

L.T. - BUICK, FISHER. THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 1965

(Richard C. Hottelet substituting, LT in Africa)

AID: President Johnson today proposed a rock-bottom foreign aid program that would cost less than three-point - four billion dollars for nineteen sixty-five. The barebones plan he presented to Congress was the lowest ever in the eighteen-year existence of the U.S. foreign aid program. Mr. Johnson himself called it "the lowest aid budget consistent with the national interest".

However, the President also asked for special standby power to step-up aid to South Viet Nam -- as needed. If approved, the proposal thus would give Mr. Johnson a virtual blank check with which to combat the Communists in that embattled Southeast Asian country.

One nation conspicuous by its absence from the proposed program was Nationalist China. Mr. Johnson explained that the Taiwan government no longer needs U.S. assistance. He said Nationalist China's economic resurgence is a striking example of "determined self-help -- supplemented by effective U.S. aid".

FORD

There was a sharp rebuff today for ^{Gerald}~~General~~ Ford, newly-elected House minority leader.

Ford defeated Charles Halleck of Indiana for the House leadership post last week, then immediately launched a move to unseat veteran House whip Leslie Arends of Illinois - a Halleck man. As part of his youth movement, Ford hand-picked forty-nine-year-old Peter Frelinghuysen of New Jersey to run against the sixty-nine-year-old Arends.

But in the House Republican caucus today, Arends came up a winner. He was re-elected, seventy ~~thirty~~ to fifty-nine, to the job he has held for the last twenty-one years. Later, Ford told newsmen that the vote "will be interpreted by some" as a setback to his leadership. And he admitted that to a degree - they're right.

Be that as it may, the mood among Congressional Democrats is one of growing optimism, and it was further reflected today by Senate Democratic Whip Russell B. Long.

Sen. Long was one of the final speakers at the four-day Washington Conference of some eight hundred of the nation's top labor leaders. He told the union men he thought at first it would take four years to get the President's "Great Society" program through Congress. But after talking to Mr. Johnson, he said, "I got the idea we ought to vote on it all/this year". He added, however, that after thinking it over, he now thinks Congress will enact the bulk of the President's program - by July first.

In the course of his remarks, Long also revealed his own formula for getting along with Mr. Johnson. Said Long: "Tell him yes, tell him no, but don't tell him maybe".

Lowell Thomas - in Damascus, Syria tells us about the city's ancient history and how it looks today.....

Lowell

...the world's oldest city. Its origin buried some-
where far back before the dawn of history. Damascus -
founded by Hiram King of Tyre. Sacked by many states
of course including the Romans. Damascus so important
in the story of St. Paul. Then there was the Arab
occupation. That was followed by a wave of Mongols under
Hulagu Khan. Later taken by the Ottoman Turks and held
by the Turks until liberated by Allied's cavalry.
Sacked by Lawrence of Arabia and Prince Faisal of
Mecca, and the Bedouin of the desert in November 1918.
Ah, but you should see what is happening in Damascus
today. It's going modern. Damascus with a suburban
sprawl. The Syrian city of nearly a half a million people
is now so overcrowded that a new Damascus has sprung
up almost overnight - four miles out in the desert. The
new suburb has all the conveniences you will find in our
country. Antennae, functional buildings of glass and aluminum,
parking lots, swimming pools, and all the conveniences of modern
living. Prices are high - but not too high. A loaf of bread
is about 10 cents. A chicken is about 20 cents. A pound of
meat is about 30 cents. By Syrian standards that's a King's
feast.

DAMASCUS

HELLO EVERYBODY:

My dateline today is Damascus and what memories that name recalls. Damascus - capital of Syria. Oldest city in the world still standing. Its origin buried somewhere far back before the dawn of history. Damascus - sacked by Alexander the Great. Sacked by many others of course, including the Romans. Damascus so important in the story of St. Paul. Then there was the Arab occupation. That was followed by a wave of Mongols under Hulagu Khan. Later taken by the Ottoman Turks and held by the Turks until liberated by Allenby's cavalry. Assisted by Lawrence of Arabia and Prince Feisal of Mecca, and the Bedouin of the desert in Nineteen Eighteen. Ah, but you should see what is happening to Damascus today. It's going modern. Damascus with a suburban sprawl. The Syrian city of nearly a half a million people is now so overcrowded ^{that} ~~with~~ a new Damascus has sprung up almost over night - four miles out in the desert. The new suburb much like any new suburb in our own country. Antiseptic, functional buildings of glass and aluminum, sprouting jungles of television antennas, with too many people and too few shops. Prices soaring - land values up to six thousand dollars per lot, in the suburbs of ancient Damascus. By Syrian standards that's a King's

*ransom. If Lawrence of Arabia could only see Damascus
now I wonder what his reaction would be?*

Solong.....

IRISH

North and South met today in Ireland for the first time since nineteen-twenty.

At Belfast, in Northern Ireland, Prime Minister ^{TERENCE} O'Neill presided at a luncheon in honor of Prime Minister Sean LeMass of the Irish Republic.

Later, the two men issued a joint statement.

Their talks, they said, "did not touch on Constitutional" or "political questions". Rather, they agreed to meet again at a future date at Dublin/- capital of the Irish Republic there "to explore further what special measures may be desirable by way of practical consultation and co-operation".

That news -
as LT

MALAYSIA

The British today disclosed plans to test the combat readiness of Malaysia's military forces in joint Commonwealth war games beginning Saturday. The so-called "Operation Iron Gate" will place its heaviest burden on the air defenses of Singapore - that city considered a prime target for possible attack by Soviet-equipped planes of the Indonesian Air Force.

A massive force of British planes, ships and troops, assigned to Malaysia in the last two weeks, will play a leading role in the military maneuvers. That's Great Britain's latest answer - to Indonesia's latest threat - in the turbulent Far East.

~~the Government of Malaysia.~~

WEATHER

U.S. weather today ranged from the ridiculous -- or at least strenuous -- to the near-sublime.

Heavy snow squalls swept off Lake Erie to dump up to a foot of snow on Northern Ohio, Eastern Pennsylvania, and upstate New York. In ice-capped Minnesota -- at Duluth -- the mercury dropped to a record thirty-four degrees below zero. At Hibbing, Minnesota, it was even colder -- forty-two below.

By contrast, Southern California basked in sunny eighty-degree weather, and the surfers swarmed to the beaches.

The weather story tonight thus one of snow boots -- and bikinis.

That's news -- as LT would say -- Solong ~~xi~~ until tomorrow.

VIET NAM

Meanwhile, in Saigon, a U.S. embassy spokesman today predicted speedy resumption of long-delayed talks on a new American aid package for South Viet Nam. U.S. Ambassador Maxwell Taylor was said to be fully satisfied with the new plan for restoration of civilian rule, devised by insurgent Vietnamese generals at the insistence of the U.S. That plan would replace the old Vietnamese legislature with a bigger, more representative "national convention" which the generals now claim they wanted all along.

Nevertheless, the Port City of Da Nang, in the northernmost section of South Viet Nam, was the scene today of another Buddhist-inspired anti-government demonstration. A band of more than a thousand demonstrators marched on the Mayor's residence, but fled when a battalion of government Rangers was sent to head them off.