

KENNEDY DEFEAT

L.T. - *Alles*. Fri. Mar. 24-61.

KCBS - San Francisco

Republicans and Southern Democrats teamed up today to defeat a compromise minimum wage bill which President Kennedy had endorsed only a few hours before. The first major legislative defeat for the administration. Until now, President Kennedy had a perfect record on big issues, winning against strong opposition on liberalizing the House Rules Committee, and passage of a controversial feed grain bill. <sup>Now,</sup> ~~this~~ his first big defeat in Congress.

**SPY**

The State Department flatly denies any connection between the cases of - Igor Melekh and Francis Powers.

No deal to exchange the Russian and the American - both of whom are accused of espionage. And - the RB-47 flyers aren't involved either.

Why all the explaining - in Washington? Well, the decision to drop the indictment of Melekh - caused some criticism on Capitol Hill. Questions about why a Communist spy caught red-handed - should be allowed to go scott free. Questions about - a possible secret deal with the Kremlin.

So the State Department moves to end the speculation - by insisting that no specific American<sup>s</sup> in Russia are being singled out. Secretary Rusk simply feels that the dismissal of the ~~Melikh~~ Melékh case - will lead to better treatment for all Americans who enter the Soviet Union.

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The word went from Secretary Rusk to Attorney-General Kennedy - who relayed it on to the court that passed the ruling. Melekh, to return home - instead of going to jail.

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*Altho'*  
~~tho'~~ the Commonwealth has been through some stormy weather recently - but it still functions as a stabilizing ~~substantive~~ factor in the world. And just might hold the key to - Laos

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REACTION ABROAD

Tonight reaction<sup>s</sup> to yesterday's Presidential news conference - are still pouring into Washington. Comments on President Kennedy's forthright declaration - that we will not let the Communists take over Laos by force. The president of the United States, telling America and the world - especially the Soviet Union - that the issue is now up to Khrushchev. Mr. Kennedy denied that he was issuing an ultimatum - but he made it quite clear that we are ready for a showdown, if it comes. Looking to our military strength - even while striving for a negotiating settlement.

First of all, <sup>the</sup> Laotian government is satisfied with the news. Premier Boun Oum, telling newsmen - that a tough, realistic stand on Laos is what the free world needs. <sup>Which</sup> ~~the~~ sentiment <sup>is</sup> echoed by our Allies. London, Paris, Rome, Bonn, Manila, Taipeh - agreeing that any retreat before this Red aggression would amount to surrender.

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REACTION - AT HOME

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In Congress, the reaction is favorable. Today you couldn't hear a ~~disseminating~~ <sup>dissenting</sup> voice - on Capitol Hill. Senator Wiley of Wisconsin voiced strong support of the President - and went on to say that the fate of Laos will probably be decided by Russian action within the next forty-eight hours. Meaning - that's long enough for Khrushchev to show that he really wants a Laotian settlement. If he doesn't want one - that will be the cue for this country to marshall the forces hinted at by the President.

A special accolade comes from - Palms Springs California. <sup>The</sup> Sender, <sup>2</sup> the last occupant of the White House. <sup>Gen.</sup> ~~Bright~~ Eisenhower held a news conference after talking with President Kennedy by phone. <sup>The former President</sup> ~~Mr. Eisenhower~~ issued his first foreign policy statement - since inauguration day, <sup>,</sup> Noting that this administration is handling the Laotian crisis - as the previous one did. That is, in Mr. Eisenhower's words - "Conciliatory but firm".



## EISENHOWER

Tonight we can go back to using - a familiar title.

Once more it's officially - General Eisenhower.

President Kennedy has signed the Bill - restoring his predecessor to the rank of Five-Star General; retro-active - to December twentieth, Nineteen Forty-Four.

You can be sure that the holder - understands the reference. It was the day after the battle of the bulge began - during World War Two. The Nazi counter-offensive that General Eisenhower had to slow down, stop, and shatter - before sending his armies on into Hitler's Reich. So let's all salute - General of the Armies Dwight D. Eisenhower.

