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GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

The New Year brought terror to the tiny West Indian islands of St. Kitts and Nevis. Word just in from Trinidad tells of violent earthquakes in the Leewards. On New Year's Eve thirty-six shocks, plus a dozen more New Year's Day.

Among the many buildings destroyed is St. John's parish church in Nevis. The church where the legendary Admiral Nelson was married to Frances Nisbet in Seventeen Eighty-one.

In those days Nelson commanded the Frigate "Boreas" in the West Indies. The great Admiral -- then only a captain -- first gained the favor of his wife, so we are told, by being found romping on all fours under the drawing-room table with her little boy. Lady Nelson was a widow who had lived in the Leeward Islands with her husband who was a doctor.

Although the islands are tonight described as

"a shambles" with only a few reinforced buildings undamaged, there is no word of the casualties among the forty-five thousand islanders.

Here's further word; from Puerto Rico this time.

More earthquake shocks reported today in St. Kitts and Nevis -- with each one bringing down more and more buildings. A U.S. Naval salvage vessel is at St. Kitts, tonight with badly needed tents, clothing and medical supplies - sent from Puerto Rico.

SUB FOR BOTH KOREA AND KOREA REFUGEES

(In Korea tonight two major enemy drives are converging on the South Korean capital of Seoul - from the north and northwest. In Tokyo a high-ranking American officer said that this new all-out offensive by the Reds may be the start of the fight for Seoul itself.) A dispatch from the front line says that the enemy troops may try to capture the city before nightfall tonight. It's mid-day in Korea now. At last word the offensive from the northwest had smashed through Koyang, to within eight miles of Seoul.

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Army line, near the east coast, another battle is raging. There three North Korean divisions have launched "large scale attacks" -- and breached the U N line in one place. At Eighth Army headquarters a spokesman described this east coast situation as "confused" -- serious but not critical. But a U.P. correspondent - now sends words that the enemy have penetrated our lines at six places.

(South Korean President Singman Rhee and his cabinet have decided to evacuate their capital,) but only after four cabinet meetings yesterday. Where they will go next we haven't heard.

Below Seoul more than ten million refugees are said to be trudging southward - spreading misery across the country. The Han River bridges, on the escape road south, were swamped again yesterday with more than eighty thousand refugees. Today still more are fleeing the threatened city - jamming all the roads.

So crowded are the bridges that many must take to the ice to cross the frozen rivers. The population of Seoul, once two million, yesterday less than five hundred thousand, is today dwindling still further.

Brigadier Tom Brodie commanding a British brigade in his order of the day today said "I have so instructed that this brigade group will not retire before its enemy, except on my orders. If you meet him, you are to knock Hell out of him with everything you've got."

WALKER FUNERAL

In Washington this afternoon, the Eighth Army's late commander, Walton Walker was buried at Arlington, as a five-star general. Among those at the grave to do him honor were his old friends Generals Marshall and Eisenhower.

In Congress today Representative Edith Rogers of Massachusetts, introduced a bill to promote General Walker's war-time commander -- the late General George Patton, to the rank of five-star General.

MOSCOW NOTE

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Today brought the text of the Moscow reply to the invitation extended by London, Paris and Washington. The answer is - yes. But that doesn't mean too much, considering the kind of invitation it was. The Soviets were asked to discuss the possibility of a four-power conference - taking up various matters of international peril, like the Korean war. So now Moscow is willing to talk about the possibility.

The main question is - the agenda, a list of topics. The Soviets themselves proposed a Big Four conference -- but on Germany. And the Moscow note, as published today, concentrates on Germany - bitterly assailing the plans of the western powers for ~~re~~ rearmament of the West Germans.

However, the communication does okay the notion of discussing other problems - like Korea. The verbiage is vague, speaking of "various questions."

And - "all problems which have to be discussed."

This is likely to lead to some wrangling between the western powers - France being particularly keen about a four power conference. The French, ~~are~~ not over-eager ~~an~~ in the business of rearming western Germany, ~~and~~ are badly worried about the danger of a third World War. *They don't want Mare to run over La Belle France again.*

All of which is confused by two dispatches on the wire today: One, from Paris - announcing that French Premier Plevén will fly to Washington during the next two weeks for talks with President Truman.

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But here's dispatch number two - from Washington. It reads: "The State Department knows nothing about a possible visit from French Premier Rene Plevén." A spokesman says: "There have been no discussions between ourselves and France about the possibility of Premier Plevén coming over soon. We

just don't know anything about it."

Quite a contradiction ^{that.} - ~~and we don't~~

~~know the answer~~

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The latest from Washington is not optimistic about the possibility of a conference of the Big Four, with a discussion broad enough to do anything with problems like the Korean war.

CHINA

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News from China states that the Red Government has issued an edict, which certainly would mean - a revolution of revolutions in that Far Eastern land. Moreso, in a way - than Communism itself. The regime at Peking has ordered the abolition of all secret societies. The proclamation was printed today, in the Red official newspaper, which states that action began with the raid on the "established faith society." One hundred and twenty people arrested - on a charge of anti-Communist agitation. Which gives the clue to the whole thing - the secret societies constituting a sort of anti-Communist underground.

