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AWACS planes sent to monitor Libya

United Press International
CAIRO, Egypt (UPI) — The United States confronted Libyan leader Moammar Khadafy by sending four AWACS planes and an aircraft carrier to monitor Libyan military movement amid "extremely heightened" tension in North Africa.

"Our armed forces are fully prepared to repel any aggression against Egypt's security," Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Abd Rab el Nabi Hafez told reporters Thursday, commenting on reports of troop buildups along Libya's borders.

In Khartoum, Presidents Gaafar Numeiry of Sudan and Hissene Habre of Chad met Thursday to discuss the reported Libyan threats to their nations' security.

Aides to Habre have warned Libya was massing troops, armor and warplanes along the border for an invasion of Chad. U.S. officials say there also has been a buildup of Libyan troops along the border with Sudan.

In Washington, officials said four AWACS early warning planes were sent to Egypt and the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Nimitz sailed near Libyan waters in a show of strength aimed at deterring the reported Libyan threat.

By late Wednesday, the Nimitz had moved back into the Mediterranean, the officials said. ABC News reported that the carrier was sitting off the coast of Egypt today, its jets within minutes of the Libyan coast.

The Reagan administration denied

it dispatched the U.S. forces in response to a Libyan military buildup, but a senior official said there was an atmosphere of "extremely heightened danger" in the north African region.

The U.S. official's carefully worded statement appeared designed to send a clear signal to Khadafy the United States will not tolerate hostile intentions toward its allies.

In Tripoli, Khadafy defiantly reasserted Thursday that Libya was ready to fight to defend the Gulf of Sidra, which it claims, against American incursions.

Khadafy said he would "not permit any state to enter our territorial waters. The Libyan people are ready to fight to defend their lands, waters and skies."

Australian brush fire finally under control

United Press International
MELBOURNE, Australia — Some 500 firefighters brought under control a two-day "holocaust" of fire that killed at least 69 people and razed hundreds of miles of parched southern Australian brush, officials said today.

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser called for a national weekend of mourning and described the loss of life and an estimated \$400 million in damage as one of the greatest disasters in history.

"South Australia and Victoria have been devastated by a holocaust and I extend my sincerest sympathy," a stunned Fraser said, after surveying the two stricken states from a helicop-

ter. A 1939 Australian fire killed 71 people.

One blaze burned out of control today in the Warburton area northeast of Melbourne in the state of Victoria, where firefighters rescued 83 people who escaped the raging inferno by hiding in a 1,000-foot-long tunnel.

The group of 83 included three pregnant women, 20 children and 15 pet dogs who fled to safety in the 3-foot-wide tunnel in the Upper Yarra dam near Warburton Thursday when the brushfires threatened their homes. The group spent Thursday night in the tunnel, officials said.

About 1,000 firefighters today continued battling the last stubborn fire.

Officials said no houses or lives were believed threatened but the Country Fire Authority in Melbourne warned some spot blazes could flare again.

Burned out cars and the carcasses of animals littered the countryside. Hundreds of kangaroos, wallabies, cattle and sheep had to be shot after suffering serious burns. Ranchers reported staggering losses.

Officials said 26 people died in South Australia and 43 in Victoria, the two states where fires fanned by gusty winds raced across parched plains.

Most were trapped in their homes by walls of fire or incinerated in vehicles while trying to escape. Hundreds more were injured.

A&M researchers say mild flu epidemic a possibility

by Donn Friedman
Battalion Reporter
Flu researchers say there may be an influenza epidemic on the Texas A&M campus this year, but say there's no reason for students to hide in their rooms or wear surgical masks wherever they go.

From the outbreaks of flu in the area and the analysis of data obtained at Texas A&M, there appears to be a good chance that a flu epidemic will hit the College Station area, said Dr. Robert Quarles, director of the Baylor College of Medicine.

"Flu has been reported to be widespread throughout the country," he said.

"A mild to moderate epidemic has been observed in Houston during the past three weeks. Some sort of outbreak of the flu also has been reported at the University of Texas and the Austin area, and Baylor University and the Waco area."

Webster defines an epidemic as an

unprecedented spread of disease, but Dr. Claude Goswick, director of the A.P. Beutel Health Center, refers to an epidemic as more than an average number of cases of a sickness.

"It's like when you say hemorrhage," Goswick said. "You really just mean bleeding — it could be a little or a lot. It means different things to different people."

Last year only slightly more than the 150 to 250 cases usually reported a week were reported at Texas A&M, he said.

"Last year we were told to anticipate a much bigger epidemic, but it never materialized," Goswick said.

This year's outbreak of the flu is not of epidemic proportions, said John Quarles, a microbiologist who works with the Texas A&M flu study.

"An epidemic occurs when a disease is out of control in a certain area," Quarles said. "The flu is under control here."

About 10 cases of the flu — Bangkok virus Type A — have been iso-

lated here, he said. But this may represent only a small percentage of the total because everyone who gets sick doesn't come to the health center for treatment, Quarles added.

Using computer programs to graph the data pertaining to the number of flu cases, Quarles developed the following figures:

Normally about 150 to 250 people a week come to the health center with respiratory complaints, but during the fourth to eighth weeks of 1983 the number rose to almost 500. Figures from 1978-81 also indicate the same rise in complaints. Those include colds, runny noses and flu cases.

The number usually drops back to normal levels after spring break, he said.

