

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Officials warned against trade Hostage swap may inspire more terrorism

BONN, West Germany — Prominent politicians cautioned officials Monday against swapping a Lebanese suspect in the 1985 TWA hijacking for a West German abducted in Beirut. They said a trade would inspire more terrorist attacks.

Government spokesmen in Bonn played down reports that the kidnapping in Beirut of businessman Rudolf Cordes was aimed at forcing the release of Mohammed Ali Hamadi, accused of being one of the terrorists who seized the jetliner in June 1985.

A U.S. Navy diver on the plane was shot to death at Beirut airport after the jet was commandeered during a flight from Rome to Athens.

Hans Stercken, chairman of Parliament's foreign affairs committee, said in a radio interview: "Those who are aware of the tendency toward terrorist acts in the Middle East know that the acceptance of blackmail increases the chances of new acts."

The Justice Ministry said Hamadi's extradition to the United States would be accomplished quickly. It had been delayed pending a pledge from the Americans not to apply the death penalty if Hamadi is convicted. West Germany does not have a death penalty.

Hamadi, 22, was arrested last Tuesday at the Frankfurt



airport after arriving from Beirut. U.S. officials have asked that he be extradited to stand trial in an American Court.

Authorities said he was identified by fingerprints as one of those who seized the TWA aircraft June 14, 1985, shot Navy diver Robert Stethem to death and held 39 American passengers hostage for 17 days.

Gunmen seized Cordes, 53-year-old Beirut manager of West Germany's Hoechst chemical company, after he arrived in the Lebanese capital Saturday from Frankfurt.

Letters reveal true Mencken

NEW YORK — H.L. Mencken, "The Bad Boy from Baltimore" who was known for his cynical style and wit, revealed joy and despair in letters he exchanged with the woman he eventually married, a new book shows.

The collection of love letters, titled "Mencken & Sara," will be published Feb. 14 by the McGraw-Hill Book Co.

"The letters reveal a tender and soft side," said the collection's editor, Marion Elizabeth Rodgers. "We tend to think of Mencken as an old curmudgeon who hated everything, but it is not so."

The book contains about 450 letters Mencken exchanged with writer Sara Haardt, whom he married in 1930. They wrote from 1923 until her death of tuberculosis in 1935.

Rodgers found the letters in 1981 in the rare book room of the Goucher College library in Baltimore. Mencken, who died in 1956, had donated them in 1936 but ordered that they not be opened for 45 years.

The Baltimore-born writer's best-known works included, "The American

Language," "Prejudices: A Selection," and an autobiographical trilogy, "The Days of H.L. Mencken."

Mencken met Haardt in 1923 at Goucher College in Baltimore, when she attended a lecture he was giving called "How to Catch a Husband." At the time, Mencken, a bachelor, was 43 and Haardt 25.

"He and Sara were very traditional in their way, but he was just as confused as men are today — it took him seven years to propose to Sara," Rodgers noted.

Haardt started the correspondence on May 20, 1923. Referring to Mencken's critique of her short stories, she wrote: "These suggestions of yours would make a villain laugh."

Many other letters also centered on the couple's craft. But their tone grew fonder and more whimsical after Oct. 7, 1923, when Haardt wrote: "I know one thing: that for a mortal with a sense of humor you are the most perfect gentleman I have ever seen or heard tell of."

Anarchist group 'cracked', but attorney: 'It's out there'

SOMERVILLE, N.J. — Law officers say they have cracked the most active unit in the domestic armed underground with convictions in a New York bombing case, a mixed verdict from a New Jersey trooper slaying trial and a pending sedition case in Boston.

But a lawyer for one of the avowed revolutionaries in the New Jersey case says of the United Freedom Front: "It's out there. I'm sure you'll hear from them."

"Where there is repression, there will always be resistance," said the lawyer, Lynne Stewart.

A mistrial was declared Sunday for her client, Richard C. Williams, when a jury failed to reach a verdict.

Co-defendant Thomas W. Manning was convicted of felony murder, which is committing homicide while committing another felony, robbery and escape. But he was acquitted on the separate charge of murder, leaving in question who fired nine shots that killed Trooper Philip Lamonaco in December 1981.

The state alleged that Manning was driving a car Lamonaco stopped, and that the trooper

recognized Manning as a fugitive and confiscated a gun before being shot by Williams, a passenger in the car.

