

L.T. - SUNOCO. TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1941.

GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY:

At this moment in the Eastern Mediterranean - it's about midnight. This we know for sure, and there's one other thing - almost as certain. In the black of night on the Island of Crete, men are dropping out of the sky - floating down. Nazi parachute troops are landing. Likewise, huge transport planes are coming to earth - disgorging swarms of blitzkrieg soldiers. And, strangest of all - gliders. Wings without motors, swooping down silently out of the sky. Huge gliders towed by warplanes, until they're near enough to ~~come coasting down~~ <sup>in, TP</sup> <sub>1</sub>. This melodrama of the sky will be at its most intense at about the break of dawn, when the uncertain light makes it difficult for defending flying forces to spot enemy units of the air, but when the first glimmer of morning facilitates the landing of parachute soldiers, troop-carrying planes - and gliders.

We know that this is occurring tonight, because it happened last night. And London tells us that the Nazi air-invaders are holding onto ground they seized -- and are certain to be reenforced by a similar troop movement through the air tonight.

The air invasion of the Island of Crete is perhaps the most startling and theatrical stunt of the present war. An invasion entirely by air, the first in history. Parachute soldiers and troop carrying transports have been used before -- but, in conjunction with operations by ground forces, part of a combination ~~with~~ of land and air. This time it's all air. And, moreover, the Nazis are using gliders -- a complete innovation. It's novelty plus -- something for the imagination of fictioneers who concoct fantasies of invasion from Mars.

Crete is vitally important, because of the development of Nazi plans in Iraq, Syria, Turkey -- a campaign against the Suez Canal. Crete lies athwart the lines of communication the Germans would use in the Near East. Hence, the British must hold it.

Only recently, Prime Minister Churchill declared that Crete would be defended to the end. Strongly garrisoned with troops -- and guarded by the British fleet. Crete is seventy miles from the German occupied mainland of Greece

*And only*  
~~It's~~

fifty miles from the Dodecanese Islands, held by Italy.

And neither the Nazis nor the Fascists have anything that can move across those waters in the teeth of the mighty sea squadrons of Britain. So now what has happened? The German command has resorted entirely to the sky route - an all-air invasion!

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

*and portents*

Signs developed recently. British air reconnaissance

spotted concentrations of large Nazi planes at airports <sup>on</sup> of the Greek mainland - numbers of troop-carrying aircraft.

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Apparently, the British didn't realize what the ~~sign~~ design was. At the same time, Nazi bombers delivered a series of heavy air attacks on Crete. These have been going on for the past few days, and now it is revealed that some serious damage was done. The powerful bomb attacks, it is now clear, were in preparation for the sky invasion <sup>^</sup> designed to cover the landing

from above. But the British, it would seem, <sup>^</sup> ~~did not realize this~~ *knew nothing* <sup>^</sup> *of what was coming.*

From the London and Cairo bulletins, <sup>^</sup> one may gather that last night's all-air attempt against Crete was a surprise.

Crete is a long, narrow strip of land, and the Nazi sky forces came down at the western end. They immediately launched a heavy attack. It isn't clear how numerous they are. Prime Minister Churchill in the <sup>of Commons</sup> House today numbered them at fifteen hundred, but other London advices indicate that there's a full Nazi division in Crete - twelve thousand men. Prime Minister Churchill, himself, described the invading units as formidable. Here are his words to the Commons:- "An air borne attack of great strength was begun this morning, ~~"said he,"~~ and what cannot fail to be a serious battle has begun and is developing," <sup>said he,</sup>

There's one grim detail in the London story of this newest military ~~xxxxxx~~ prodigy. It is stated that Nazi troops landing in Crete wore New Zealand uniforms. London says they were uniforms taken from New Zealanders captured during the campaign in Greece. And the implication is that such Nazi troops, if made prisoner, would be liable to be shot. Because it's one of the oldest and sternest laws of war that an enemy soldier not wearing the uniform of his country is liable to execution as a spy. The British would be following a long accepted custom,

if they were to shoot every Nazi they might catch in the garb of a New Zealander. *Berlin denies the uniform part of it.*

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The latest is that the Nazi attack was beaten back at several points. Cairo tells of German detachments being quickly rounded up. Severe fighting went on throughout the day, and when night came at least one strong Nazi force was maintaining itself. And London stated the German command would do everything to reenforce its men tonight - another military advance through the darkness; by parachute, transport plane and glider. Weird indeed - only an invasion from Mars could be stranger!

