

News Digest By The Associated Press

In Brief

Physicists achieve electricity breakthrough

WASHINGTON — Physicists in Houston and Alabama have achieved a breakthrough in superconductivity research that points to dramatically more efficient and cheaper electrical power, the government announced Sunday.

The researchers, Paul C.W. Chu at the University of Houston and M.K. Wu at the University of Alabama have achieved superconductivity — the ability to transport electrical current with no resistance — at a temperature so high that it could be called a breakthrough, said the National Science Foundation.

The researchers reached superconductivity at 283 degrees below zero. When superconductivity is achieved, electricity can travel farther with greater efficiency.

After its discovery in 1911, scientists believed superconductivity only occurred when materials were kept close to absolute zero, or minus 459.7 degrees Fahrenheit, the temperature at which the normal motion of molecules ceases.

B-52s begin low-altitude refueling exercises

OMAHA — Crews flying B-52 bombers have begun training to become expert in low-altitude flight refueling, said Gen. John Chain, Strategic Air Command commander in chief.

Chain said the new procedures would delay radar detection while the bombers are on attack with non-nuclear weapons.

Most B-52s can fly about 2,000 miles without refueling, he said. To reach long-distance targets, the bombers might have to refuel from tanker planes just before they cross over fighting fronts or into hostile territory, Chain said.

"If I refuel at 25,000 or 30,000 feet, enemy radar can see me 200 miles out," Chain said. "If I refuel down at 3,000 feet, it may be 50 miles because of the curvature of the earth. If I drop down to 300 feet, I'm a lot closer."

SAC usually refuels the B-52s at altitudes of 25,000 to 30,000 feet.

Chief exec under fire

Panel criticizes Reagan's performance at summit

WASHINGTON — President Reagan was poorly prepared for the U.S.-Soviet summit meeting last October and the two-day meeting ended with "an astonishing degree of confusion" about potential nuclear arms control agreements, the House Armed Services Committee said Sunday.

The report by the Democratic-controlled panel was sharply critical of Reagan and his administration, citing confusion and disputes among U.S. officials about the wide-ranging arms control proposals discussed and almost accepted by Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Four months after the meeting, there is still an "astonishing degree of confusion surrounding what actually happened" and what the two leaders discussed and nearly agreed to, the report said.

The report was based on a series of hearings held by the committee's defense policy panel, which listened to a variety of witnesses, including several U.S. participants in the Iceland summit last Oct. 11-12.

White House officials declined comment on the report, saying they had not yet seen it.

Sweeping U.S. proposals for deep reduction in nuclear arsenals were never studied in advance by the Pentagon for their impact on the military balance, Rep. Les Aspin, D-Wis., panel chairman, said. "This table-now, study-later approach is symptomatic of the whole problem."

The summit was proposed by the Soviets and accepted by Reagan in late September.

Between the time the summit was announced and the meetings began, administration officials failed to consult with U.S. allies or to study the military implications of U.S. proposals, the report said.

When Reagan and Gorbachev met, the U.S. side expected the agenda to be limited to setting a future summit date



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— House Armed Services Committee report

and trying to nail down the final stages of a treaty limiting atomic-tipped missiles in Europe, the report said.

Instead, Gorbachev proposed sweeping reductions in superpower stockpiles and Reagan responded with proposals that were even more wide-ranging, the report said.

Shultz, Weinberger send letter Shamir says Israel now official U.S. ally

TEL AVIV, Israel — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Sunday the Reagan administration has elevated Israel to the status of official ally.

Israeli officials said this could mean expanded military cooperation between the two countries.

Shamir said on Israel Radio, before flying to the United States on a 10-day visit, that the new relationship would put Israel on a par with non-NATO allies like Japan, Australia, South Korea and Egypt.

"Israel is considered for the first time, officially, an ally," Shamir said. "There is much significance to this declaration, above all political significance."

Shamir said specifics of what he termed "certain advantages" from the status change would be worked out during his visit.

A Shamir spokesman, Yossi Ahimeir, told The Associated Press a 1983 bilateral strategic cooperation agreement could be expanded under the new formal relationship.

"I don't know the details. But it is understood that the cooperation, the level of military cooperation, will now be higher, for sure," said Ahimeir.

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Israel, the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, is due to get about \$1.3 billion in military aid and \$1.7 billion in economic assistance this year.

The United States has raised the profile of its military links with Israel in recent weeks as tension rose over a spate of kidnappings of foreigners, including three Americans, in Lebanon last month.

Israeli officials confirmed that Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger sent the Israeli government a letter last week stating that Congress had been informed that Israel was granted the status of official ally.

Liberace case spotlights misleading death certificates

LOS ANGELES — Some doctors write misleading death certificates to protect the privacy of AIDS victims, a process made easier by the complex nature of the disease, experts say.

The writing of false, misleading or incomplete death certificates to conceal AIDS was spotlighted last week when Riverside County Coroner Raymond Carrillo accused Liberace's doctors of covering up AIDS-related pneumonia as the cause of the entertainer's death Feb. 4.

William Ginsburg, Daniels' lawyer, denied a cover-up. Heart failure was listed, he said, because Liberace's symptoms didn't neatly fit the definition of AIDS, so the doctor decided to resolve doubts about the cause of death in favor of Liberace's privacy.

"Liberace's death has shown that physicians will respect the wishes of people with AIDS and their families, at least some will, and withhold the information," said Dr. Neil Schram, chairman of the Los Angeles City-County AIDS Task Force. If asked, "I would probably try to do so," he added.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome cripples the body's immune system, causing victims to die from pneumonia and other so-called opportunistic infections or cancers.

"Many physicians feel they are doing nothing wrong in reporting the death by pneumonia and protecting privacy rights of patients," said Dr. Jack McCleary, president of the Los Angeles County Medical Association. "Since AIDS doesn't really kill the patient, they feel they are following the letter of the law."

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