Manning contended he shot the trooper in self-defense. Williams denied he was even at the murder scene. The state is considering whether to retry Williams.

Despite the mistrial, which the defendants hailed as a victory for "anti-imperialist freedom fighters," law enforcement agents say the United Freedom Front is essentially destroyed.

"I think they're pretty well wiped out," said

New Jersey Detective Sgt. Richard Ryan, who worked on the case for four years.

Manning and Williams face lengthy prison terms for their March 1986 conviction with five other United Freedom Front members in the bombing of New York-area corporate and military offices from 1982 to 1984. The seven also face trial in Boston on charges of plotting to overthrow the federal government.

It has taken law officers more than a decade to get this far in efforts to break the United Freedom Front.



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Communists expel liberal educator

PEKING — Fang Lizhi, an astrophysicist who gained national prominence by standing up for student demonstrators, was expelled from the Communist Party for preaching Western liberal ideas, the official media reported Monday.

Fang, 50, was fired last week from his position as vice president of China Science and Technology University in Hefei.

Fang's expulsion from the party came as Zhao Ziyang, the premier and acting party chief, issued assurances that intellectuals would not be victimized by another ideological purge.

The Xinhua News Agency said the local party branch

decided to expel Fang on Saturday because he "attempted to incite intellectuals against the party and students to make trouble, causing grave consequences."

The official said Fang denied Marxism, vilified China's socialist system as "modern feudalism" and called for independence of universities from party leadership.

He was accused of "advocating bourgeois democracy and freedom and instigating students to make trouble."

Fang, a graduate of Peking University who became one of China's pioneer researchers in laser theory, gained a nationwide reputation for speaking out for greater democracy and pointing out anomalies in the socialist system.

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Correction

Monday's story about the Nebraska State Student Association's 12th Legislative Assembly incorrectly said, "Students from Chadron State College and UNO were in favor of videotape instruction because learning from a television is far less educational than learning from a human being."

The story should have said those students were in favor of videotape instruction because it is the only way they can take some classes. UNL delegates, however, were not in favor of videotape instruction because learning from a television is far less educational than learning from a human being.

The Daily Nebraskan regrets the error.

Daily Nebraskan

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In Brief

Ski resorts try to recover

LOS ANGELES — California's ski season finally is in full swing, but resorts face an uphill battle to recoup millions of dollars lost when a snow shortage left most slopes barren through the Christmas holidays.

"If we have a good January, February and March we could certainly recoup some business and make (the losses) up, but it will not be our best year," said Bob Roberts, executive director of the Sierra Ski Areas Association in San Francisco.

When the storms that normally dump up to several feet of snow at resorts by late December held off until around New Year's, about one-fifth of the \$350 million taken in annually by ski resorts in California and Nevada was lost, Roberts said.

Wheelchair contestant is inspirational

FAIRFIELD, Calif. — Maria Serrao, the first wheelchair contestant in a beauty pageant leading to the Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants, says that even though she lost she hopes she was an inspiration to others.

The 23-year-old actress, who was paralyzed in a car accident at age 5, received enthusiastic applause during evening gown and swimsuit competitions Sunday. She also was well-received in the opening production, as she swung her arms and spun her wheelchair in a dance number that featured the contestants in a Las Vegas-style chorus line, with feather headdresses and sequined costumes.

"If somebody looks to me as an inspiration, that's great," she said. "People can do a lot of things they think they can't. If I could be a role model for someone to help overcome their obstacles, then I'd feel good."

Woman tries to sell her baby

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — A pregnant woman who allegedly offered to sell her baby for \$15,000 so she could buy a car and pay off debts has been charged with child selling, authorities said.

Joi E. Silverthorne, 27, of Tampa, was arrested Saturday after the Jacksonville couple, whom authorities would not identify, met her at Jacksonville International Airport.

They were to give \$3,500 to Silverthorne as a first payment for her baby, authorities said. Instead, they turned her over to investigators who were nearby and recording the conversation, according to a police report.

Child selling is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison, said Assistant State Attorney E. McRae Mathis. Silverthorne was released Sunday on \$5,000 bond and is to appear in court Jan. 28, a jail official said.

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(Room will be posted under "College-Career Christian Fellowship")