

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Reagan criticizes Soviets; denies 'assassination'

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration — asserting "we're not trying to assassinate" Moammar Khadafy — said Wednesday that the American raid on Libya could have been avoided if the Soviet Union had heeded requests to "restrain the Libyans" from anti-American terrorism.

U.S. officials were assessing intelligence concerning the condition and whereabouts of Khadafy, who appeared on Libyan television and dispelled speculation that he had been killed in the Monday night raids.

Confronted with diplomatic criticism of the raids, the administration said that if the Soviets had acted on its pleas, authorities might have been able to foil the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque, which killed an American serviceman and a Turkish woman and wounded some 200 others.

State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb said the Soviets also were warned that supplying SA-5 missiles might encourage Khadafy to "take risks which would force us to respond. This in fact turned out to be the case."

In his broadcast, Khadafy condemned the United States and Britain for the bombing attack. "We are ready to die and we are ready to carry on fighting and defending our country," he said.

There was no immediate indication whether Khadafy's broadcast was being carried live or had been pre-recorded. Moreover, it could not be learned where Khadafy made the broadcast, and speculation continued that he was no longer in Tripoli.

Questions also were raised by reports of street fighting in Tripoli near Khadafy's headquarters. White House deputy press secretary Larry Speakes said he had no information about whether a coup was attempted, and Libyan officials in Tripoli insisted that the firings were aimed at a U.S. reconnaissance plane.

A congressional source said U.S. officials thought the gunfire indicated that Khadafy foes were "back in town," but added, "They really don't know who's in control of what" in Libya.

Meanwhile, following the shooting of a U.S. embassy employee in Khartoum, Sudan, the State Department on Wednesday said it planned to withdraw large numbers of Americans, mostly dependents of diplomats from that country. It acted out of concern over the shooting and an influx of Libyans into Sudan.

Because of what a State Department official called a "fluid situation," in Khartoum, officials also made plans for a reduction in the size of the official American community in the city.

The official, speaking on condition his name not be used, said there were concerns about the security of American women and children in the city and a general belief that they should leave the country. He said it was a situation of "taking regular flights out" not a question of military evacuation.

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger said that damage to the French Embassy and nearby residences in Tripoli may have been caused by a bomb from an Air Force F-111 that failed to return from the attacks on two Libyan cities.

Adm. William Crowe, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the search for the two missing crewmen had been called off after Navy planes and ships failed to find any trace of them or their plane.

At the White House, a senior administration official said, "We're going to take our time, make assessments, respond where it will be appropriate, where it will have results, where it will do the most good" to preempt terrorism.

This official agreed to discuss counter-terrorism strategy only on the condition he not be identified publicly.

The United States will respond militarily "if and when we deem it necessary and appropriate striking at the heart of (Khadafy's) terrorist operation in order to cripple his ability to run a worldwide, terrorist plan," said the official.

From flamboyancy to forefront

TRIPOLI, Libya — Col. Moammar Khadafy has succeeded in thrusting this once-sleepy North African backwater of less than four million people into the forefront of world politics.

A mouse roaring at the lions of the world, the flamboyant Khadafy rails against American "imperialism," challenges France in Chad, and declares himself a leader of the world's oppressed, helping fund guerrilla groups from Northern Ireland to the Philippines.

In the 1950s, American author John Gunther wrote in "Inside Africa" that Libya would have a bleak future without steady, massive foreign aid.

What changed Libya was oil. Oil exports enabled Khadafy to raise living standards and transform Tripoli from a seaport of mud-choked streets into a modern city with palm-lined avenues.

Khadafy shuns formal titles and is known only as "leader of the revolution." He frequently manages affairs of state from a tent in a large open field in his sprawling headquarters compound, receiving visitors in the style of an Arab sheik.

Khadafy is fond of telling foreign reporters he admires American ideals of freedom and independence.

Khadafy house wrecked

TRIPOLI, Libya — Bombs wrecked Moammar Khadafy's house and ruined his tennis court during the raid by American warplanes that targeted the Azzizyah fortress where the Libyan leader lives and works.

"He was in his tent," not at his home during the raid, explained a white-turbaned guide strolling through a short promenade littered with shards of glass, broken palm tree branches and shrapnel.

Khadafy's house, a light blue two-story building, lost most of its facade when a bomb hit about 10 yards away, leaving a huge crater near the entrance.

All nearby military buildings lost their windows and some walls were blown down when the bombs crashed inside the compound, hurling a storm of flying red-hot metal and concrete.

Khadafy's office, a yellow four-story building crowned by a dome, was pierced with thousands of holes.

Reporters counted six bomb and missile craters during the brief tour of Khadafy's quarters. But the extent of the damage seen suggests many other missiles hammered the compound during the 20 minute raid.

They also refused to say how many people other than Khadafy's adopted 15-month-old daughter were killed.

Khadafy to U.S.: 'We won't kill children'

TRIPOLI, Libya — Moammar Khadafy emerged from two days' seclusion late Wednesday, condemned the United States for its air attack on Libya and vowed that his people are ready to fight on and die.

