

# News Digest

By The Associated Press

## Abductions continue

### Terrorists kidnap W. German businessman, newspapers say

BONN, West Germany — A West German businessman was kidnapped in Beirut, the Foreign Ministry said Sunday. Two newspapers said the kidnappers apparently hope to trade him for a Lebanese jailed as a terrorist in West Germany and wanted in the United States.

West German authorities said it was too early to say if Saturday's abduction of Rudolf Cordes, 53, was linked to the arrest Tuesday at Frankfurt airport of Mohammad Ali Hamadi.

Hamadi, 22, who was carrying a fluid used to make explosives, was later

identified as a suspect in the 1985 hijacking of a TWA airliner and held 39 other Americans hostage for 17 days.

Police in Beirut said Sunday they could not confirm that a West German had been kidnapped. The West German Embassy in the Lebanese capital was unstaffed.

The Foreign Ministry in Bonn said an anonymous telephone caller told its embassy in Beirut that Cordes had been taken hostage.

Cordes is Beirut manager for Hoechst Ag, a major West Germany chemical company. A company official, com-

menting on condition of anonymity, said Cordes does not live in Beirut, but travels there frequently from his Frankfurt base.

West German newspapers said Cordes arrived in Beirut from Frankfurt Saturday evening, went through passport control and has not been heard from since.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the telephone caller told the embassy Cordes and three Lebanese accompanying him were kidnapped. The three Lebanese were later released, the caller said.

The caller did not identify himself or make demands, the ministry said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Reinhard Bettzuege told The Associated Press: "We cannot assume the two (Hamadi and Cordes) are linked because the (kidnappers) have not identified themselves or placed any demands on us. It could be a criminal act, or someone looking for ransom."

But Bild and Die Welt newspapers, of Hamburg and Bonn respectively, said senior government officials fear the kidnapping is aimed at blackmailing West Germany into releasing Hamadi.

## Aquino offers peace talks to Moslem group

COTABATO CITY, Philippines — President Corazon Aquino, touring violence-ridden Mindanao island Sunday, offered peace talks to a Moslem rebel faction whose attack last week killed 46 people.

In Manila, troops went on alert to keep Moslem violence from spreading to the capital.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front gave no immediate reply to the offer.

The group on Saturday ended five days of attacks on the island which left at least 46 people dead and 89 injured. It said it launched the attacks because it had been shut out of talks between the government and a rival Moslem faction, the Moro National Liberation Front.

Both groups seek Moslem self-rule on Mindanao, but disagree on the terms.

Two Manila newspapers reported that the military fears Moslem rebels might join forces with dissident officers and supporters of deposed President Ferdinand E. Marcos in a plot against the government before the ratification plebiscite for the draft constitution Feb. 2.

About 800 Marcos loyalists burned Mrs. Aquino in effigy Sunday at a Manila rally as part of their campaign against the constitution, which guarantees her a six-year term.

Mrs. Aquino met for 10 minutes with Haji Murad, deputy leader of the Moslem stronghold on Mindanao. It was her fourth stop on a five-city, weekend tour of the island to muster support for the constitution.

## In Brief

### Arson suspect commits suicide

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — A bartender at the Dupont Plaza hotel has killed himself by leaping from a building, police said Sunday, and a newspaper reported he faced questioning about the fire there that killed 96 people.

Julio Verges Gaetan, 45, jumped from the ninth floor of a building in the Rio Piedras suburb Saturday, police said.

El Mundo newspaper quoted his wife, Juanita, as saying he had been despondent since learning Friday that investigators planned to question him this Tuesday. Two men, including a bar busboy, have been charged with arson in the New Year's Eve inferno, and investigators have said there may be additional arrests.

"Almost every time he heard the latest news about the fire, he began to cry," Mrs. Verges Gaetan was quoted as saying.

### Whooping crane populations on the rise

AUSTWELL, Texas — About 110 whooping cranes, the highest number since conservation efforts began for the endangered species in the 1930s, are wintering along the Texas coast, Wildlife officials say.

The flock of 110 birds at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge "is basically surviving by itself," said Tom Stehn, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist at the refuge.

The flock, which migrates to Texas each winter from its breeding grounds at Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada, has recovered from a low of 14 birds, with the most dramatic increases coming in recent few years.

## Railroad shuts down; contract negotiations fail

NEW YORK — The nation's busiest commuter railway shut down Sunday when contract negotiations failed between the Long Island Rail Road and 11 unions, idling 6,600 workers.

"Operations on the railroad are now shut down," Long Island Rail Road spokesman Jim Burns said shortly after the strike began at 6:01 a.m.

