

National/World

Anti-gun feeling high

WASHINGTON — Handgun control advocates say the shooting death of John Lennon may aid the congressional drive for gun control legislation, but fear progress could be cut short when Republicans take over the Senate.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said in a statement Tuesday the shooting deaths of Dr. Michael Halberstam in Washington, D.C., Friday night and Lennon in New York Monday night were "senseless acts of violence that once again emphasize the urgency of reasonable handgun control."

The Washington Post, in an editorial Tuesday, called on Congress to enact "sensible firearms controls."

"We've been swamped with calls since 4 a.m. this morning," Michael Beard, executive director of the National Coalition to Ban Handguns, said Tuesday. "I've never seen anything like this."

Beard said support for handgun control legislation ebbs and flows with events in the news. "He said there is a bill in Congress that would make the current handgun situation worse."

The bill, supporters said, is aimed at allowing hunters to transport guns through states with restric-

tive gun laws without violating those laws.

"Up until yesterday (Tuesday), I would have said it had a good chance of passage. Now, I don't know," Beard said, citing reaction to the Lennon slaying.

A spokesman for Sen. James McClure, R-Idaho, the leading Senate sponsor of the bill, said Lennon's shooting would have "no effect whatsoever" on the legislation.

Beard said the chances of McClure's bill being approved will improve dramatically when Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., a co-sponsor, takes over Kennedy's chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee next month.

"There's a good chance that rather than a step forward, we could take a step back," Beard said.

President-elect Ronald Reagan described the Lennon slaying as a "great tragedy," but said he continues to oppose gun control legislation.

"I believe in the kind of handgun legislation we have in California. If somebody commits a crime and carries a gun while doing it, add five to 15 years to the sentence," Reagan said.

The law in California provides that anyone who uses a gun during the commission of a felony has three years added to his or her prison sentence.

Muskie doesn't rule out military action

BRUSSELS, Belgium — U.S. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie Wednesday refused to rule out a Western military response to a potential Soviet invasion of Poland.

Muskie, arriving for a NATO ministerial council meeting as the possibility of Soviet intervention in Poland hung over the alliance, told reporters aboard his plane:

"Poland is 200 miles from NATO territory. NATO is created to defend the territory and there is the possibility of the use of force."

He said he was not predicting the use of Western military action, but he was not ruling it out.

Although NATO was facing the use of Soviet military force in Eastern Europe, he made it clear that the United States was not proposing the use of force as an immediate reaction.

But, he repeated, "It is not the kind of operation that NATO can prudently ignore."

The American secretary of state, on his last scheduled trip abroad in the office, said the first question for NATO to face concerns Soviet intentions.

He answered his own question by framing the Soviet motives in terms of Poland, alone. He said he did not believe that the Soviets intended to use a Polish intervention as a prelude to a larger military operation.

But he added, "We don't think it's wider. But we can't assume anything. We have to be prepared."

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Hostage dies in Cubans' escape try

MEXICO CITY — Armed Cubans stormed the Vatican mission in Havana and seized four nuns and another hostage in a bid to leave the Communist island, but the attackers were flushed from the building in a gunfight with security forces in which a hostage was killed, reports from Havana said.

The reports said the four nuns, believed to be Canadians, were un-

harmful. The fifth hostage, a Cuban office employee, died when Cuban forces, lobbing tear gas bombs, stormed the building to end the brief siege, the reports said.

In a four-paragraph dispatch from Havana monitored in Mexico City, the official Prensa Latina news agency said armed "anti-social delinquents" hoping to get out of Cuba seized the Vatican's mission Tuesday, taking the five hostages.

A Havana-dated dispatch from Mexico's government-owned Notimex news service said 14 gunmen, all Cubans, were involved. The Prensa Latina report did not say how many gunmen seized the building.

Security forces from the Ministry of Interior charged into the mission and rescued the four nuns, but the office worker died in the gunfire, Prensa Latina said.

The dispatch said the gunmen

were captured and turned over to authorities and "must respond to their terrible criminal action." It did not explain what legal action was planned.

Notimex, Mexico's news agency, said the security forces used tear gas before storming the mission and rescuing the nuns, who had to be carried out on stretchers suffering from tear gas inhalation.

The Mexican news agency said there were unconfirmed reports the nuns were from Canada. It said the director of the Vatican mission, Giulio Einaudi, was not in the building at the time of the attack.

Cancer treatment question

Women leery of surgery

WASHINGTON — A national survey indicates that many women would want a more active role in determining their treatment for breast cancer, possibly because they be-

lieve doctors sometimes perform unnecessary breast surgery.

The study conducted for the National Cancer Institute found that nine out of 10 of the 1,580 women questioned said they would obtain an opinion from a second doctor before undergoing breast surgery.

"Fifty-five percent said they would not give their doctor prior consent to remove a breast immediately following surgical biopsy if cancer were discovered," said Dr. Vincent DeVita, director of the cancer

institute. "Instead they prefer to make the decision about cancer treatment in two stages."

An interval between diagnostic surgery and surgical treatment allows time for a review of the pathology report, time for a second medical opinion and time to explore alternative treatments.

The survey released Tuesday found that 63 percent of the women questioned believed that unnecessary breast surgery is sometimes performed for cancer suspects.

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