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L.T. - GM - BROADCAST

January 11, 1955

(Charles Collingwood substituting)

C.C.: GOOD EVENING EVERYBODY!

COSTA_RICA

The President of Costa Rica, Jose Figueres, is appealing to the O.A.S., the Organization of the American States, to do something about the invasion of his country. The invaders crossed the border from Nicaragua and seized the communication center of Villa Quesada. President Figueres declares that the invaders are building a landing field at Villa Quesada as a base for their big push on the capital city of Costa Rica, San Jose. He says he's raising troops to defend the capital, but at the same time he hopes that the O.A.S. will do something to check the invasion. The Organization of American States has called an

extraordinary meeting of foreign ministers to consider the situation. The U.S. State Department is keeping hands off, on the grounds that the situation in Costa Rica is a matter for the O.A.S., but naturally, our government is following developments closely.

HAMMARSKJOLD

At United Nations headquarters diplomats are saying that the Secretary-General has not failed. The reference being, of course, to Dag Hammarskjold's journey to Peiping, and the negative reports that are going the rounds. Those reports declare that he did not win freedom for the eleven American airmen. But the UN diplomats believe that the Secretary-General is bringing back a counter-proposal from Chou-en-lai possibly dealing with an exchange of Chinese students in this country for the Americans in Red China. In

other words, they do not believe that Red China turned him down altogether. Hammarskjold himself spoke to newsmen in Hong Kong, but he pointed out that he could say nothing about his trip until he reports to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

POST OFFICE

President Eisenhower wants the employees of the Post Office to get a raise in pay. The President made his recommendation in a couple of messages to Congress. The plan calls for a basic five per cent increase for half a million government workers plus a new graduated salary scale. If Congress says ok, the change will cost the government close to four hundred million dollars a year. Where's the money coming from? Well, Mr. Eisenhower is also proposing

an increase in the postal rates that would cover more than half of that, the rest would have to come from some other source.

KNOWLAND

Inter-party harmony in Washington was disrupted today when Senator Knowland, of California, accused the Democratic National Committee of trying to affect legislation. The California Republican added that what he termed "other outside organizations" might try to influence the Democrats in the Senate. Senator Lyndon Johnson of Texas promptly came to the defense of his party. The Texas Democrat said "I think it would be more appropriate for Senator Knowland to get his own house in order first, before worrying about ours." The exchange between Knowland and Johnson was the first real party quarrel to develop in this session of Congress.

VERDINE

The Russians say they're going to release Private Willian Verdine of Starks, Louisiana, who's been their prisoner for nearly six years. No reason is given for the move. The Kremlin simply informed our ambassador to Moscow that Private Verdine will be turned over to the American authorities in Berlin. Verdine is the last American citizen known to be held by the Russians except for some individuals who are considered Russian citizens by the Soviet government.

SLAVE LABOR

A revolt might begin at any moment in the notorious Russian labor camp of Vorkuta, outside . . . or inside, rather, the Arctic Circle, so says John

Noble of Detroit who's just returned after more than nine years as a prisoner of the Soviets. He was released the other day. According to Noble, the Russians have had a lot of trouble with Vorkuta. He says that following the fall of Beria, a hundred thousand prisoners in the camp revolted. It took special troops to put down the rising. Noble describes Vorkuta as still seething with unrest, and that's why he thinks there might be an explosion there at any time.

FORMOSA

A dispatch from Taipeh, Formosa, indicates that the air war between the Nationalist Chinese and the Reds is increasing in fury. Yesterday we reported that planes flew from Red bases to blast Tachen Island. Today, Chiang-Kai-shek struck back by sending

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a fleet of four-engined bombers to raid Communist-held islands near Tachen. The Nationalists called the attack successful, add that all their planes returned safely to their bases on Formosa.

Now the last we heard from Lowell Thomas - he was deep in the blistering desert of south Arabia. Tonight, his recorded report comes from a very different place, a sort of terrestrial paradise.