"It has been about three weeks since we isolated the flu virus on the A&M campus — usually it spreads much more rapidly," he said. "This year we don't expect a large number of cases at once, but rather a longer, drawn-out season of the flu."



Looks good guys

staff photo by Rob Johnston

The U.S. Ambassador to Argentina was among the many at the main drill field Thursday afternoon to witness the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets review. From left to

right are University President Frank Vandiver, Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman, Col. Donald L. Burton, Col. Henry C. Hill, and Col. Donald J. Johnson.

State senate approves bill to ban 'cop-killer' bullets

United Press International
AUSTIN — Legislation that would ban the use, possession, sale or manufacture in Texas of powerful armor-piercing bullets has been unanimously approved by the state Senate.

The Senate Thursday also sent to Gov. Mark White a bill that establishes new guidelines on protective custody procedures for mental patients, and sent the House a bill that would create a registration and training program for lay midwives.

Law enforcement officers are lob-

bying for passage of the so-called "cop-killer" bullet bill because they are worried about criminals gaining access to the special Teflon-tipped bullets.

Tests have shown the ammunition is capable of penetrating most bullet-proof vests used by police. Several other states have already banned the bullet.

The bill's co-sponsor, Sen. J.E. Brown, R-Lake Jackson, said it would "effectively control" the spread of the bullets "so our peace officers won't be

exposed to this hazard."

The midwives bill would require a \$50 fee for training by the state Health Department, but Sen. Ed Howard, D-Texarkana, said the fee would not cover the cost of the training.

Sen. Hector Uribe, D-Brownsville said midwives would not be able to afford the \$200 fee originally suggested by Howard.

"These people assist the very very poor," he said. "They're in no better financial condition than the people they serve."

White questions emergency funds request from TDC

United Press International
AUSTIN — An emergency request from the Texas Department of Corrections for \$81 million to build a prison housing facility prompted Gov. Mark White to question the propriety of the buildings being requested.

"I'm very disturbed by the seemingly unending requests for appropriations to build prisons," White said. "I've seen now a range of numbers associated with prisons that have included approximately 1,500 beds for \$2.7 million and then it seems for

4,000 its going to cost \$81 million. "That raises the question in my mind as to alternatives to that type of expensive construction."

White then added that the Texas Board of Corrections needed changes in its membership.

"I'm going to be very closely involved in the selection of board members," he said.

Three members' terms — T. Louis Austin, T.L. Roach and Joe La Mantia — expired Tuesday and White said he will name his appointees as soon as possible.

The TDC board has asked White to

grant emergency status for its appropriation to complete a 1,000-bed maximum security prison and start work another 2,000-bed maximum security facility.

In other matters, White refused let a sharp reduction in expected revenues move him from his campaign promise to support a 24 percent pay hike for the state's public school teachers.

The governor has held off delivering his budget address for several days while his staff prepares the appropriations proposal.

Local residents to get 409 area code

by Tracey Taylor

Battalion Staff

The local area code will change in four weeks because of growth in the Houston metropolitan area.

Effective March 19, the area code will change from 713 to 409 in Bryan-College Station and in 178 other southeast Texas cities. Houston and 29 other cities will retain the 713 designation. Local seven-digit telephone numbers will not change.

When the area code change is completed, telephone numbers originally used in this area can be used in the Houston area.

John Wallace, public affairs manager for General Telephone Company of the Southwest, said the change has taken more than a year of intense planning and cooperation.

"It's an extensive process," he said. "It had to be coordinated through GTE, Southwestern Bell and all the independent and/or cooperative phone companies that serve this area."

Although the new area code officially takes effect March 19, there will be a three-month grace period

before the 713 area code is changed, Wallace said.

"The March 19 date is to encourage people to begin using the 409 area code — to change their dialing habits," he said.

"If someone in Dallas wants to call someone in Bryan and doesn't know that the area code has changed, he can dial 713 until June 19 and still get Bryan. After that time, however, there will get a recording saying that the area code has changed and to hang up and dial again."

Bryan-College Station residents may receive a new rate hike along with the new area code.

On Feb. 11, GTE asked the Public Utility Commission of Texas for \$85.5 million in new revenues. GTE officials said a need for modernization and new service improvement programs prompted the rate increase request.

If the proposed rate increase is approved, the total monthly charge in this area would be raised from \$9.10 to \$13.10, an increase of about 44 percent, he said.

Currently, the monthly charge of \$9.10 includes a \$7.90 charge

for service and \$1.20 charge for extended area service. The proposed \$4 increase would be for the service charge, not the extended area service charge, Wallace said.

Extended area service enables citizens to call surrounding communities for local rates instead of the long-distance rates that normally would be charged.

Wallace said the EAS charge, which everyone receives, will remain the same.

"EAS is not an optional service such as call-forwarding," he said. "It's something that everyone in the community has to agree on."

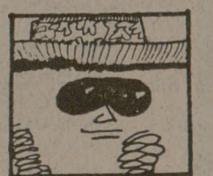
Having a rate increase approved involves up to a year of extensive study, detailing expenses and revenues, Wallace said. The phone company decides how much revenue is needed for expenses, then files proposed price hikes with the Public Utility Commission.

Testimony from phone company representatives is presented during a hearing. A hearing examiner then presents a report of the proceedings to the three-member PUC for a final ruling.

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forecast



Mostly clear skies today with the high reaching 70. Northerly winds at 10 to 15 mph. Mainly clear for tonight with a low near 43. Clear and warmer on Saturday with a high around 74.