One of the most startling angles of ~~this~~ ~~startling~~ story is that the British regard the air invasion of Crete as a dress rehearsal for a possible similar attempt at that other island - Britain. They think the blitzkrieg commanders seek not only to capture the strategic stronghold of the Aegean, ~~Sea~~, but also to try out the effectiveness of new sky tactics that they have developed. If the all-air system of landing should work, ~~out~~ ~~all right~~, they would apply it to their supreme objective - the British homeland. This view multiplies infinitely the

significance of the attack on Crete, and will cause the world to watch the issue with redoubled interest. Dress rehearsal for an invasion of Britain -- how will it turn out?

The British Commander is a general from New Zealand -- and he adds a final touch to the singular drama of war. Two weeks ago tonight, I spoke about - Freyberg, V.C., told some things about him. The occasion was not important -- the news was merely that Brigadier-General B.C. Freyberg, V.C. of New Zealand had been named Commander of the Allied Forces in Crete. I dwelt on this, because of the extraordinary personality of the man. Decorated with all the military medals; - the Victoria Cross at the top of the list. Hero of incredible hair-breathless adventure - like swimming from a World War troop transport to one of those murderous beaches at Gallipoli; lighting calcium flares to draw the fire of the defending Turks, while the main force of Anzacs landed elsewhere. Wounded on the Western Front, escaping from hospital to get back into action. Youngest general in the World War, and going over the top with a party of volunteers at the our the Armistice was signed - to have one last go at the enemy. Wounded a score of times, minus an arm. And he tried to swim the English Channel. Also in

peace time, commander of the crack Grenadier Guards at the Royal Palace in London. And now, this same incredible Freyberg, V.C is the general directing the defense of Crete as invasion comes out of the darkness of the sky.

Singular events on a fabled island -- most ancient in renown. Even to the classic Greeks of Sophocles and Plato, Crete was a place of bygone wonder and awe -- the legend of King Minos and his terrifying labyrinth and the monster bull, the Minator. And Crete is equally remarkable to the science of this modern day with ruins and relics of a civilization immensely old, excavated by archeologists. They've brought to the light of day, the forgotten metropolis of Knossos, destroyed in flames by enemy warriors way back in the dam dawn of things -- back in the age of bronze. And now -- tongith, the realm of King Minos is attacked by parachute and glider!

FRANCE

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Affairs seem to be developing ominously in Syria. The French authorities there today virtually expelled the British diplomatic representatives. French High Commissioner Dentz informed the British Consul-General that his mission was ended and asked him to leave Syria. This is said to be in retaliation for the British bombing of Nazi warplanes at Syrian airdromes. The German aircraft were ~~in~~ on their way to wage war against the British in Iraq - where <sup>a</sup>~~the~~ new British offensive against Baghdad is now in progress.

The French attitude toward matters in Syria was stated today by the French Ambassador to the United States. He declared that Nazi warplanes have a perfect right to use Syrian air bases - this under the terms of the Armistice between Germany and France. The Ambassador declared that the Armistice conditions give the Nazis and Fascists the full right to use all French air bases. ~~He added that they have not availed themselves of this right in the case of Dakar - although the Nazis and Fascists could have the aviation facilities of that East African port - if they so desired.~~ The Ambassador made these statements following a conference with



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Secretary of State Cordell Hull. His ~~CONFERENCE~~ conversation with the Secretary had a pertinent bearing upon the question of French possessions in this hemisphere. There have been plenty of suggestions that the United States should take over such French islands as Martinique - and even West African Dakar. The proposal has been made and repeated in the Senate. Today the Ambassador from France told our Secretary of State that France will resist if anybody makes any attempt to take over any French colony anywhere.

