

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

A late bulletin from Budapest states:

"Hungarian Foreign Ministry officials and American diplomats declare that no news can be expected tonight on the release of the four American airmen."

This creates a state of confusion, hard to explain. Yesterday the Hungarian Legation in Washington announced clearly and definitely - - that the four fliers would be set free today. Later the Red press attaché at the Legation repeated that the U. S. offer to pay the one hundred and twenty thousand dollar fine had been accepted.

But now all is clouded with uncertainty - - about when the airmen will be released. There is even some doubt that the Communist regime is accepting the payment - - the money for which is ready at the American Legation in Budapest, waiting to be collected.

Meanwhile, Congressional anger continues to

boil. Nobody likes to see his own country blackmailed in such brazen fashion. Today Senator Bridges of New Hampshire called the Communist ransom-demand an "ugly blot on the national honor." All of which is echoed angrily by American public opinion.

In the excitement over the Red blackmail, there's talk of the good old days - when our Government never yielded to extortion. Wouldn't pay - ransom, or tribute. Days of Thomas Jefferson - - and Theodore Roosevelt. "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute," as the slogan was when we crushed the Barbary pirates.

However, we do sometimes ignore a few facts about the heroic days of old - a thing pointed out by Arthur Krock in the New York Times today.

As for not paying tribute to the Barbary pirates, the history of it is this: The United States, in the early days, did submit to extortion by the buccaneer states of North Africa - - as did

the countries of Europe. Then, in the time of Jefferson, things got so bad that a U. S. naval force went into action against Tripoli - - and put an end to tribute we had been paying to that pirate state.

But we continued to pay the others, like Algiers - and in one case, had to ransom an American warship, paying sixty thousand dollars. The blackmail continued until 1815, when Commodore Stephen Decatur captured Algiers, and put a final end to American tribute paid to the Barbary pirates.

In the case of Theodore Roosevelt, an American citizen, named Perdicaris, was kidnapped, and a strong American diplomatic note did the trick. However, as I recall, the ransom was actually paid to the bandit, Raisuli. But - - by the Sultan of Morocco. He thought it cheaper to pay. The Sultan got stuck.

All of which illustrates the way we tend to give glamour to the past - - by ignoring some of the facts.

Paying off pirates and brigands is not at all uncommon. For years the British in India found it the cheapest way to keep down brigandage among the wild Mahonds, Wazirs and Afridis along the India-Afghan frontier, where I spent a part of one year. And now the government of Pakistan does the same.

Late word from Budapest. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry has asked the American Charge d'Affaires to call there Friday morning - apparently about the fliers, though this is not made clear.

AMBASSADOR

The Moscow newspapers and radio are ignoring the appointment of George F. Kennan as U.S. Ambassador to Moscow. Only yesterday they had been blasting at Kennan, who was a prime architect of the American policy of checking Red aggression. But today, not a word - after formal notice of Kennan's appointment by President Truman. The Soviet government - - not objecting.

Moscow Diplomatic Circles, however, received the news with surprise; they having been sure that the Kremlin would refuse to receive an anti-Soviet protagonist as prominent as new Ambassador Kennan.

KOREA - TRUCE

There has been one slight break in the deadlock, very slight. It came when the U.N. negotiators hinted that we might hand over the prisoners we have in return for the prisoners they have. This, in spite of the huge difference in the figures. We holding over one-hundred and thirty-two thousand. They - less than eleven-thousand and six hundred.

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On the battlefield, there was no sign that the passage of the deadline might be followed by a resumption of heavy fighting. The Reds did make a lunge on the Eastern Front, and encircled a small outpost. At last reports, a push was on to relieve the beleaguered patrol; U.N. troops pushing through heavy snow.

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Korean skies were clear for the first time in days. So the jets were out. There were two encounters, but little damage was done. One Mig-15 shot down - - to add to the total of enemy jets destroyed.

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(The truce teams met again at Pan Mun Jon today - - and ignored the end of the thirty-day period assigned for an armistice agreement.) The deadline was for last midnight, but the negotiators went right on, as if there had never been any deadline.

In fact, there was only one mention of the deadline - - when the chief delegate of the Reds blamed the U.N. truce team for the failure to reach an agreement in a month. The Communist was bitter about it, and American Admiral Libby snapped back just as sharply - - saying the failure was because of Red stalling.

Peking Radio has just broadcast a Communist threat that the peace talks will be broken off if the U.N. negotiators continue to insist that no Red airfields may be built or repaired during an armistice. The Chinese Radio accused our negotiators of pressing "fantastic demands for interference in our Internal Affairs." Then added, "we are well

aware that you are afraid of our growing air power."

Meanwhile, the Truce Teams have just started meeting again at Pan Man Jon.

STEEL

The steel strike is off. Today the policy makers of the union complied with President Truman's request to keep steel production going - - and cancelled the walkout scheduled for New Year's day.

