

world

Yankee trader shops Kabul despite Russian occupation

United Press International KABUL, Afghanistan — You can't keep a good Yankee trader down. With 85,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the government railing about American-inspired plots and newspapers warning darkly of CIA and Chinese collusion, it would not seem a good time for any American businessman to be operating in Kabul.

But Paul Ramsey of Denver walked unconcernedly around the city at the beginning of February buying carpets, tribal weavings and semiprecious stones for his arts and crafts shop back home.

Ramsey, 37, has been coming to

Afghanistan for six years and was last here nearly four months ago. The current trip was his first since the Soviets moved into Afghanistan Dec. 27 and installed a new government.

"I've been spending about \$100,000 a year here," Ramsey said. "I thought I'd better come out just to make sure the Soviet presence doesn't mean the beginning of the end of my dealings in Afghanistan."

"As far as the friendliness of the people I have met over the years, nothing has changed. However, prices of the goods I buy have increased about 20 percent since I was last here," he said.

He put the increase down to a

noticeable drop in supplies of carpets and weavings produced by tribesmen in remote areas who have had difficulty reaching towns and cities because of the political events and the heaviest snowfalls in six years.

Ramsey said he had found Afghan merchants more than anxious to do business with him and the government had not placed any restrictions on him as an American.

He has, however, noted some Afghans being cautious when they talk to him.

"One carpet seller took me outside the building where we were talking and whispered to me, 'The walls have mouses and the mouses have

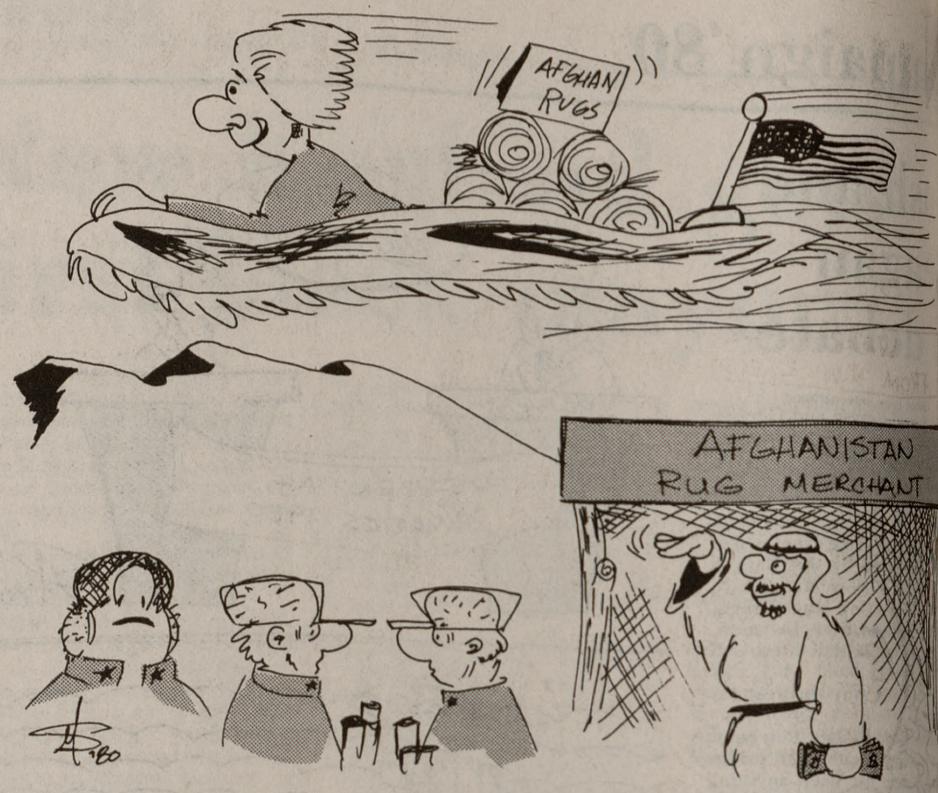
ears.'"

Despite the "slim pickings," Ramsey said he had spent \$30,000 in two days buying carpets and semiprecious stones.

As to the future for a foreign businessman, Ramsey said, "It all depends what happens politically."

He speculated the government could, as in Russia and China, channel its exports through one general state-owned corporation.

His only fear in the current situation is that "someone might mistake me for a Russian. And everyone I meet doesn't seem to like the Russians."



Peace Corps prisoner in Columbia released for ransom after 3 years

United Press International BOGOTA, Colombia — An American Peace Corps worker kidnapped three years ago by leftist revolutionaries has been released in a remote area of Colombia with the aid of a \$250,000 ransom paid by columnist Jack Anderson.