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~~L.T.:~~ Greetings from the Persian Gulf, from the island of ~~Umm A'Sabaan~~ ^{Umm A'Sabaan} Max Weston Thornberg,

engineer, number one authority on many of this planet's economic and social problems, and his wife, Leila, own this island. *Umm A'Sabaan* ~~Umm A'Sabaan~~ means "mother of sea shells" - an appropriate name, because this island

although a mass of coral rising out of the sea, is coated with a layer of small sea shells. Most of them from a half-inch to an inch in length, the spiral sort that come to a sharp point. We are right in the middle of the oldest pearling waters in the world, and where most of the real pearls still come from.

These are the islands that have belonged to the Sheikh of Bahrein and his family since time immemorial.

A moment ago I asked Max Thornberg how long the ancestors of the present sheikh, Sir Sulman Ben Hamed Al Kalipha, had been here? Whereupon, Max took a frame off the wall of his library, a library incidentally that is the most complete on the Near and Middle East in this part of the world, and he explained that this was the genealogy in Arabic of Sheikh Sulman's family, tracing it all the way back to Adam

and Eve. Sheikh Suleiman's father, Sheikh Hamad, gave the island to our friends seventeen years ago. It's all a story of flowing gold. The British had their big oilfields in Iran and Iraq, and these islands of the Persian Gulf were, and still are in a sense, a part of the far flung British Empire. But they hadn't suspected that there was another oilfield here at Bahrein.

A New Zealander, Major Frank Holmes, got the original concession. He sold it to Andy Mellon. When Mellon became Secretary of the Treasury he wanted to divest himself of all international holdings, so he sold out to Standard of California, and they made a fifty-fifty deal with the Texas Company.

The geological work was all done by Fred Davies in 1930. And then Ed Skinner struck oil on Bahrein Island, in '32. The third step came in 1936, when Max Thornburg from California came out and built a great refinery. In 1940, Max extended the concession to all of Bahrein, the entire archipelago.

The oilfield brought undreamed of wealth to the Sheik. So, naturally, he and Max became warm friends - and out

of that friendship came the presentation of this island.

It was flat, utterly barren, uninhabited, without a drop of fresh water. So you can't help wondering whether the Sheikh Hamed thought that the Thornburgs would ever even put up a hut. But modern engineering has its geni who perform miracles equal to any performed by geni who came to carry out the wishes of Aladdin when he rubbed that magic lamp.

An artesian well was drilled right thru the top layer of seashells and on thru the coral and the limestone, down to a depth of 260 feet, and out came a geyser of cool, clear, sweet water that even brought the ruler of Bahrein and all his sheikhs over here in a hurry to behold the wonder.

Since then, in the past sixteen years, the island has been transformed from a blazing, treeless desert in the roaring hot Persian Gulf to a veritable Garden of Eden - without the serpent. There are no serpents on the island, in fact, few insects.

Gardens now cover about a third of the mile-long

island. The trees that dominate the scene are tall cocoanut palms, shorter date palms of ten varieties and fruit trees, such as banana and pomegrante and especially tall oleanders.

Running the length of the oasis is an avenue right through a long green tunnel. This runs north and south. East and west are more such green avenues leading to the homes of the Number One boy, a Mohammed, a Persian; the cook, who is from Goa; the head boatman, a black Arab; and the gardeners, who are from El Hasa.

The many Europeans and Americans, oil personnel, Navy and Air Force people, representatives of Britain, the Civil Aviation crowd, sheikhs and others who live on the main island, with its 120,000 people, well, they vie with each other for invitations to come to Umm A'Sabaan to swim in the sea or the Thornburg's swimming pool and enjoy the cool breezes here.

Lowell Junior and his wife, just in from central Asia, from an expedition to the Himalayas, the Karakorams, flew here in their own plane. When they saw Umm A'Sabaan they figured that

there was still enough room on the south end of the island for an airstrip. So they rounded up all the manpower they could find here on the island - and this week their plane flies back and forth to the capital, Manama, on the main island, several times a day.

The rest of the time you can see the plane at the far end of that main avenue of oleanders. There it is, in contrast to the dhows that sail by, manned by the sons of Sindbad.

And now, from Umm A-Sabaan back to Baghdad-on-the-subway!

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C.C. Ah me, Hugh, if I were on Umm A'Sabaan I'd be in no hurry to get back to Baghdad-on-the-subway, certainly not in the middle of winter.