The strike is delayed at least until a special union convention meets at Atlantic City on January Third - - to give its decision. The belief is, however, that the convention is virtually certain to agree - - that any walkout shall be put off while the dispute is before the Wage Stabilization Board, the group which will make a recommendation after a careful study.

Today's decision by the policy committee urged the six-hundred and fifty-thousand steel workers to go on with - - full production.

STASSEN

Harold Stassen is in the race for the Republican nomination. This was made formal today, when the President of the University of Pennsylvania set forth a platform on which he will campaign.)

He proposes what he calls - - "a modern gold standard" for currency in the U.S.A. Cuts in income taxes - and the ousting of two-hundred thousand government loafers. That's what Stassen calls needless Federal employees. He wants tax incentives to encourage corporations to share profits with their employees; and - - a dynamic foreign policy to defeat communism without a world war!

Stassen declares that he seeks the GOP nomination for President on his own, but Washington thinks that, in a possible convention deadlock, he would throw support in favor of General Eisenhower.

Stassen makes it clear that he will not back Senator Taft of Ohio - - who has a head start in the quest of the nomination.

First applause for Harold Stassen's bid for

the presidency comes from - Governor Earl Warren of California. Warren, who is in the race himself called Stassen "a fine American" - and then he added: "His candidacy will be an important factor in the Republican Convention."

Meanwhile, the University of Pennsylvania has granted Stassen leave of absence, which is to be "continued or terminated at the pleasure of the Board" and will be without salary.

KEFAUVER

Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee is considering a bid for the Democratic nomination in 1952. This was definitely disclosed by the Senator from Tennessee at Cambridge, Massachusetts, today. Kefauver told newsmen at Harvard that he was "appraising the situation and would make an announcement fairly early in the New Year." As he put it: "I am not running, but I am not running away from the opportunity of running."

MOON

In Chicago, the American Astronomical Society is holding a meeting, where there are to be many new disclosures about the wonders in the sky. These began today with the Man in the Moon. Professor Harold Urey, Nobel prize winner and prominent in the development of the atomic bomb, says his features - the Man in the Moon's - were carved about a billion years ago - - when fragments of an exploded planet hit the moon. The blasts created so much heat that lakes of liquid lava were formed. These, now turned solid, are the dark patches we see on the moon, distributed in such fashion as to look like a funny caricature of the human face - - the Man in the Moon.

They were studied first by Galileo, the first human being to look at the sky through a telescope. He thought the dark areas were bodies of water; and for this reason they are still called "seas". But later indications were that there was no water at all on the moon - - which left the dark spaces a puzzle.

They have peculiarities which, according to Dr. Urey, can only be explained by the theory that the moon was hit by fragments of an exploded planet a billion years or so ago.



EARTH

Today, brings forward some new and wonderful pictures of possible things to come. One - - great mountains and canyons rising out of the ocean. So declared Dr. Kenneth Landes of the University of Michigan in addressing the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Philadelphia.

This earth is shrinking, says the professor. Our globe is becoming smaller - - so indicated by the latest investigations. This, thinks Dr. Landes, is because the interior is cooling off - - a liquid core turning solid. As we all know, when a spherical object starts to shrink, that causes wrinkles. An apple dries out and shrinks, the skin gets crinkly. In the case of this earth, the wrinkles would be mountains in some places, chasm in others. The shallow parts of the ocean would be pushed up, the deeper parts sinking lower. Sections of the ocean floor would rise above the water level in the shape of mountains and canyons.

But don't get excited. Don't get ready to

go skiing down those new mountains! Stay where you are at Sun Valley or Squaw Valley or Mt. Hood. The new mountain ranges the University of Michigan professor talks about won't emerge from the sea for a million years or so.

GIRL

Down in Brazil the merry Christmas is over for Maria Costa - - who had a bright idea for celebrating the Yuletide in a big way. Maria is a girl in a Brazilian city - attractive, with a pretty face and good figure. She was short of money for Christmas, and had the brilliant idea - of raffling herself off. This turned out to be a financial success. Maria sold chances on herself, and found plenty of customers, the raffle bringing in seven-hundred and fifty dollars - plenty of Christmas money in a small Brazilian town. But today - retribution arrived.

In a raffle, somebody has to win the prize - - and, in this case, a watchman at a Bahia factory had the lucky number. He came to collect - - to collect Maria. She didn't like his looks, and rejected him - - saying "no," which is okay in ordinary courtship, but not in a raffle.

The disappointed winner felt he had been cheated - - and who could blame him? He went to

the police and today the Brazilian cops grabbed Maria. The result - - a compromise. The night-watchman does not collect the prize, but he gets all that Maria has left of the \$750. from the raffle. She spent \$500. and the night-watchman gets the remaining \$250.

The echo would seem to be a variation of an old theme; Nelson - - lucky in raffle, unlucky in love.