The release Tuesday of Richard Starr, 34, in the southwestern Colombian city of Neiva ended the second longest captivity of an American in Colombia. Businessman William Niehaus, who was held by guer-

rillas four months longer than Starr, was released last year.

Anderson said from Honolulu he had borrowed the money and that his aide Jack Mitchell turned it over to the leftists in cash two weeks ago.

The State Department in Washington said Starr, of Edmonds, Wash., flew out of the country but did not give his destination. The American Embassy in Bogota said he was on his way to the United States.

A source in Colombia said Starr

had arrived in Panama City, Panama, but there was no confirmation of the report. Others reported he was heading for Miami and San Francisco before going home to Edmonds.

Starr, who was working on a botanical study for the Colombian government, was seized Feb. 14, 1977, in the small town of La Macarena in Meta State south of Bogota by guerrillas of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces.

He was believed to have been kid-

napped as an afterthought when guerrillas found him in the town during a raid in which they killed a policeman, looted stores and preached revolutionary ideology to the citizens.

In Edmonds, Starr's stepfather, Fred H. Jensen, said the family had no comment on the release.

Colombian Defense Minister Luis Camacho said Starr emerged at Neiva, 155 miles southwest of Bogota, at the Army's 9th Brigade head-

quarters. A Peace Corps worker in Washington, however, said he was released into American hands.

A Peace Corps spokesman in Washington said Starr was in a shape physically despite being captive longer than any other Peace Corps worker.

There had been only sporadic indications during the three years Starr was in the hands of the guerrillas, who operate over a wide area of Colombia's rugged countryside.

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Iran sets no timetable for hostages' release

United Press International Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh said Wednesday no timetable has been set either for the release of the American hostages or for setting up an international commission to investigate alleged U.S. crimes against Iran.

The foreign minister, in Athens for an unofficial visit, also denounced the United States and the Soviet Union for trying "to instill the fear of one another into the smaller nations in order to take them under their protection."

Asked by a communist reporter about the presence of the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, Ghotbzadeh said, "Obviously we are opposed to the United States presence in the Gulf and Indian Ocean, but the Soviet Union also has no right to be outside its boundaries."

"The United States has no right to be everywhere in the world exercising its power, nor has the Soviet Union. We oppose the presence of the U.S. in the Arab sea but the presence of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and elsewhere is no less dangerous."

On the hostages, Ghotbzadeh said: "There is no timetable for the release of the hostages. There is no timetable for the commission to start work. There is only the decision to begin procedures by forming the

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THIS IS MY COLUMN

This Is My Column

and it doesn't have a name and neither do I.

But I'm an average guy, scramblin' to make a buck like everyone else. And the old buck sure ain't what she used to be.

Everything keeps going up except my wages. And then you read where some big outfit announces "Revenues hit all-time highs; price increases planned."

Who do they think they're kiddin'? And what do they think I'm gonna pay 'em with?

I mean, I'm makin' more than I ever did but by the time I get finished payin' for the stuff we gotta have, I'm lucky if I got enough for a hot dog on Saturday night.

Ya know, I just got a funny feeling. Maybe that's what they're tryin' to tell me: they're takin' in more than ever, but everythin' costs so much, they're down to a hot dog on Saturday night, too.

I guess that's what they call inflation. I don't know where it's gonna end.

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Britain again gives support to Carter's boycott proposal

United Press International LONDON — Britain again proclaimed its firm support for President Carter's campaign to boycott the Moscow Olympics Tuesday, and said holding them in the Soviet Union would "condone Soviet aggression in Afghanistan" and give Moscow a "propaganda victory."

In a tough formal statement, the Foreign Office said the government will notify the British Olympic Committee of its views before its next meeting March 3.

British officials said there is no question of seizing or withholding

passports of British athletes who decide to go to Moscow anyway.

"The decision by the International Olympic Committee to proceed with the Olympic games in Moscow this summer has been noted," the Foreign Office statement said.

"The government is disappointed that the IOC came to this decision. It remains of the view that it would be possible to move them from Moscow. Any other course would appear to condone Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and allow the Soviet propaganda victory."

NOTICE:

Effective Feb. 25, 1980 the security lockers that are located in the entry area on both levels of the Texas A&M Bookstore will be cleaned out each day at 5:00 p.m.

All articles removed may be claimed at the main office of the bookstore. There will be a \$2.00 charge.

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