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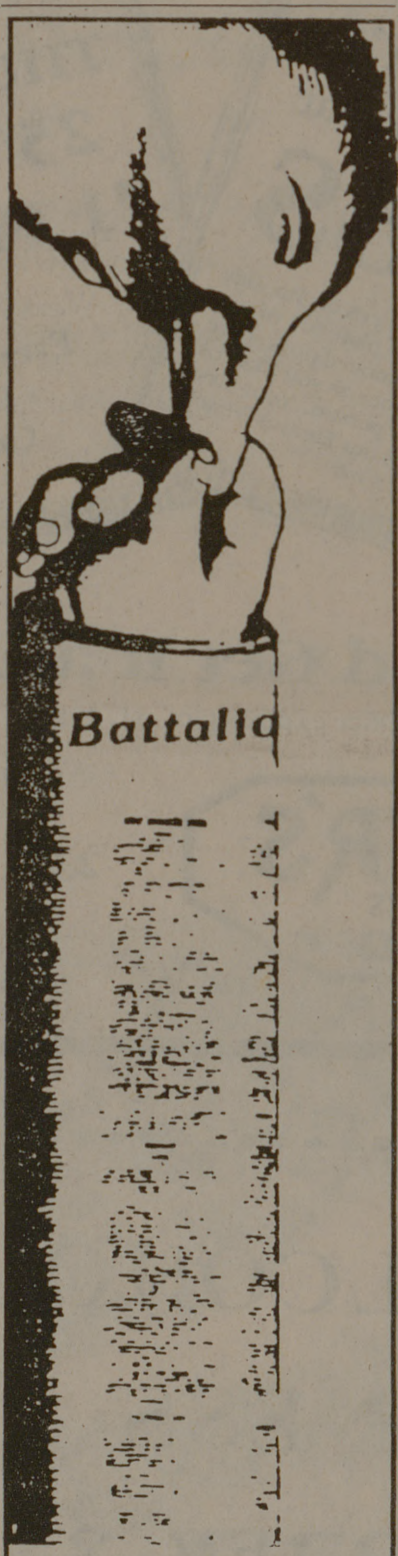
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World and Nation

Free ride

Federal employees take cruises at taxpayers' expense

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A congressional investigation uncovered "numerous examples of extravagant" trips on luxury liners by federal employees traveling at taxpayer expense to and from overseas assignments, a House committee chairman says.

Rep. Jack Brooks, D-Texas, head of the Government Operations Committee, said trips on ocean liners at prices several times the cost of equivalent airplane trips were turned up by a study begun last year by the General Accounting Office, the investigative wing of Congress.

The chairman made the statements in a written announcement that his committee has called State Department and U.S. Information Agency officials to explain at a hearing Wednesday why their employees "travel in the lap of luxury on cruise ships rather than on coach-fare airlines."

Brooks also said officials would be asked to discuss a GAO finding that the two agencies "have been very lax in accounting for millions of dollars in travel advances provided their employees."

Copies of the GAO report have not been made public by the committee, but a source familiar with the document cited two examples found by the GAO of ocean liner travel by State Department personnel.

In one case, an official and his family, returning to Buenos Aires, Argentina, from home leave in Los Angeles, flew to Cartagena, Colombia, and then took a 25-day cruise to Buenos Aires, according to the source.

The source, who spoke on condition he not be identified, quoted the GAO as saying the voyage cost \$18,156, compared to \$3,360 had the trip been made by air.

In the other case, an employee and his six dependents flew from New Delhi, India, for home leave in Spokane, Wash., and began the return trip by flying to New York. There they boarded the Queen Elizabeth II for a five-day crossing to England, where they took a flight back to India.

The cost of the ocean liner passage was \$18,407, nearly four times the \$4,732 for airfare from New

York to England, the GAO reportedly found.

Brooks ordered the investigation in March 1984 after his committee held a hearing into the case of a USIA employee who took his family on a taxpayer-funded \$17,371 trip up the Mississippi on the plush Delta Queen as he was returning home from an assignment in South America.

The USIA said at the time that the riverboat ride was approved by the State Department, which handles travel arrangements for USIA, without the information agency's knowledge.

At the 1984 hearing, Comptroller General Charles Bowsher, head of the GAO, said that while federal regulations allow government-financed home leave trips, they are supposed to be made by the "most direct and expeditious routes."

