

News Summary and Index

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1974

The Major Events of the Day

International

President Nixon announced that Secretary of State Kissinger would go to the Middle East next week to help get talks under way between Israel and Syria. He had nothing to say about the lifting of the Arab oil embargo against the United States, but said that the "immediate problem is the disengagement" of troops along the Syrian front. [1:1.]

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel served notice that he would refuse to join the next Cabinet unless the ruling Labor party agrees to share power with the right-wing opposition, the Likud. This puts him in direct conflict with Premier Golda Meir, who has repeatedly asserted that a coalition including the right wing would be a "government of paralysis," incapable of making hard decisions on negotiations with the Arabs in the coming months. [1:2-3.]

National

William F. Simon, the Federal energy administrator, ordered emergency allocations of 84 million gallons of gasoline this month to 20 states, including New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The new allocations will reach service stations "in a matter of days," Mr. Simon said. [1:6-7.]

Despite a new threat of a Presidential veto, the Senate approved a compromise emergency energy bill that would roll back domestic crude oil prices. The measure, which had been stalled in Congress since December, passed 67 to 32, after the Senate rejected three attempts to send it back to a Senate-House conference committee to be rewritten for the second time. [1:6-7.]

The Senate Watergate committee decided not to hold further public hearings. The chairman, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., said the hearings were being ended because "the committee believes that it should be careful not to interfere unduly with the ongoing impeachment process of the House Judiciary Committee or the criminal cases which will soon be prosecuted by the special prosecutor, on which the attention of the country appears now to be focused." [1:5.]

Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the Federal District Court in Washington tried to end the public debate over findings of the court-appointed panel of electronics experts that is investigating subpoenaed Presidential tape recordings. [1:4:3.]

Two of President Nixon's former Cabinet members, John N. Mitchell, who was Attorney General, and Maurice H. Stans, who was Secretary of Commerce, went on trial in Federal District Court in New York on charges that they obstructed a major investigation and lied about it to a grand jury. They are accused of exerting their influence to impede a Federal investigation of the fugitive financier Robert L. Vesco in exchange for his secret \$200,000 cash donation to President Nixon's re-election campaign in 1972. The trial opened with the questioning of prospective jurors. [1:4.]

The loss of Vice President Ford's former Congressional seat in Michigan to a Democrat, Richard F. VanderVeem, left Republicans badly shaken, while Democrats jubilantly predicted landslide victories for their party this fall. For the first time some of the top Republican leaders conceded that Watergate might indeed be a major factor in this year's elections. [1:3-4.]

Metropolitan

Mayor Beame, calling the metropolitan region's gasoline situation "desperate," said that he had informed Governor Wilson that the city intended to enact a mandatory allocation system unless the state took action by Friday. [1:8.] Westchester's new mandatory odd-even system of gasoline allocation went into effect, easing supply problems a little at stations with gasoline. [4:1-2.]

Two New York police officers have given evidence that at least half of the detectives in the elite unit assigned to arresting major heroin dealers were accepting large cash bribes between 1968 and 1971, law enforcement sources said. The investigation started in late 1972 with discovery of the theft of millions of dollars of heroin and cocaine from the property clerk's office. [1:2-4.]

The League of Women Voters discovered that it had men among its members, all of them in the chapter in Perth Amboy, where the league's women defied the organization's national bylaws by admitting men. [1:1.]

Jon J. Leibowitz, a 33-year-old Harvard Law School graduate, described by the police as independently wealthy but fascinated by the challenge of constructing elaborate schemes to steal money, was arrested and charged with the theft of \$607,000 in state and municipal bonds. [1:8.]

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