ROOSEVELT

The White House press conference today was quite an event -- largely because of what it was expected to be. It was not called at the usual time -- which is afternoon. The President advanced the hour, and called the press this morning. That raised the instant surmise that something special was afoot -- that the President would announce something of headline importance in the international situation.

But no -- the only foreign topic was a presidential announcement of food ships to Ireland. Two ships under the Irish flag will take food to the Emerald Isle -- half a million dollars' worth provided by the Red Cross. And more supplies are expected to go later -

but no war materials. Ireland wants to procure armament from this country for its defense, but the White House attitude is that war materials under the Lend-Lease Act will be provided only to such democracies as are actually fighting.

The main thing at the press conference was a domestic matter - and important it is. The President announced the creation of the Office of Civilian Defense. That's to be a mobilization of civilians along the line of a similar thing in war-time Britain. Civilians all over this nation to be recruited for various kinds of service - if war should come. Air raid warning, work in connection with air raid shelters, fire fighting in case of incendiary attack, quieting of panic, the handling of evacuations, guard against looting, protection of important points, and a lot of similar activities. The President stated that the Office of Civilian Defense will make a special effort to enlist men who are not called by conscription - the Selective Service officials have been asked to draw up lists. Women also will be <sup>urged</sup> asked to take an active part in the civil defense program.

Who is to be the head of the new O.C.D.? The rumor has

been - Mayor LaGuardia of New York. And that's right. The President today appointed LaGuardia, who, however, will continue to hold his job as Mayor of America's greatest city and also his post in the Canadian-American defense program. President Roosevelt was asked whether LaGuardia, as Director of the O.C.D., would have anything like the rank of a cabinet member? The President dismissed the query as unimportant.

Later in the day, President Roosevelt took his first action for economy in government expenses <sup>not</sup> connected with the defense program. Some while ago, <sup>the</sup> Secretary of the Treasury ~~Morgenthau~~ suggested that non-defense expenditures could be cut to the tune of a billion dollars. And today the President suggested the first cut. In a special message to Congress, he proposed that relief money be reduced. The original budget figure for relief was nine hundred and ninety-five million dollars. The President now asks Congress to cut the appropriation to eight hundred and sixty-six million ~~dollars~~. ~~That means a~~ slash of a hundred and nine million. Non-defense economy.

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ZAMZAM

The State Department sent a prompt cable to Berlin today -- asking about the Zamzam. What about the sinking of the Egyptian liner? And where are the passengers and crew? Of the three hundred and twenty-three persons aboard, including one hundred and forty-two Americans. So Uncle Sam is particularly interested to know the full facts of the drama of the sea.

Berlin today announced the sinking of the Zamzam by a Nazi raider and stated that all aboard were saved -- passengers and crew. But beyond that the Berlin spokesman would give few details. He declared that the sinking was in accordance with International Law, because the ship under the flag of non-belligerent Egypt was carrying contraband. Word in this country is that the Zamzam had aboard a non-military cargo -- no munitions. Nowadays, however, nearly everything is considered contraband.

The Berlin spokesman would not say just where the sinking of the Zamzam occurred -- though we know that the ship, on its way from the United States to Egypt, had left a Brazilian port and was steaming across the South Atlantic to round the Cape of Good Hope. So the Zamzam was sunk somewhere between Brazil and the Cape. The survivors were taken to a German controlled port.

Berlin won't say what kind of raider figured in the affair. But obviously it wasn't a submarine. That much was admitted by the Nazi spokesman, who remarked that anybody would know a submarine could not take aboard three hundred and twenty-three persons. So it was a surface raider, a converted merchant ship or an armored warship. Probably the latter. One supposition is that the warship may have been a cruiser putting out of the French African port of Dakar. There have been rumors about the French letting the Nazis use Dakar.

For the people aboard the Zamzam, the adventure of a lifetime. Most of the American passengers were missionaries bound for Africa. And fancy their sensations -- a Nazi raider sinking their ship and taking them for a dash through waters that are the traditional realm of the British fleet. What an account they'll give of that to their families when they get home -- those families cast into despair when the story came that the Zamzam had been sunk. And now -- the sigh of relief.

And now, Hugh.