

Johnson Space Center key in shuttle program

United Press International

HOUSTON — There is no danger of large parts of Johnson Space Center duties or employees being transferred to Florida, the center's director assured Chamber of Commerce members Wednesday.

"There will be some changes as time goes on," Gerald R. Griffin told the chamber's Aviation Committee. "I don't think, though, there's any chance of moving large chunks of JSC to KSC (Kennedy Space Center)."

Griffin also said the naming of JSC as the lead center for the space station program "provides a super stability factor in terms of levels of employment" for the Houston facility.

However, he said there will be only a "modest" increase in the num-

ber of overall employees at the center from the space station because the space shuttle program is requiring fewer employees as it becomes more routine.

In addition to growth at the center, private companies are interested in moving their space departments to Houston to be near the NASA facility, Griffin said.

"There is one warning — that some of the deficit reduction steps could catch us," he said. "The NASA budget is less than 1 percent of the total budget. If you cut it much more it's going to eventually run out of steam."

Griffin said JSC will be a "key player for many years to come" because of its designation as the lead center for both the space station and

space shuttle, two programs with no designated end.

The space station is scheduled to be in operation in the early 1990s, but Griffin said he would like to see it in orbit in 1992, which will be the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

Asked the difference between the Soviet space station and the one planned by the United States, Grimes said the Salyut is a "simple machine" that has "no where near the type of capability we're planning."

Griffin told the business leaders that the fourth space shuttle, the Atlantis, is expected to be completed in mid-1985, about the same time refurbishment of the first shuttle, the Columbia, will be complete.

Hijackers threaten to kill 95 if 21 prisoners aren't freed

United Press International

KUWAIT — Five gunmen who hijacked a Kuwaiti airliner to Tehran threatened Wednesday to blow up the plane with all 95 people aboard unless Kuwait freed 21 people imprisoned for bombing U.S. and French facilities. Kuwait refused.

Iran's official news agency said the hijackers disclosed that a hostage they shot to death and dumped on the tarmac Tuesday was a U.S. diplomat, but U.S. officials in Washington said they had no confirmation the victim was an American.

State Department officials said three Americans employed by the Agency for International Development were among the 90 hostages aboard the plane 36 hours after five heavily armed hijackers seized the French-built Airbus carrying 166 people on a flight from Kuwait to Karachi, Pakistan.

"We're concerned about everybody on that plane, but obviously we're particularly concerned about American citizens," State Depart-

ment spokesman John Hughes said in Washington.

The hijackers Wednesday freed 24 hostages, including a security guard wounded during the takeover, raising the number to 70 passengers released since the Kuwaiti Airways jet landed at Tehran's snow-covered Mehrabad Airport.

Hours later, the hijackers announced their plane was ready to leave for an undisclosed destination but the runway was blocked.

"They stepped out of the plane and checked the plane's lights and wheels and the sound of its starter was also heard," the official Islamic Republic News Agency said. "However, security forces have closed the runway with vehicles and other obstacles."

IRNA said the hijackers said they had "planted explosives in the plane" and threatened to blow it up if their demands were not met.

They demanded Kuwait release 21 people who were imprisoned for a wave of bombings against French and U.S. facilities in Kuwait last De-

cember, Kuwaiti officials said. The bombings were attributed to Shiite Moslem supporters of Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

IRNA said ambulances, firemen and other rescue teams were on alert around the jetliner, which was also surrounded by troops on a snow-covered side runway at the airport.