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EARTHQUAKES

Tonight the city of Messina in Sicily - is a ghost town.  
The city of almost three-hundred-thousand - deserted. The entire  
population - fleeing to the hills. Looking down tonight - on  
an inferno of flame and smoke.

Messina - hit by eight successive earthquakes. A series  
of jolts that knocked buildings into heaps of rubble, started  
hundreds of fires - and left the streets cracked and twisted.  
The first tremor was so violent - it broke the seismological  
instruments at the Sicilian Observatory: That first one - was  
enough of a warning. Nobody waited - for the second. The Exodus  
began - as the population 'streamed out into the streets, headed  
for safety. They escaped from the city - in every conceivable  
way. On foot, bicycle - and horseback. In cars, busses, and  
helicopters:

Casualties - few and minor. Damage - massive, running

50  
into the millions. A new ghost town - Messina in Sicily, near  
that fire mountain that so often goes on a  
rampage - Mt. Etna.



The shade of the Greek ~~phil~~ philosopher Diogenes -  
 can rest easy tonight. Diogenes used to go through the streets  
 of Athens with a lantern in broad daylight - looking for an  
 honest man. *One has now been found -*  
 Well, ~~they've found him~~ *not in Athens - in*  
 Chicago. His name ~~is~~ George Hagopian - ~~and he's~~ a court bailiff.

The story starts with a dice game - raided by the  
 Chicago Police. Six men ~~were~~ arrested - and hauled into the  
 rackets court. Their they spotted George Hagopian, *a court bailiff*  
 likely soft touch. Their proposition - a hundred and fifty  
 dollars for George, if he would "fix" their case. The  
 bailiff's reply - non-committal. But he did say he'd approach  
 one of his superiors - about their case. The superior was -  
 the State Attorney. ~~The last of the "fix"~~  
*Oh yea and* The story ~~should end there, but it~~ has an epilogue -  
 with a twist. The six accused gamblers turned out to be -  
 members of the Chicago police force. ~~Bookie~~ cops, assigned to

an investigation - of graft in the courts. They thought George Hagopian might be a candidate - for their technique. Instead, they found the man Diogenes was looking for with that lantern.

Now Dick - I'm looking for you - without a lantern.

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WESTERN WEATHER

I've been roaming the west again, something I do  
nearly every year; spending a few weeks in the mountains of  
*Colorado,*  
~~Colorado,~~ Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and California.

A wierd winter we've been having, all over this continent --

even in Alaska where <sup>we never</sup> ~~have~~ over the Christmas Holiday.

*There had been*  
~~Throughout the west there was~~ fear of a serious  
*- coming.*  
drought. But it looks now as if late storms will unload

enough snow to prevent <sup>a</sup> ~~any~~ such disaster. With Jack Simplot,

1/2 "Mr. Idaho", we have flown over much of the west, ~~most of~~

~~the time~~ looking down on snowy mountains -- skiing down

some of them -- in Oregon ~~even doing this~~ with Mark Hatfield,

the young Republican Governor who is regarded as one of the

most promising Republican leaders in the country -- at a time

when we don't hear much about the Republicans. With

Governor Hatfield I spend some time on Bachelor Butte<sup>1</sup>, near

Bend Oregon, which he, and many others rightly believe is



about to burst forth as one of the major sports meccas of the west.

Like Sun Valley, which is now buried deep in snow, in time for the thrilling annual Harriman Cup Races, the cup presented by President Jack Kennedy's roving Ambassador Averill Harriman.

Now, tonight, - near where I am - storms are sweeping over the High Sierra. More snow, where it's needed. So the word is, the west is not likely to suffer the drought many had feared.

Good news! and s - l - u - Monday.

Gromyko's attitude helped to explain - that of the administration. President Kennedy, hopeful that a cease-fire can be arranged in Laos. Adlai Stevenson, who sat in on the White House meeting - echoes the sentiment.

Still - everything depends on Khrushchev. - If the Boss of the Kremlin accepts the British proposal -