger Clair

Chennault, also advisor to General George Kenney who ran the Air War in the Pacific under MacArthur. Or, I think of World War One in which we both were involved, when he was flying in France even before America entered the war. Also as the creator of Paderewski's Polish Air Force following World War One. "Coop" as he was known to his associates and friends around the world, was captured by the Russians, sentenced to be executed, and made a spectacular escape from Russia.

Next he and his pal Schoedsack went to a remote mountain area in Persia and made a picture of the migration of the Bachtiari. Their film GRASS, overnight made them famous. Then followed Chang and Four Features. After that a whole string of unusually seccessful films, Flying Down to Rio, The Last Days of Pompeii, The Qutet Man, Fort Apache and others in which featured Clock Gable, Katherine Hepburn, John Wayne, Fred Astaire and many more.

General Merian Cooper, wasn't just a remarkable

man, he was incredible. All of which was recognized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences with a special award. He married a lovely actress, Dorothy Jordan, there are two daughters. He was particularly proud of their son Major Richard Cooper on Air Force pursuit pilot who I presume comes near holding the record for the number of tours flown in the Southeast Asia War. He's still based in Thailand. On the telephone a little while ago I was chatting with General Edward "Ted" Curtis, one of the heads of Eastman at Rochester, who figures the chances of Dick Cooper being alive today stand at about a hundred to one.

"Coop" also was an explorer and a writer, and, he was my partner and associate in launching Cinerama. So, he played a major role in creating a worldwide screen revolution. For it was Cinerama that brought on the widescreen era. I wish I could have been the biographer of

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**of General Merian Cooper, a genius - the man who did
also create King Kong.**

QUINCY

Heavy weekend rains in the upper mid-west led to renewed flooding today in Iowa and Illinois. The surging waters of the Mississippi and its tributaries - forcing nearly six thousand persons to flee their homes. The flood conditions hitting worst of all - at Quincy, Illinois. With St. Louis - perhaps next.

Farther south - a series of thunder storms; leading to flash flooding today in western Tennessee and northern Mississippi.

CAIRO

The London report that Egypt is planning a new "super Suez Canal" Cairo calls - complete nonsense.

An article in the Cairo newspaper Al Akhbar - today attacked the U.S. saying that "every Arab" must keep telling himself: "America is conspiring against me - America is destroying my home and killing my son and my wife.

HARTFORD

The Greater Hartford, Connecticut Chamber of Commerce is creating a so-called "downtown attractions task force;" promoting innovations such as - "fire hydrants decorated like toy soldiers - curbs and safety islands painted bright colors - and new stylish police uniforms.

They are saying: Bill -" Hey, we aren't just a gas station between Boston and New York."

SKRITNII

Rear Admiral Vladimir Kruglakov of the Soviet Navy; who served as host to Britain's Princess Anne when she visited the Soviet destroyer Skritnii said: Anne is "very beautiful, very clever - why is she not married?" And so long until Monday.