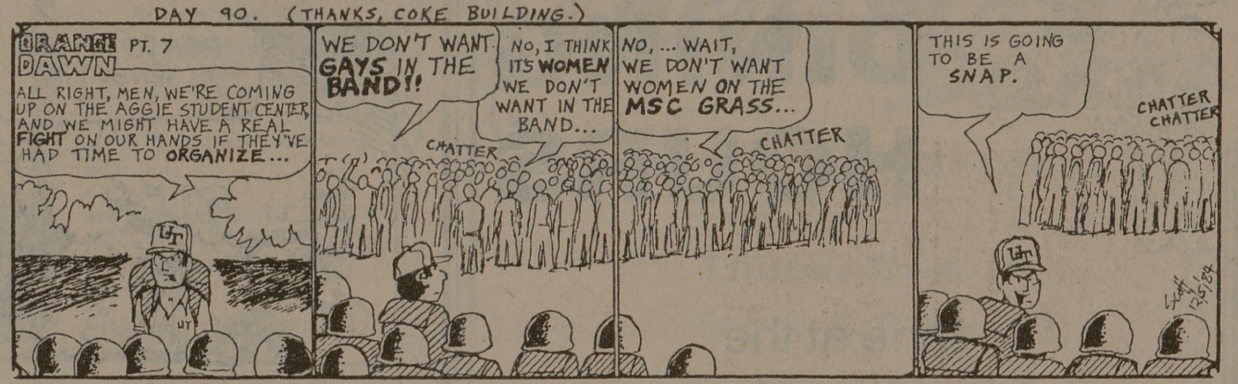
The Arabic-speaking hijackers forced the airliner with 150 other passengers and 11 crew aboard to Tehran early Tuesday, shortly after a scheduled stopover at Dubai, the United Emirates, on a flight from Kuwait to Karachi, Pakistan.

Shortly after its arrival in Tehran, the hijackers shot a man aboard the aircraft, dumping him onto the tarmac. The official Iranian News Agency IRNA said the man died of his wounds on the way to a Tehran hospital.

A diplomatic source said the description of the victim's body did not appear to match that of any of the three AID employees, who sources said were based in Karachi.

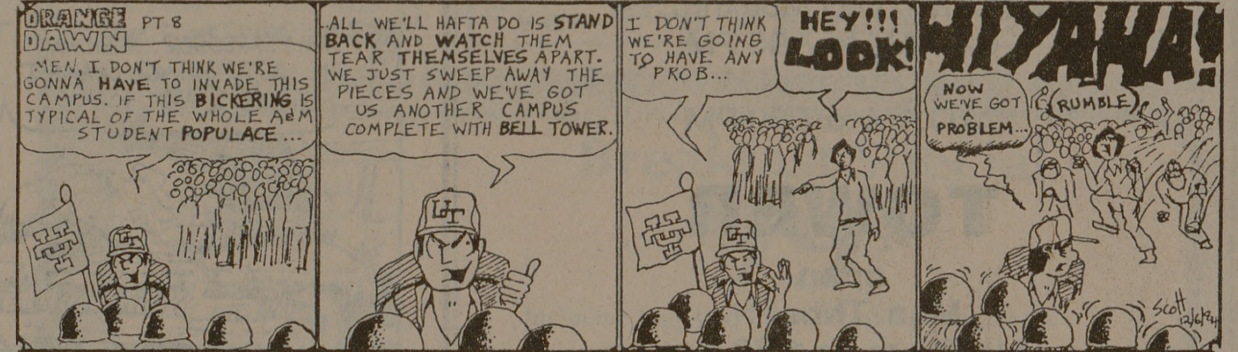
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New House members advised on spending

Large budget cuts necessary

United Press International

WASHINGTON — President Reagan met with his Cabinet Wednesday to present his plan to slash about \$34 billion from domestic spending in his new budget after telling new House Republicans to "take the lead and take the heat" for the cuts.

Reagan's plan for big budget cuts, which is expected to include several popular programs, is part of a bid to keep the national debt from hitting \$2 trillion in 1986.

An administration official indicated that Reagan, searching for a \$42 billion reduction in spending, had settled on a \$34 billion cut in non-military budgets, leaving \$8 billion to cut from the Pentagon budget request. Military spending will be

considered next week after Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger returns from a trip to Europe.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said he would not quarrel with reports Reagan would try to dissuade Cabinet members from appealing budget cuts in their departments.

In an Oval Office meeting with 33 newly elected House Republicans, budget director David Stockman stressed the need to keep the fiscal 1986 budget under \$1 trillion, said John Groberg, a new Illinois representative.

Officials have already said Reagan is trying to keep next year's overall spending at this year's \$968 billion

level, with some programs increased and others cut.

"There are two magic words — 1 trillion and 2 trillion," Groberg told reporters meeting at the White House. He said Stockman, who did most of the talking, told them in order to keep the national debt under \$2 trillion by the end of next year, the budget would have to be kept under \$1 trillion.

Asked if Reagan impressed upon them how difficult it would be to fight the annual budget battle on Capitol Hill, Groberg said his response was "only that it's going to be tough."

Helen Bentley, who will take over a Maryland House seat in January, said Stockman "pointed out we have to take some very firm stands on spending."

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