

News Digest

By the Associated Press

U.S. expels 25 Soviet diplomats

WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration on Wednesday ordered the expulsion of 25 U.N.-based Soviet diplomats, but said the action was unrelated to the spy charges Moscow has filed against American journalist Nicholas Daniloff.

State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb said the expulsion was a follow-up to a U.S. decision announced six months ago, to force cutbacks in the Soviets' U. N. presence. The administration has maintained that the Soviet staff at the U. N. is disproportionately large and engages in spy activities.

For its part, the Soviets have insisted that the required reductions violate the obligations the United States has undertaken as host country for the U. N. The 25 were given until Oct. 1 to leave the country.

The Soviet U.N. Mission immediately

signaled that it will resist the order. "I think there will be a protest," Valentin G. Karymov, a senior counselor at the Soviet mission, told a reporter by telephone. The diplomat, however, said the U.S. note would first be studied by Moscow before a formal response is made.

While the administration has promised retaliation in the Daniloff case, Kalb was categorical in stating that the expulsion order "is not related" to that issue.

Secretary of State George Shultz said Tuesday night that the United States has a "plan of action" for dealing with the Daniloff case but declined to give details. He said the issue has "put a cloud" over Soviet-American relations.

Last March, the Reagan administration announced that the Soviets would

be required to reduce their U. N. staff by from 275 to 170 over a two-year period in increments of roughly 25 every six months.

The Soviet delegation is more than twice the size of the next largest delegation.

The Soviets have 243 diplomats attached to the U. N. while the two Soviet republics have a combined total of 32.

A U. S. official who asked not to be identified said the Soviet total has dropped below 243, but added that the Soviets have never indicated that any of those who departed did so as a result of the expulsion order of last March.

In any case, he said, the Soviets will be operating under a ceiling of 218 until the United States orders the withdrawal of an additional group of diplomats, presumably next March.

Weather satellite launch successful

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — A \$37.3 million weather satellite whose launch had been delayed 16 times was carried into orbit by a rebuilt 25-year-old rocket Wednesday, the second successful launch in two weeks for the nation's troubled space program.

A crowd of 120 Air Force and NASA officials and contractors cheered as the 94-foot-tall Atlas E rocket blasted off at 8:52 a.m., from Space Launch Complex-3, carrying the RCA-built NOAA-G satellite into a 518-mile-high polar orbit.

"We have liftoff," the flight commentator said as the rocket, spewing bright orange flames into a thick cloud cover, vanished into the clouds above the base 140 miles northwest of Los Angeles.

In the first few minutes after launch,

the nose cone covering the satellite and the five engines on the booster all separated from the spacecraft on schedule.

From its vantage point above Earth, the 14-by-6-foot NOAA-10 will photograph and collect global weather information, measure Earth's radiation belts, relay data from weather stations worldwide to a central processing center, measure how much sunlight Earth absorbs and radiates back into space and detect distress signals from ships, planes and travelers in remote areas.

It will also provide some reconnaissance photographs to U.S. intelligence agencies, said Larry Heacock, satellite operations director for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"It's another step on the way back" from a Jan. 18 explosion that destroyed

the shuttle Challenger and killed its seven crew members, said National Aeronautics and Space Administration spokesman Jim Kukowski. "Any successful launch is significant in showing the American public that we are coming back from a very disastrous eight months."

On Sept. 5, a Florida-launched Delta rocket carried two satellites into orbit, where they destroyed each other in a successful test of the so-called Star Wars space-based anti-missile defense system.

Before the launch attempt, three of the last five major U.S. space launch attempts failed: the Jan. 28 Challenger explosion, the April 18 blowup of a Titan rocket launched from Vandenberg and the May 9 destruction of a Delta rocket carrying another weather satellite from Florida.

In Brief

"Amerika" film nearly ready

LINCOLN — ABC-TV will complete filming of "Amerika" this week, and the 12-hour miniseries is tentatively scheduled to air in February, according to ABC publicist Bob Wright.

Wright said an extended period of post-production work would begin after the company finishes interior shots in a Toronto studio.

Filming in Toronto began earlier this summer shortly after ABC finished an extended period of filming in Tecumseh. Wright said he expected about 45 percent of the final, edited miniseries to be drawn from Nebraska location filming completed last spring.

The miniseries, chronicling the occupation of the United States by the Soviet Union 10 years in the future, pumped about \$7 million into the southeast Nebraska coffers during filming.

Wright said a specific airing date has not been set and that meeting the February target would depend on the post-production work.

Survey: Replace lost shuttle

WASHINGTON — A survey taken while the Reagan administration was deciding whether to replace the space shuttle Challenger showed overwhelming public support for building the \$2.5 billion vehicle.

