

MIKITA KHRUSHCHEV ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON.

Fifty minutes late because of Atlantic head-winds, a Russian TU.114 jet liner slides along the tarmac at Andrews air base near Washington; but what's fifty minutes, when all the world's been waiting for months to see what would happen when the leaders of the two great power blocs met face to face?

Dwight D. Eisenhower, head of the United States, and Nikita Khrushchev, undisputed boss of the Soviet Union - but beyond that, each in practice the spokesman of millions of other human beings in many lands. The atmosphere is correct but cautious as Secretary of State ~~Barter~~ Barter greets the Russian leader; but there's curiosity, too - particularly about Mrs. Khrushchev, almost unknown to the outside world. The guests perhaps, are equally curious about their hosts.

Mr. K. looks smarter than we've been used to seeing him - wearing, so rumour has it, an Italian-tailored suit. He misses nothing - and he's going to learn a lot about Americans, as the President makes clear in his speech.-

"I most sincerely hope that as you come to see and believe these trues about our people there will develop an improved basis on which we can together consider the problems which divide us. After all our common purpose should be as always a just, universal and enduring peace. It is in this spirit Mr. Chairman that I greet you and welcome you to Washington and to the United States".

From the airfield to the White House is fifteen miles - so the President leads his guests to an open car for the official drive into the city. And an astonishing drive it proves to be. American welcomes are world-famous, and if Americans turn out at all, they turn out with plenty of noise. But not today; this will go down on record as the biggest silent reception in United States history - the "frozen mitt" on a colossal scale. The crowds are there all right - packed tight every yard of the way - but almost the only sound comes from the bands.

And yet the caution is mixed with hope. Even among those who regard him as a monster, there's a grudging respect for this irrepressible and shrewd politician who (after all) has given the Russians more freedom than Stalin ever did, and who - after all - must have no illusions about what war would mean to both East and West. So as the Khrushchevs arrive at Blair House - the official guest house near the President's own - feelings are very mixed.

Mr. K. has a tough assignment ahead; he's a born showman, and Americans appreciate a showman, even when they distrust him - but if he wants to thaw the Cold War, he's got to thaw Washington first.