

Russia Cuts Diplomatic Relations With Australia

MOSCOW, April 23 (AP)—Soviet Russia tonight broke off diplomatic relations with Australia over the Vladimir Petrov case.

The Soviet government charged Australia was protecting Petrov, whom is described as a swindler and embezzler and demanded his arrest. It accused the Australian government of kidnaping Mrs. Petrov and of manhandling Soviet personnel.

Petrov, third secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Canberra, abandoned communism and obtained

asylum with the Australian government. He brought with him a batch of documents announced as exposing a Soviet-led spy ring. Mrs. Petrov also received asylum after a tumultuous incident involving Soviet agents trying to take her back to Moscow.

The break in relations came on the eve of the Geneva conference in which both Russia and Australia will participate. Moscow recalled its ambassador to Australia, Nikolai E. Generalov. It demanded that Australia recall her envoy in Moscow, and under diplomatic protocol this must be done immediately.

The Soviet demand was for "all the embassy" to be recalled. The Soviet government declared "in the present situation, it is impossible for the Australian ambassador to continue in Moscow."

Australia is represented in Moscow by a charge d'affaires, Brian Hill.

The recall was demanded in a note given Hill by a Soviet deputy foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko.

The same note asked that the Australians arrest Petrov as a swindler and embezzler. This was a request made earlier by the Russian Embassy in Canberra, and has already been rejected.

The note said Petrov had left the Australian capital, Canberra, for Sydney April 3 but did not return. The embassy, the note continued, asked the Australian Foreign Ministry on April 7 to try and find Petrov, but "in spite of repeated reminders, for almost a whole week, the ministry gave no reply."

"A careful inspection...ascertained that Petrov, by means of forgeries, appropriated a considerable amount of state funds, thereby committing a criminal act," the note said.

Olney Blasts FHA For Wrong Attitude

WASHINGTON, April 23 (AP)—The government's chief crime prosecutor said today the Federal Housing Administration—by taking the attitude that "they were just giving the stuff away"—has torpedoed any chance of prosecuting bigtime apartment housing profiteers.

But he revealed that the FBI, on orders of President Dwight D.

Eisenhower, is combing the country for bands of fast-talking home repair and improvement salesmen who have "bilked a great many thousands" of homeowners under government loan insurance programs.

Warren Olney 3d, assistant attorney general in charge of the criminal division, told the Senate Banking Committee a story of construction cost finagling that Chairman Homer Capehart (R-Ind.) called "unbelievable."

The shakeup of top FHA officials continued meanwhile with announcement that Howard M. Murphy had resigned as associate general counsel effective at once. His resignation was accepted by Acting FHA Commissioner Norman P. Mason.

Capehart, commenting on Olney's testimony that FHA apparently was willing to insure construction job financing far in excess of actual costs, said "There seems to be a pattern that they don't give a damn what it costs to build."

Capehart has estimated that builders and promoters pocketed a half billion dollars in "windfall" profits under the emergency rental housing program of 1942-50. This enabled them to keep the difference between the amount of mortgages for which they obtained government insurance and actual building costs.

Murder Orders Are Uncivilized U.S. Charges

BERLIN, April 23 (AP)—The United States brought the Nikolai E. Khokhlov case to the diplomatic level today by charging Russia with "deliberately outrageous and uncivilized conduct" in ordering the murder of a Soviet emigrant leader in Western Germany.

Acting U.S. High Commissioner Walter Dowling, the top U.S. administrator in Germany, fired off a sharp letter of protest to V. S. Semyenov, the Soviet high commissioner.

Dowling cited the cases of Khokhlov, the Soviet Secret Police captain who said he was sent into West Germany to murder a leading member of the anti-Soviet NTS organization. Instead of carrying out the mission Khokhlov turned himself over to American Intelligence authorities.

Dowling also took up the case of Dr. Alexander Truchnovich, West Berlin head of the NTS group who disappeared from his home there on April 13. Dowling asserted Truchnovich was "brutally kidnapped."

Koreans Reach Geneva

GENEVA, Switzerland, April 23 (AP)—Foreign ministers of North and South Korea arrived today for the Geneva conference to determine whether their divided nation can be unified.

The rival Korean leaders were among the first diplomats to reach here for the 19-nation parley on Korea and Indochina Monday.

NATO Asks Vigilance Against Soviet Threat

PARIS, April 23 (AP)—In a rapid one-day survey of the world situation on the eve of the Geneva conference on Korea and Indochina, the ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty organization called for maintaining vigilance and unity in the face of the Soviet threat.

Vietminh Troops Near Heart of Dien Bien Phu

HANOI, Indochina, April 23 (AP)—Red-led Vietminh—striving to launch a death thrust at Dien Bien Phu—today seized another French defense post in the bastion's crumbling northwest defenses. Rebel legions smashed to within 700 yards of the Union garrison's nerve center.

The French fought back desperately as wave after rebel wave surged forward in a furious attempt to blast a gap big enough to send thousands of Vietminh troops stabbing towards the heart of the northwest Indochina fortress.

The bastion's defense perimeter continued to shrink under the relentless pounding. The outer barriers which encompassed a plain four by six miles when the fighting began five weeks ago now measure less than a mile across.

As the see-saw battle raged, the first contingent of American airlifted French paratroops from Paris began pouring into Indochina. The first of five huge U.S. Air Force Globemasters touched down in Saigon with 220 beret-wearing jump troops who left Paris Field Wednesday. After a brief stop they pushed onto an undisclosed combat area field.

Draft Quota Announced

HARRISBURG, April 23 (AP)—State selective service headquarters today announced a June draft quota of 1107 men.

The quota represents an increase over May's call of 921 but is a sharp drop from June 1953's 2244.

LEXINGTON, Ky., April 23 (AP)—President Dwight D. Eisenhower declared today the battle for the French fortress of Dien Bien Phu in Indochina is "an agony of conflict—a testing ground between dictatorship and freedom."

Paratroopers Reach Siagon

SAIGON, Indochina, April 23 (AP)—The first American-transported French paratroopers were delivered safely at an undisclosed air base in Viet Nam today to help relieve the critical situation at Dien Bien Phu.

A C124 Globemaster with 220 French paratroopers aboard set down briefly at Saigon, then delivered its cargo in Viet Nam after a three-day flight from Paris.

Any drops of men into Dien Bien Phu itself will be made either by French pilots flying American-supplied planes, or American civilian pilots hired to fly the cargo planes used to drop men and supplies to the hard-pressed fortress in northwest Indochina.

The lead plane in the flight was met here by representatives of the staff of Gen. Henri Navarre, the French Commander-in-chief in Indochina.

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