But the Libyan leader, whose baby daughter was reported killed in the raid, told Americans, "We will not kill your children. We are not like you, we do not bombard cities."

Khadafy's appearance on Libyan television, during which he disclaimed responsibility for anti-American terror attacks, dispelled speculation he had left the country or been killed or seriously injured in the Tuesday morning air raid, staged by waves of U.S. warplanes that dumped one bomb just 10 yards from the Khadafy residence.

The Libyans also said there were new U.S. air attacks Wednesday against Tripoli and towns south and east of here. But the Pentagon denied it, and reporters here found no signs of new bombardments.

For almost two full days after the damaging U.S. air bombardment of Tripoli, Khadafy had remained out of sight. Earlier Wednesday, he failed to appear for a promised meeting with journalists at his headquarters. Then, at 11:15 p.m. (3:15 p.m. CST), the Libyan leader appeared on state television, dressed in a white army uniform and speaking in a studio with a map of Africa behind him.

Khadafy said Reagan "should be put on trial as a war criminal and murderer of children."

Libya had not issued orders to murder anyone, Khadafy said, alluding to U.S. allegations that the Libyan government plotted the bombing of a Berlin nightclub April 5 in which a U.S. soldier was killed and 63 other Americans were injured.

"Even those who carried out operations in Europe are unknown persons," he said. "Who knows them? Perhaps the American intelligence carried out these operations. Possibly a Palestinian carried them out. Anyone else could have carried out these operations."

After the 21-minute speech, demonstrations broke out in the streets of Tripoli and drivers honked their horns, apparently in joy over their leader's speech.

Students compensated for poor instruction

WINONA, Minn. — The verdict is in for nine students who sued their vocational-technical school complaining about poor instruction: A judge says they were entitled to 10 extra days in class or \$62.50, but not the \$2,011 they had sought.

The Winona Area Vocational-Technical Institute students said in separate suits filed in small claims court that they had several instructors in an auto body repair class after the first one quit. They contended the poor quality of their instruction meant they would have trouble getting jobs.

Winona County District Court Judge

Dennis Challeen said in his ruling Monday that the students received adequate education, but were entitled to either compensation or extra instruction.

"The school did their best under very unfortunate circumstances," Challeen said in an interview Wednesday. "But the students were short-changed and, therefore, that's the reason for my ruling."

Challeen said the school owes the students the extra class time or money because of 10 days when they had no teacher or an instructor who wasn't qualified to teach the course.

"To me that's the best solution," he said. "If I give them all their money back and they get their credits back that's not fair. I think it's a compromise."

The students were seeking the money as compensation for the time they said they wasted.

Bill Gau, one of the students who sued, said the publicity the case generated had benefited all students in the course. He said the school has provided \$4,000 worth of new equipment for the class as well as a good instructor.

"As far as we're concerned, we already won," he said.

But William Hemsey, director of the Winona Area Vocational Technical Institute, said Wednesday the school felt it had won the case.

"We're real pleased with the outcome of this," he said.

Norris Abts, the school's assistant director, acknowledged the students' complaints had helped prompt changes in the class, but he said the extra equipment money was budgeted 18 months ago and had nothing to do with the suit.

Legislative Briefs

Sales tax bill passes

LINCOLN — The Legislature voted Wednesday night to brush aside Gov. Bob Kerrey's veto and enact a half-cent increase in the state sales tax rate. The action came as the 1986 Legislature prepared for its final adjournment.

Lawmakers voted 33-13 to enact LB 539 over Kerrey's veto. It will increase the state sales tax rate from 3.5 percent to 4 percent on Jan. 1, 1987.

The measure will raise about \$23.2 million in additional revenues for the 1987-88 fiscal year that begins July 1.

The Legislature last week sent Kerrey a spending package of more than

\$846.2 million. He used his line item veto to strike \$32.6 million from those appropriations.

nesday to fund those budget decisions.

Speed limit bill passes

LINCOLN — The Legislature narrowly passed a bill Wednesday to raise the speed limit on the interstate from 55 mph to 70 mph next year, despite warnings that Nebraska could lose federal highway funds.

Supporters of LB600A, which passed 25-22, argued that few people comply with the 55 mph speed limit. They also claimed that the higher speed limit

wouldn't endanger lives because the interstate system was designed for speeds in excess of 55 mph.

Liquor law

LINCOLN — The Legislature decided Wednesday to give local governments control over granting liquor licenses in a move characterized as "truly dangerous" by one opponent.

Senators voted 35-10 to pass LB911, which would make radical change by transferring the authority to grant liquor licenses from the state Liquor Control Commission to local officials.

Sen. John DeCamp of Neligh said LB911 would lead to inconsistency in liquor licensing standards and would

be prone to "invite the schlocks" to seek licenses instead of reputable businessmen.

Ag authority

LINCOLN — The Legislature passed a bill 38-6 Wednesday that's touted by some as a way to assist agriculture by luring long-term capital into Nebraska.

The measure, LB849, proposed by the Kerrey administration, would create an Agricultural Revitalization Authority charged with developing a secondary market in agricultural mortgage loans. The bill has an emergency clause, meaning it would take effect almost immediately if Gov. Bob Kerrey signs it.

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