

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Hostage dilemma Pro-Iranian group threatens to kill educators

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Anonymous callers Sunday claimed the weekend abduction of three American teachers and an Indian professor in the name of an underground group linked to Iran and threatened to kill them if the United States helps Iraq.

The first caller said the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth would kill a hostage if Ali Hamadi, 22, were extradited to the United States, where he is wanted on charges of air piracy and murder in the June 1985 TWA hijacking to Beirut.

In the second call, a man said a hostage would be killed if Hamadi were not released by midnight (6 p.m. CST). It was not clear if the caller referred to an American or to other hostages.

"We ask U.S. President Ronald Rea-

gan not to intervene in the Gulf War and not to provide assistance to the Iraqi authorities," the Lebanese-accented Arabic man said. "The (American) hostages will be wasted if he fails to do so."

The three Americans kidnapped from Beirut University College on Saturday night by gunmen disguised as police were Alann Steen, 48, a journalism professor who formerly taught at three northern California colleges; Jesse Turner, an Idaho native, assistant instructor of mathematics and computer sciences; and Robert Polhill, 53, assistant professor of business studies.

The Indian was identified as Mithleshwar Singh, chairman of the business studies division and a legal resident alien of the United States.



Pell: U.S. should consider military action

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said Thursday that President Reagan should consider military action in the latest kidnapping of three Americans in Beirut if the hostage-takers carry out a threat to kill the U.S. citizens.

Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., said Reagan should take "pretty hard" action against Iran if there is "clear evidence" that Iran is behind the latest kidnapping.

If he can establish a link between these terrorists and any government, I think he would be justified in going after that government, Pell said.

Officials expect Reagan to address health issues in speech

WASHINGTON — President Reagan is expected to talk about catastrophic health insurance in his State of the Union speech for the second straight year but, once again, what he will say remains a mystery even to government health officials.

Health and Human Services Secretary Otis R. Bowen told a Senate panel Thursday that he did not know whether the president would embrace

his proposal to provide catastrophic coverage for the elderly by increasing Medicare premiums about \$5 a month.

A department official said Bowen still did not know late Friday whether his proposal — which has won widespread support in Congress — would be made part of the president's speech.

Reagan's 1986 address cited potentially devastating medical bills facing the elderly as a

major national problem and instructed Bowen to seek solutions.

Bowen, a physician and former governor of Indiana, made his proposal public Nov. 20. Since then, he has been working to overcome resistance from others in the administration who argue that an expansion of Medicare to deal with catastrophic illness runs counter to the administration's philosophy of letting the private sector deal with

any problem that does not absolutely require government intervention.

The Bowen plan calls for the 28 million Medicare beneficiaries to pay an additional \$4.92 a month in Part B premiums to make up a pool — with no tax money included — that would insure recipients against having to pay more than \$2,000 in medical expenses in any year.

China hints anti-Western stand Student arrested for passing intelligence

PEKING — Authorities arrested a student accused of giving intelligence to an American reporter, the official news media said Sunday, in what appeared to be the first move against the press in China's anti-westernization campaign.

The official Xinhua News Agency said in a two-paragraph report that Lin Jie, a student of Tianjin University, was arrested for "his secret collusion with and providing intelligence to" Lawrence MacDonald, reporter for the French news agency Agence France-Presse.

The report said conclusive evidence

was obtained by the Tianjin office of the State Security Bureau, a secretive organization responsible for China's external security.

The French news agency's Peking bureau issued a statement saying, "Agence France-Presse states that it knows nothing about all accusations against Mr. MacDonald and only learned about this from a dispatch from the New China (Xinhua) News Agency."

A U.S. Embassy official also said he had heard nothing about any criminal case involving the reporter.

Lin could get up to life in prison if convicted of passing state secrets to an

enemy of the state.

MacDonald, 32, from San Luis Obispo, Calif., was in Hong Kong on Sunday. Fluent in Chinese, he has reported extensively on student activism that has led to the massive campaign against "Bourgeois liberalization," the trend of favoring Western culture and capitalism over socialism and the Communist Party.

The report did not say if Lin was involved in recent demonstrations, but the arrest appeared to be a clear-cut warning to Western news organizations and their Chinese sources.

Correction

In Friday's News Digest story datelined Manila, Philippines, the story incorrectly illustrated a marine aiming a Russian AK47 assault rifle. The illustration should have shown the marine aiming an M16 automatic rifle. The Daily Nebraskan regrets the error.

In Brief

Soviets propose way to eat alcohol away

MOSCOW — Two Soviets think they have the answer to problem drinking in the Soviet Union: selling liquor in an edible bottle to reduce the alcohol level in the blood.

I. Bogomolova and S. Kimaikin of the city of Magnitogorsk drew up a patent application suggesting bottles made of meat and bread, which could provide the fixings for popular Russian "zakuski," or appetizers, the newspaper Socialist Industry reported Sunday.

In their application, the two said their edible bottle would achieve a "lowering of the alcohol intoxication level" by requiring drinkers to buy something to eat along with their liquor, the paper said.

The suggestion was promptly shelved in the archives of the government patents commission as impractical, the paper said.

Soviet airliner makes emergency landing

MOSCOW — When an Aeroflot jetliner's nose landing gear failed to drop, the captain ordered all 92 passengers to crowd toward the tail section in hopes of a more stable landing, Tass reported Sunday.

The Tu-154 was flying from Moscow to the southern city of Ordzhonikidze last Monday when a warning light indicated a landing gear malfunction, Tass said. In-flight maneuvers failed to shake the gear loose, and fuel was running low.

"Going into reverse and engaging flaps, the crew landed the plane, its nose gradually lowering and scraping off myriads of sparks on its run until the craft finally came to a screeching halt," Tass said.

It said there was "insignificant damage" to the plane, and "no loss of life." Tass did not say if there were any injuries.

Hawaiian beaches reopen after oil spill

HONOLULU — Three popular beaches were declared safe Sunday by the Coast Guard after crews cleaned up after an oil spill, but state health officials said warning signs would remain in place at least until Monday.

About 1,000 gallons of fuel oil spilled from an interisland barge Tuesday when it was buffeted by a storm southeast of Oahu. The oil drifted across the Molokai Channel to the eastern shore of Oahu, Hawaii's most populated island.

Black gobs floated ashore Friday and the state Health Department advised swimmers to stay out of the water at six beaches.

They were the popular bodysurfing beaches of Makapuu and Sandy Beach, the tropical fish preserve of Hanauma Bay and Kaiona, Waimanalo and Lanikai beaches. The Air Force closed Bellows Beach, next to Bellows Air Force Station.

The Coast Guard said Makapuu, Waimanalo and Bellows were safe enough Sunday for swimming.



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