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## WORLD AND NATION

### SHOE

by Jeff MacNelly



People returning to homes

## Smoke spurs evacuation

**Associated Press**  
 CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Up to 10,000 people were evacuated after a dense cloud of choking, acidic smoke from a smoldering plastics fire spread over the southern part of the city, but residents were allowed to return home in early afternoon as the smoke began to clear.

Cedar Rapids Mayor Don Canney announced that the danger was over for the residents, who began returning to their homes in the southern part of the city shortly before 1 p.m. Seven people complaining of scratchy throats and burning eyes were treated at Cedar Rapids hospitals.

Gov. Terry Branstad declared Linn County and Cedar Rapids disaster areas Tuesday morning after

the fire sent a vast cloud of black smoke containing hydrochloric acid over Iowa's second-largest city. Branstad said he made the declaration mainly to enable him to put the National Guard on alert.

The fire, which started Monday afternoon when a crew was demolishing a plastic dome at the city's old sewage plant, was extinguished around noon Tuesday.

Doctors had said the hydrochloric acid gas did not pose a deadly threat to healthy residents, but could irritate eyes and respiratory systems.

There is little danger of permanent damage from such short-term exposure to hydrochloric acid in its gaseous state, said Bill Poppendorf, an industrial hygienist at University Hospitals in Iowa City.

Between 5,000 and 10,000 Cedar Rapids residents had been evacuated by Tuesday morning, city police Capt. Howard Gardner said. The Red Cross sheltered about 1,000 people at two schools.

One evacuee said the fumes made her feel sick.

"It smells like sulfur, like 100,000 matches at once," said Debi Fields of the Hyde-Away Manor trailer court, who was evacuated to Taft Junior High School. "It started making me sick to my stomach. We closed all our windows and put on the air conditioners and hoped to stay the night. But the police came and told us, 'Everyone out.'"

The cloud erupted when a demolition worker touched a plastic dome with a torch, officials said.

## U.S. files protest with Soviets about treatment of soldiers

**Associated Press**  
 WASHINGTON — The United States, for the second time in four months, is protesting the treatment of American soldiers inside East Germany following a weekend incident in which a U.S. vehicle was rammed by a Soviet military truck.

Pentagon spokesman Fred Hoffman said Tuesday one of three American soldiers riding in the U.S. car was injured slightly and a protest was filed with Soviet military officials in Potsdam, East Germany, where the American mission has offices.

"The U.S. military authorities have made a protest to the Soviets and the Soviets have said they will look into it," Hoffman said. Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger "is very disturbed by it," the spokesman continued.

"Let me underscore at the outset that we view this matter very seriously," Hoffman said. "The intent

of the Soviets who were involved in the incident is unknown.

"But regardless of whether it was an accident or a deliberate act, it accentuates once again the problem that we have faced in recent times, the difficulties that our perfectly legitimate liaison teams have been experiencing in operating in East Germany..."

He said the incident occurred shortly after midnight Saturday on a public highway northeast of Berlin near Satzborn, East Germany. The injured American was Col. Roland Lajoie, who heads the U.S. Military Liaison Mission, he said.

Lajoie was thrown against the back of the front seat and suffered fractures to the lower part of his eye socket, Hoffman said. Lajoie was hospitalized briefly.

The American vehicle, described as resembling a Land Rover and clearly identified with distinctive license plates, was being driven by Staff Sgt. Jessie Schatz. Schatz was also the driver last March 24 for Maj. Arthur D. Nicholson Jr., who was shot and killed by a Soviet sentry while conducting what was described as a routine surveillance mission.

The United States is still awaiting a Soviet response to its demand for an apology and compensation for Nicholson's family.

The other American in the vehicle was identified only as a Maj. Lyons, the spokesman added.

Hoffman said details of the incident were still sketchy. But he said the three Americans were "doing their work" and were not near any off-limits Soviet facility.

## Federal Reserve Board to keep current monetary policy in place

**Associated Press**  
 WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve Board, faced with a persistently sluggish economy, announced Tuesday that it was holding monetary policy steady for the rest of the year in a move likely to keep interest rates about where they are in coming months.

While the central bank did not make any significant changes in its money growth targets for 1985, the Fed did announce that it was revising the base period for computing the most closely watched measure of the money supply, M1.

Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker refused to predict at a briefing for reporters the future course of interest rates. But he indicated that the bank was sticking to the basic policy course it has followed all year long.

The central bank tries to provide enough money to keep the economy growing at a healthy pace while guarding against allowing the money supply to expand so rapidly that it re-ignites inflation.

However, economic growth has

sagged considerably this year at a time when M1 has been well above the initial targets set by the central bank.

Rather than abandon the original target, the Fed announced it would measure growth from this year beginning in the period from April through June, providing a higher starting base than the final three months of 1984.

Some analysts had predicted this change, viewing it as a way that the central bank could account for the rapid money growth without being forced to dramatically tighten monetary controls at a time when economic growth remains so sluggish.

However, this is only the second time the Fed has ever resorted to a change in its base period to cover a major over-shoot of its money targets. It made a similar correction in 1983.

Volcker was asked whether he was concerned that the Fed's decision to rebase M1 would tarnish his image as a staunch inflation fighter.

He responded, "I am as concerned about inflation as I've ever

been and I don't think we are yielding... We are making reasonable judgments which we think don't present inflationary risks."

Interest rates have fallen considerably in recent months. In June, banks lowered their prime rate, the base business lending rate, to 9.5 percent, the third cut this year.

Fixed-rate mortgages have dropped to around 12 percent, their lowest level in five years.

The interest rate declines came in part from Fed actions to ease monetary conditions as a way of spurring renewed economic growth.

So far this year, the economy, as measured by the gross national product, has advanced at a weak 1.7 percent annual rate while unemployment has remained mired at 7.3 percent for the past five months.

The Fed predicted that growth for the whole year would average 2.75 percent to 3 percent. In February, the central bank and many private economists were forecasting growth of 3.5 percent to 4 percent.

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