Despite the risks associated with manned flight, 89 percent of those questioned through shuttle flights should be resumed. Eighty-five percent thought the United States should replace the Challenger.

Only 13 percent of 1,200 people interviewed in the telephone survey approved the statement that "we should not continue the manned space flight program" while 22 percent approved flights with astronauts only "when it is absolutely necessary" but never flights with civilians.

"We are finding the American public strongly in support of the space program," said Robert Reiser, vice president of Market Opinion Research, which did the study in early August. The results were compared with a similar survey in the weeks before the Challenger explosion in January.

Since the accident, which killed five astronauts and two passengers, he said, there has been a seven percent increase in support for space programs.

Sixty percent of Americans, the survey found, say the government "should spend whatever is necessary to maintain U.S. leadership in space" while 27 percent disagree. And 71 percent feel that the space program should be continued to stay ahead of the Soviets, the Japanese and others.

Asked whether NASA was an honest agency, 59 percent agreed while 36 percent did not. And 44 percent thought NASA was "living on past glories."

S. African mine fire kills 177

EVANDER, South Africa — Weary rescue crews on Wednesday collected the bodies of miners sprawled along a mile-deep shaft that a raging fire turned into a death trap for at least 177 men. It was South Africa's worst gold mine disaster.

Officials said 235 of the miners were hospitalized with burns, injuries and chest pains from inhaling the fumes that filled the mine after a fire was accidentally started by a welding machine. The miners "didn't stand a chance," according to Dick Grenfell, a 38-year-old Briton who survived the fire. "They just ran into a wall of smoke and must have dropped like flies."

Most of the bodies were found along a mile-long horizontal tunnel, some in groups and some alone — men who perished as they frantically sought a way out.

Jacobus Olivier, general manager of the mine 62 miles southeast of Johannesburg, said workers were welding a broken rail used by small trains to transport ore when the fire broke out. Olivier said an acetylene gas cylinder caught fire, and the blaze spread to the walls covered with the polyurethane foam.

The fumes killed all the victims, he said.

Fifth Paris bombing kills 5, injures 58

PARIS — Terrorists struck the French capital Wednesday for the fifth time in 10 days, demolishing a clothing store with a bomb thrown from a car. Five people were killed and 58 injured, authorities said.

Three people were killed and more than 100 injured in the previous bombings, which prompted the government to adopt tough anti-terrorist measures. Two groups seeking to free three imprisoned Middle Easterners have issued conflicting claims of responsibility for those attacks.

One woman passer-by was blown apart by Wednesday's blast in central Paris, and a witness said another victim was lifted several yards into the air. "It is an incredible sight, many women, children, blood everywhere," said a witness who refused to give his name.

The bomb was tossed from a black BMW carrying two mustachioed men, one of whom rolled down the window and tossed the bomb at the Tati clothing and textile store in the Montparnasse district, said Laurent Davenas, an assistant state prosecutor.

Windows were blown out at several businesses. The sidewalk in front of the Tati store was covered with glass, debris and bleeding victims, many crying out for help. Police cleared a plaza, the Place du 18 Juin, and used it as a helicopter landing pad to evacuate those with the gravest injuries.

Premier Jacques Chirac called an emergency meeting of his top security ministers immediately after the attack.

The attack was the bloodiest since the recent wave of bombings began Sept. 8. Earlier explosions hit a city hall post office, a cafeteria in suburban La Defense, the Pub Renault on the Champs-Elysees Avenue and police headquarters in central Paris.

In response to the bombings, France deployed troops to aid frontier police and imposed visa requirements on all visitors except those from selected European nations.

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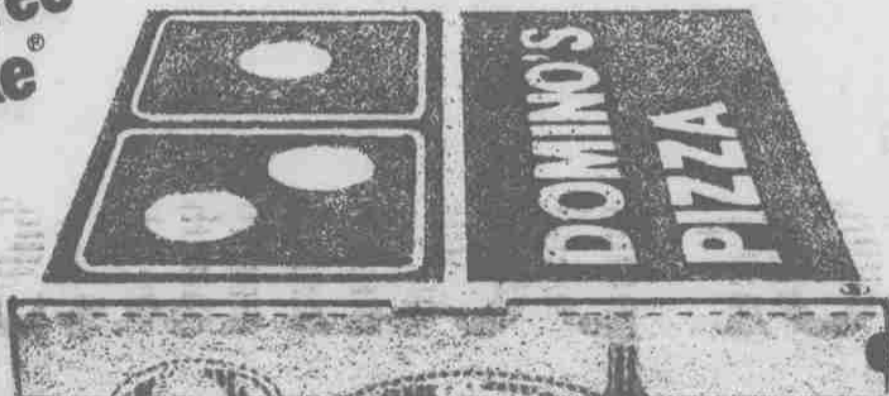
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