

All American hostage free; will rest in Maine

United Press International
WIESBADEN, West Germany — Freed American hostage Richard Queen, suffering from multiple sclerosis, plans to recuperate in Maine, then resume his foreign service career.

Queen's doctors announced Tuesday he had contracted MS, a potentially paralyzing disease of the central nervous system that has no known cure. They disagreed with other authorities over what might have caused Queen to develop the affliction.

In Washington, Secretary of State Edmund Muskie said Queen, 28, will return with his family to the United States Friday and recuperate "in the best place in the world — the state of Maine." Queen's parents live in Maine.

The diplomat's father, Harold Queen, said, "Richard took it very calmly" when he was informed he had the disease, known as the "crippler of young adults."

Dr. Jerome Korcak, a State Department physician who examined Queen in Zurich and traveled with him to the U.S. Army hospital in Wiesbaden Saturday, said American tests confirmed the Iranian diagnosis of MS.

Korcak said the cause of the disease was not known, but added "stress is an important factor."

However, authorities at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in New York said there was no medical proof to substantiate the theory stress is a factor in the disease.

MS frequently attacks young adults. It may disappear completely but more often it strikes, goes into remission, then reappears. It may lead to permanent paralysis.

Korcak said Queen, vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, developed symptoms of the disease — nausea, vomiting, dizziness and "abnormal sensations in the upper extremities" — last December, the first month of his 250 days captivity in Iran.

The disease affected Queen's coordination and Iranian doctors feared he had suffered a brain lesion, Korcak said. This prompted them to urge Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to order Queen's release last Friday.

Korcak indicated, however, Queen suffered no permanent brain damage and said "He will be returning to the United States in the next few days."

The elder Queen said his son was in "a very good mood" Tuesday, "eating like mad" and insisting on getting out of his wheelchair.

He said Queen's private room at the 235-bed former Luftwaffe hospital was "stacked with flowers and telegrams" from well-wishers all over the world.

Atheist calls to nullify judicial oath

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — Atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair asked a federal appeals court Wednesday to nullify a portion of the Texas Constitution requiring judges and other public officials to declare belief in a supreme being.

O'Hair, an attorney who in 1963 succeeded in having prayer banned from public school classrooms by order of the Supreme Court, said the provision requiring belief in a supreme being barred atheists from serving as state judges. She also said it was an infringement on her ability to argue cases as a lawyer.

"I am unable to practice in the Texas courts because I do not believe in God," O'Hair said. "The whole thing has left me in a state of extraordinary limbo."

A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard the case but gave no indication of when it would issue a decision.

Joining O'Hair in the challenge was attorney Robert Vork of New Jersey, a specialist in constitutional law.

"Every trial judge, appellate judge and every juror is required to take this (supreme being) oath," Vork said.

As a result of the oath, atheists could not expect fair trials in the Texas courts, Vork said.

"In race and sex discrimination cases, a judge can disqualify himself because he is black or white or male or female. But here, no atheist can serve on the judiciary because no atheist can take that oath."

Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat asked him whether a belief in God affected a judge's ability to make impartial decisions.

"No, I don't think so," Vork said. "But to the extent that members of our class cannot serve as members of the judiciary, we are denied a fair trial. What is bad is no atheist can serve as a member of the bench."



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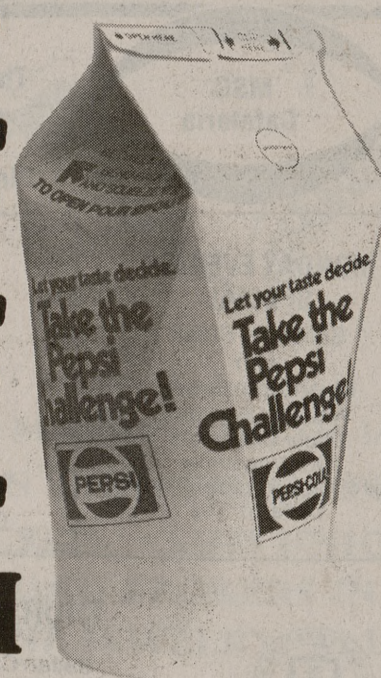


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