They ~~are~~ patriots, nationalist^{s, who} ~~and~~ worked against the Japanese invaders a few years ago. One group is - the Red Spears. Another "the long hairs".

Groups now opposing
~~Now turning against~~ Communism.

Well, China has always been the great land
of secret societies. ^{- Tonga.} Virtually every Chinese belongs
to one or more. Some of them are ^{like} ~~also~~ guilds. In
China, even a labor union or a Chamber of Commerce
turns into a secret society. Some are religious, some
political - while others are both. They pervade every
angle of Chinese life.

This afternoon, I had a talk with a British
journalist, who worked on China coast newspapers. He
told me how, when you live there, you have ^{an all-} pervasive
feeling of - secret societies. As a European or an
American, you learn little that's definite about
them, but you know they ~~are~~ all around you. You know
that your cook or houseboy is a member. In the
newspapers you read occasionally about the murder of
a coolie or a Chinese merchant - ^{invariably} and there's mention
of a secret society. But it's all like a dim, shadowy

thing - hidden, pervasive, secret.

Here in our own
~~everything~~ country, we've all ~~xx~~ heard
the about ^{secret} societies in ~~every~~ ^{every} American Chinatown,
the Tongs. In New York, the On Leong Tong and the
For years
Hip Sing Tong [^] fought ferocious hatchet wars. We know
that the boxer rebellion was launched in China by a
political secret outfit - the Order of the Righteous
Fists.

But you must live in China to feel the
importance of the secret societies. ~~There's~~ **Something**
in the national temperament which makes the Chinese
that way. The British *Old China Hand* ~~Journalist~~ [^] I talked with today
expressed it by remarking: "Put two Chinese together
and you have a secret society."

It makes you wonder - can the Communists
possibly wipe out a thing so deep in the national
character? It would be as great a revolution as

Communism itself. All a sign how, in China, the Reds have to contend with ancient institutions - the patriarchial family, the clan, the village elders, the secret society.

For an example of all this, let's look at the Triad. The Encyclopedia Britannica describes the Triad as the largest secret society in the world -- more members than any other. Fifteen hundred years old - founded in the Fourth Century A.D., as a Buddhist group. Then it combined with China's ^{Taoist} Taoist philosophy, strange mystery and magic -- and to this day ^{it} has an occult ritual, with ceremonies resembling the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," and The Tibetan "Book of the Dead."

But the Triad is also ~~xxx~~ political, six hundred years ago it played a prominent part in the overthrow of the Mongol dynasty - the imperial family descended from the great Kubla Khan.

Just a century ago, this year the Triad took the lead in launching the Taiping Rebellion - which vast revolt nearly overthrew the dynasty of the Manchus. The Triad opposed the Manchus all along the line, until they were finally overthrown and the Chinese Republic established.

In all these revolutionary doings the secret societies played a prominent part. Now in action against the Red dictatorship - and today the suppression of them all was ordered. *I wonder can they be suppressed?*

COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

Pakistan may not attend this week's important Commonwealth conference in London. That is the word from London where all Prime Ministers except Ali Khan, from Pakistan, have already arrived. It was announced today that all arrangements for the Pakistan Prime Minister's arrival have been cancelled. The Prime Minister from Karachi will not attend the conference unless the question of Pakistan's dispute with India, about Kashmir, is discussed. A British spokesman announced today that so far there is no agenda for the meetings which will go ahead whether Pakistan is there or not.

FREIGHTER

There's one item of good news out of Tokyo tonight at any rate. Word just in that the entire crew of the Greek freighter "Kostis Lemos" is safe. The Greek ship ran aground and broke in two, in the Philippines on New Year's Eve. Today's rescue was made by a Japanese merchantman, bound for Singapore, which took the stranded men from rocks where they had been clinging for three days.

BUS

In a blinding snowstorm in Scotland today, a bus skidded off the road came to a halt - nobody hurt. Quickly the conductress helped the fourteen passengers from their seats and shepherded them back on the road. Not until everyone was safe, did she tell her passengers that two of the wheels of the bus ^{actually} were out in space - two-hundred-and-fifty ~~mm~~ feet above the sea -- that the bus was swaying in the wind on the edge of a cliff.

CONGRESS

Here's the latest -- the Democrats have just elected a leader in the Senate. Senator McFarland of Arizona, a moderate who stands between the radical and conservative wings of the party. Backed solidly by the Southern Democrats McFarland defeated O'Mahoney of Wyoming for the post of Senate Democratic leader.

The Eighty-First Congress ended its existence this afternoon, with a rush of business, and a rush of oratory. Bills were passed in a hurry - including - the twenty billion dollar appropriation for national armament and the measure putting up three billion, one hundred million for a civil defense program. Also, a bill to give the President the power to rewrite defense contracts.

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The oratory was the kind you'll hear on the last day of any lame duck session - tributes paid to department Senators and Congressmen who failed to be re-elected. This year, the Lame Duck list is particularly

impressive - after the Republican successes in the fall election. So this afternoon the oratory really flowed.

I say without fear of contradiction!

What do you say, Nelson?