

December 28, 1970
Dallas Townsend

BASQUES

Good evening everybody. A Spanish military court in Burgos today sentenced six Basque nationalists to death on charges of murder and terrorism, and ordered long prison terms for nine others. One defendant - a woman - was acquitted. There are indications that Generalissimo Franco may commute the death sentences to avert possible outbreaks of violence in the Basque country of northern Spain.

Eugen Beihl, the West German diplomat who spent most of the month in the hands of Basque terrorists, wept when he heard the court decision. A Defense lawyer said "Even the most pessimistic among us never expected such harsh verdicts."

They were announced soon after the Vatican said Pope Paul had appealed for clemency - not only in the Burgos case - but in the case of the defendants sentenced last week by a Soviet court in Leningrad for attempted airplane hijacking. Most of the defendants are Jews. Two of them were sentenced

to death.

Reports from Moscow say the Soviet Union has set Wednesday for an appeal hearing in that case. Normally it takes at least six weeks for such a hearing, and the Soviet authorities appear to have acted with unusual speed - perhaps because of an international storm of indignation over the verdict. The protests in Israel have been especially vigorous.

MIDEAST

Israel today decided to rejoin the Middle East peace talks it abandoned four months ago after attending just one meeting. At that time, the Israelis charged Egypt with violating a ceasefire by moving Soviet made missiles into the Suez Canal zone. Egyptian officials have reportedly met to map strategy for the new talks. In Washington, News Secretary Ron Ziegler said the White House was "gratified" at the Israeli decision and now hoped "each side would show a spirit of give and take" to reach an agreement.

Even as the decision was made, military spokesmen in Tel Aviv reported Israeli commando raids against four houses inside Lebanese territory in reprisal for guerilla attacks. Both Israel and Lebanon reported casualties - a total of fifteen dead and several wounded.

CRASH

A Trans-Caribbean Airways plane crashed and burned this afternoon while landing at Charlotte Amalie on Saint Thomas in the Virgin Islands. At least two of the forty-six passengers aboard were killed - and more than forty injured. The flight had originated in New York City.

BOMB

A bomb exploded at noon today in front of an Army recruiting office in an Atlanta, suburb - injuring a janitor who had just picked it up. Police blamed it on persons they called "young radicals." An Army recruiting officer inside the building said he leaped under his desk when the bomb went off. Said he - "That's something you learn quickly in the war zone."

INDOCHINA

Communist forces have launched what appear to be concerted drives in three countries involved in the Indochinese War - Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Allied spokesmen say more than fifty South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed, and Communist advances made in both Laos and Cambodia. American warplanes also went into action - bombing and strafing the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The current air campaign - longest and fiercest of the Indochina War - is in its third month.

President Nixon today dismissed the prisoner-of-war film shown on nation-wide television last night. He said the film demonstrates Hanoi's "total disregard" for the Geneva Convention on treatment of P-O-W's.

RIVERS

L. Mendel Rivers - the sixty-five-year-old chairman of the House Armed Services Committee - died today in a Birmingham, Alabama, hospital where he had undergone heart surgery. / He entered the hospital earlier this month and never fully recovered from the operation, even though for awhile he was able to walk about the hospital. / In Washington, Congressman Rivers was known as the Pentagon's best friend / at a time when the role of the military in American life has become extremely controversial. / Often, instead of endorsing cuts in military spending, / Rivers would ask generals and admirals to speak up if they needed more money. / President Nixon - ^{Mourning} ~~regarding the~~ ~~manner~~ the South Carolina democrat - called him a "patriot who held to the belief that freedom in the modern world" depends upon American military strength. Edward ^{Aylak} ~~Hebert~~ of Louisiana - who's expected to succeed Rivers as Armed Services committee chairman - says he'll pursue the same goals as his predecessor.

CONGRESS

The Senate came back to work today with time running out on the Ninety-First congress. The House returns tomorrow after the Christmas recess. The Ninety-First expires by law at noon January Third - and the massive logjam of legislation remains as formidable as before. Late this afternoon, the Senate decided to delay consideration of President Nixon's family assistance plan and trade legislation until next year - and to act only on social security legislation in the final days of the Ninety-First.

KIDNAP

Three suspects in the kidnap-slaying of Quebec

***Labor Minister Pierre LaPorte were arrested today in a
farmhouse south of Montreal - perhaps bringing to an end
one of the most intensive manhunts in Canadian history.***

***We'll have tonight's report from Lowell Thomas after
this word.***

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minister Pierre LaPorte were arrested today in a
case south of Montreal - perhaps bringing to an end
the most intensive manhunts in Canadian history.
We'll have tonight's report from Lowell Thomas after
midnight.

THOMAS TALKS

LOWELL THOMAS IS IN THE HOT SEAT TONIGHT - AND
HE'S GOT TO TALK UP THE CASE OF THE MISSING QUEBEC
MINISTER.
THOMAS TALKS
TODAY AT 11:30
ON THE TV TUBE

THOMAS

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he has th
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Tape Run
Outcue:

THOMAS TAPE

**Lowell Thomas is in the Far North tonight - and
he has this word for us from Point Barrow, Alaska.**

Lowell...

Tape Runs: 1:35

Outcue: So Long....

(SUGGESTED FOLLOW POINT BARROW, ALASKA)

**Thank you Lowell. It's cold down here in New York
too - but not as cold as it is up there.**

Dallas Townsend saying good night.