The effects of the strike were minimal Sunday, a light ridership day, and were not expected to be fully felt Monday, the federal holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

But if the strike lasts until Tuesday, it will force nearly 150,000 passengers between the Long Island suburbs and New York City to seek alternate transportation. The railroad averages 272,000 trips per weekday.

Officials urged commuters to use car pools, set up an information hot line and planned special express buses.

"There is a very good possibility it's going to be a long strike," said John Caggiano, business manager of local 589 of the International Brotherhood of

Electrical Workers.

Walter C. Wallace, the federal mediator for the talks, said he could not say when negotiations would resume. "We will get some sleep, recharge, and I'm not going to set a date when we will get back together," he said.

Sunday's walkout climaxed two years of federally sponsored negotiations, including two cooling-off periods. It occurred after five unions suddenly withdrew from the talks and two others — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Police Benevolent Association — failed to reach agreement with management.

The LIRR strike is the first since April, 1980, when the railroad was shut down for one day. In December 1979, a week-long strike ended only when President Carter invoked federal legislation requiring a cooling-off period.

Under the Federal Railway Labor Act, which governs LIRR labor relations, employees are allowed to strike after all federal procedures have been exhausted.

## Researcher: Pregnant cocaine users risk long-term brain defects in infants

NEW YORK — Animal experiments suggest that cocaine use during pregnancy can produce infants with long-term abnormalities in the brain systems that control sensation, movement and emotions, a researcher said Sunday.

This occurs despite the frequent absence of physical defects in the offspring, said Diana Dow-Edwards, a researcher at the State University of New York Health Science Center in Brooklyn.

Dow-Edwards found, in studies with about 30 rats, that rats exposed to cocaine during early development mature into adults with marked hypersensitivity in the brain's motor system, its sensory system and in the limbic system, which governs emotions and such functions as eating and sleeping.

The evidence suggests, she said, "that cocaine exposure during pregnancy produces long-term and perhaps permanent alterations in brain function activity."

Ira Chasnoff, a pediatrician at Northwestern University Medical School in Evanston, Ill., and one of the nation's leading authorities on the effects of cocaine use in pregnancy, reported that infants of cocaine-using mothers have a significantly smaller head size than normal infants, suggesting a retardation in brain growth and possible future brain defects.

Chasnoff said cocaine-affected infants are excessively jittery, experience rapid changes of mood, and are extremely sensitive to noise and other external stimuli.

## 40 percent of crime victims know attackers, study says

WASHINGTON — In nearly four out of 10 violent crimes, the attacker is a relative, friend or acquaintance of the victim, according to a federal study released Sunday.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics report says that less than half the 20 million violent crimes committed from 1982 through 1984 were perpetrated by people who were strangers to the victims.

The survey of 58,000 households conducted twice a year by the Census Bureau found that 46 percent of robberies, rapes and assaults were committed by strangers.

"It is often said that the fear of crime is largely a fear of strangers," bureau director Steven R. Schlesinger said in a statement.

But he said 10 percent of the offenders were known to the victims by sight and 39 percent of the violent crimes involved friends, relatives or acquaintances of the victim.

Friends accounted for 17 percent, or 3.3 million, of the violent crimes, while casual acquaintances accounted for 14 percent, and relatives accounted for 8 percent.

In the rest of the cases, the relationship of the attackers to the victim was not known.

"Individuals victimized by relatives may be reluctant to discuss the event . . . for fear of reprisal or out of shame or embarrassment," the report said. "Further, some victims of domestic violence may not perceive these acts as criminal."

In the 1.5 million violent crimes in which a relative was the offender, 77 percent of the victims were women.

More than half of the crimes by relatives against women were reported by women who were divorced or separated.

The bureau cited FBI statistics for 1984 which found that 20 percent of the 19,000 homicides were committed by relatives and nearly 40 percent by acquaintances.

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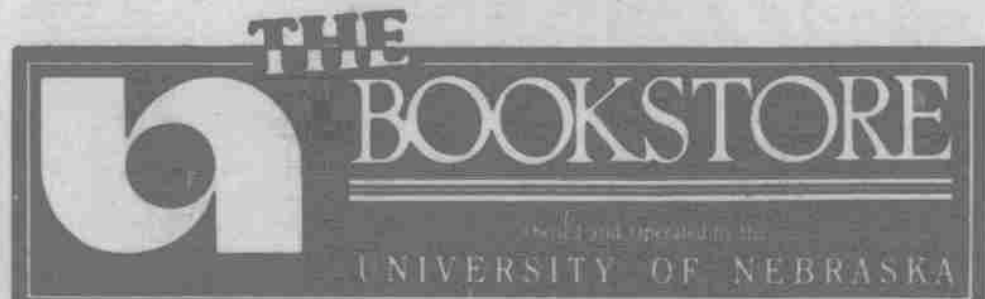
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