

Washington Whispers[®]

[Items appearing on this page are being talked about in Washington or other news centers]

More Draftees to Vietnam in '67 . . . New Threat Of Tight Money . . . Will the Navy Fly the TFX?

George Romney, Michigan Governor, is finding that a letter he wrote to Barry Goldwater in 1964, highly critical of the Republican Party platform committee and of the South, as well as of the Republican candidate, is tending to grow in importance with time and can affect the Romney chances for the Republican nomination in 1968.

★ ★ ★

The Michigan Governor is reported already to be in serious trouble with a very important wing of the party. Yet the "leak" of the letter that is aggravating old party wounds is said to have come from the Eastern wing of the Republican Party, which is supposed to favor Romney.

★ ★ ★

Charles Percy, newly elected Senator from Illinois, is being mentioned as a key man to watch if Governor Romney is blocked for the nomination. Daniel Evans, young Governor of Washington State and a popular figure in the West, is another of the new and fresh faces attracting attention of Republican leaders.

★ ★ ★

Reports have it that one out of two draftees in 1967 probably will end up in Vietnam, usually as replacement for a soldier being rotated back to the U. S.

★ ★ ★

Reporters, who get frequent complaints at the White House about what they consider minor points that may show up in a long story, call President Johnson "Constant Reader." One reporter, who wrote what he considered to be a dull story about a White House ceremony, made this comment: "That piece was so dull, I'll bet nobody in the United States

got to the last paragraph—except Constant Reader."

★ ★ ★

There's concern on the part of some members of the Federal Reserve Board that a new tight-money crisis may flare up around the end of the year, when it is expected that great quantities of money from Europe will be siphoned back to that continent, where a money squeeze is on.

★ ★ ★

Commented one important Democrat on one important subject: "I don't know whether the President will back out of the war in Vietnam through some face-saving maneuver, or whether he will step up the war to get it ended. He's going to do one or the other, or face trouble in 1968."

★ ★ ★

The President's dilemma in another field, as explained by a high official: "If LBJ decides against going ahead with installation of a system of anti-missile missiles and the decision is wrong, it will prove a calamitous mistake in case the Russians attack U. S. Yet if he decides to jump in he may spend billions on the wrong system. It's an issue of money versus possible loss of American lives."

★ ★ ★

The "doves" among civilians in the Pentagon and in the State Department have had the upper hand in the argument over giving Americans protection of an antimissile-missile system with the reasoning: "Don't do it. It will insult the Russians and escalate the cold war besides costing 30 billions." Now it turns out that Russia was not concerned about "insulting" the U. S., or about costs, and once again is one up on the U. S. with progress in antimissile-missile defense.

From Vietnam comes word that important quantities of American supplies are being lost to well-entrenched Chinese businessmen running highly sophisticated pilferage rings that specialize in stealing U. S. construction materials, and office materials and equipment. Looting is on a scale that alarms some American officials.

★ ★ ★

Word from Navy sources is that the supposedly dual-purpose TFX plane, built at a cost of billions of dollars, is unlikely ever to be usable by the Navy on its aircraft carriers, although acceptable to the Air Force. The Navy is said to be working on a plane designed for its purposes.

★ ★ ★

Some members of the Kennedy family are reported in White House circles to be concerned about possible repercussions concerning the late President in a book that originally was being sponsored by the Kennedys.

★ ★ ★

Questions are being raised by some White House aides about why Mrs. John F. Kennedy—as revealed by the official transcript—submitted to only 10 minutes of questioning by the Warren Commission that investigated President Kennedy's assassination, but then is understood to have given 10 hours to a tape-recorded interview by one writer who is coming out with a book on the assassination and six hours to another writer.

★ ★ ★

Hubert Humphrey, Vice President, is described as hardly pleased by the President's desire to have former President Eisenhower undertake a mission to Asia, while the President himself visits Latin America and Europe and the Vice President is left at home.