

WED. JULY 17, 1968
(Dallas Townsend)

HAVANA

For the third time in less than a week - thirteenth time this year - still another case of airplane piracy.

As you have doubtless heard by now - a National Airlines jet barely airborne from Houston - when the pilot radioed:

"I have a Cuban in the cockpit - with a grenade in one hand and a pistol in the other. I'm being hijacked."

The plane later setting down briefly at New Orleans - long enough to take on the necessary fuel. Then - on to Havana, along with sixty-three crewmen and passengers - helpless to do anything about it.

Late this afternoon, Cuba released the aircraft, with its crew - and the plane has now landed safely at Miami. But the passengers were forced to remain behind in Havana - presumably on grounds that it was unsafe for the plane to leave there fully loaded.

SENATE

IN a crowded Senate committee room - the Abe Fortas hearings - part two. With Senator Ervin of North Carolina - again the chief questioner. Drawing an admission from Associate Justice Abe Fortas - that he had recently placed a call to a leading U.S. businessman; a call complaining about a public statement - that the war in Vietnam this year would cost about Five Billion dollars more than White House estimates.

However, Fortas insisting the unnamed businessman - was a "very dear and old friend." Going on to say that he telephoned "as a friend" - to correct "a very exaggerated statement." "I thought the statement harmful to my country" - said Fortas. Adding: "I am a Justice of the Supreme Court - but I am still a citizen."

Earlier, the nominee for Chief Justice saying he was greatly surprised - to find that anyone considered it unusual for a Supreme Court member to advise the

President. Fortas citing numerous examples for such advice - dating all the way back to our first President - George Washington.

...regarding past statements. Cussing Chief U.S. Negotiator Averell Harriman to comment later - there was no progress whatsoever.

If the official talks were unproductive - met so the coffee break. North Vietnam's Colonel Ha Van Lam passed along to Harriman - the names of three American flyers that Hanoi has promised to release. These identified as Major James Low - Major Fred Thompson - and Captain Joe Carpenter.

PARIS

VIETNAM
Thirteenth session of the talks in Paris - longest yet. Lasting four-and-a-half hours - but most of the time spent in summarizing past statements. Causing Chief U.S. Negotiator Averell Harriman to comment later - there was "no progress whatsoever."

If the official talks were unproductive - not so the coffee break. North Vietnam's Colonel Ha Van Lau passed along to Harriman - the names of three American flyers that Hanoi has promised to release. These identified as Major James Low - Major Fred Thompson - and Captain Joe Carpenter.

VICTNAM

On the fighting front - halfway round the world - thousands of U.S. Marines to the attack today. Invading the last-known North Vietnamese stronghold - on the southern side of the bullet zone. This in a mountain area - where no American had previously ventured for the past two years.

Down the coast - at Da Nang - a visit today from U.S. Defense Secretary Clark Clifford. Also a prediction that Communist forces will mount "widespread" attacks against South Vietnam - over the next six weeks. "We are preparing ourselves for that" - said Clark Clifford.

WHITE HOUSE FOLLOW PARIS

Here at home - a two-hour briefing today at the White House. President Johnson conferring with Cyrus Vance - our Number Two man at Paris. In the midst of final preparations - for his meeting later this week with South Vietnamese President Thieu. Late this afternoon, the President flew to Texas - for a brief overnight stay en-route to the Pacific.

ILLINOIS

In Chicago - a continued deadlock. The electrical workers turning down a new proposal by Illinois Bell telephone company - rejecting the offer only six hours after it was made - and furthermore, filing a charge of unfair labor practices against Illinois Bell with the National Labor Relations Board. The union insisting that the company submit the dispute to binding arbitration. So the strike goes on - now seventy days old - and the possibility is growing that the Democrat^{ic} National convention, scheduled to open in Chicago August twenty-sixth, may have to be moved elsewhere.

apparently caused by domestic differences - rather than foreign policy.

BAGHDAD

Military Coup in Iraq. Baghdad Radio reporting the overthrow of President Abdel Rahman Aref - in a pre-dawn uprising - With Aref himself - now in exile; by order of the new revolutionary government, which has chosen as his successor - Major General Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr.

General Al-Bakr - a former President and Premier of Iraq - also a close personal friend of Egypt's President Nasser. Which means he will probably continue Iraqi opposition - to the extreme left leanings of neighboring Syria. Mideast observers noting, what's more, that the coup was apparently caused by domestic differences - rather than foreign policy.

CAIRO

Reports from Cairo today telling - of a successful X-Ray of the great Pyramid of Chephren. First readings indicating the presence of a hidden gallery - or possibly a treasure chamber - deep within the giant stone structure. A room undoubtedly constructed - to foil grave robbers. A room whose contents could answer questions - that have haunted and perplexed Egyptologists for centuries.

Successful penetration of the pyramid - finally accomplished by a combined team of American and Egyptian scientists; led by space age technicians - from the University of California at Berkeley. The probes using cosmic rays - to scan the inner recesses of Chephren's last memorial. With a full computer study of all the findings - probably coming up late next month. Pointing the way perhaps - to solution of the next big problem: How to reach the hidden room - without damaging the pyramid itself.

VUNG TAU

From the seaside resort of Vung Tau in the Mekong Delta - comes the story of the "wackiest ship in the Army." Also - the coolest. A self-propelled barge - Number Sixty-Six, Sixty-Eight; by official designation. Its principal function that of turning out daily some three hundred gallons of ice cream - for battle-weary G.I.'s in Vietnam.

The only such vessel in the war zone - old Sixty-Six, Sixty-Eight has been chilling American palates and warming American hearts for more than two years now. Along the way, acquiring a reputation among Americans and Vietnamese alike - as "The Good Ship Good Humor."

Good Night.