Brooks said in the statement that the GAO report supports his comment at the 1984 hearing that the Delta Queen cruise might have been only "the smallest tip of an enormous iceberg."

Expansion of secure phone system needed to reduce security leaks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some experts believe a shortage of secure telephones and carelessness by officials who sometimes are too impatient to use them are giving away national secrets to foreign powers.

"We're getting eaten alive by the bad guys," said one official, who spoke on the condition he would not be identified. Expanding the network of secure phones "has always been a low priority because of the cost," he said.

But with government officials more aware of the potential damage of losing vital national security information, a new network of secure phones — capable of scrambling transmissions before they pass through the atmosphere where they can be intercepted — is being developed under a \$44 million National Security Agency contract.

With delivery scheduled to begin in 1987, at least 500,000 of the new phones will be installed at government desks and in the offices of defense contractors, who often deal with classified information. As many as 2 million of the phones are expected to be bought by other firms in the private sector, including major corporations, high-tech companies and financial institutions, the NSA says.

NSA, part of the nation's intelligence network, is in

charge of protecting government communications and listening in on the communications of foreign powers.

"We want to get (sensitive information) scrambled and get people used to that. People are just so used to using (unsecure) phones," said Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

"People get careless because there are a limited number (of secure phones), he said. "It's like someone who says, 'I can leave the safe open for a few minutes while I run down the hall.' Once they're more available, that will stop."

The government won't say how many secure phones it has. J.C. Sharp, deputy chief of information policy at the NSA, said the information is classified because it would "indicate to adversaries what the size of the effort is."

But the source said the government's network of secure phones is not much larger than it was in the late 1950s.

Last March, the NSA selected RCA, Motorola and American Telephone & Telegraph Co. to develop the new phones. The companies are required under the contract to deliver prototypes by the middle of next year and to begin delivering the new phones the following year, Sharp said.

editorial editor of the Nohon Keizai Shinbun, were among 25 people chosen last year by the government to scrutinize Japan's highly centralized school system. They and three other council members are on a two-week tour of schools and campuses in the United States and Great Britain.

The Provisional Council on Educational Reform, in its first of four reports last June, concluded that Japan's schools — the "driving force" behind the country's postwar economic boom — face numerous problems.

The emphasis on rote memorization in the early grades thwarts creativity and prevents children from developing the ability to think, the council said.

The council criticized the intense competition for university entrance and said Japanese society puts too much stock in test scores and academic pedigrees.

Copies of a Japanese translation of Boyer's 1984 book, "High School," about shortcomings in U.S. secondary education are prominently on display at the Carnegie Foundation. But Boyer has an even closer tie to Japanese education.

"Our grandchildren have attended Japanese schools and they speak Japanese more fluently than English," Boyer told his visitors.

His daughter, Beverly Reed, who recently brought her three young children back from a three-year stay in Tokyo, helped translate the luncheon conversation. Her oldest daughter, Leah, 7, spent last year in a Japanese first-grade class.

Reed said, "The biggest difference between the two school systems is the flexibility . . . and the idea of the individual vs. the idea of the group." In her daughter's Japanese class, all 43 students progressed at an equal pace.

Saito said Japanese schools need more flexibility.

Caller claims another Soviet captive is dead

Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — An anonymous caller claiming to speak for the kidnappers of four Soviets said Sunday they have killed a second captive and dumped his body near the Cite Sportive stadium in south Beirut, the Voice of Lebanon radio reported.

But a police search after night-fall was called off after an hour when no corpse was found.

The Christian radio station quoted the caller as saying in Arabic, "One captive was executed 15 minutes ago. His body is lying at the Cite Sportive. The police are invited to go there to pick it up."

Five police patrols and Shiite Moslem Amal militiamen combed the area, surrounded by muddy empty lots and garbage dumps, but found no body.

"There's no way to assert the authenticity of the call," said a police officer searching with flashlights among piles of rubble surrounding the sports complex.

The body of a Soviet diplomat, consular attache Arkady Katkov, 32, was dumped at the bomb-blasted stadium Oct. 2, two days after he and the three other Soviets were abducted in Moslem west Beirut.

Anonymous callers who said they represented the Islamic Liberation Organization told radio stations the group had kidnapped the Soviets.

The callers said the goal was to pressure Syria, Moscow's main Arab ally, to call off a leftist offensive against Sunni Moslem fundamentalists in the northern port of Tripoli.

Japanese officials studying U.S. schools

Associated Press

PRINCETON, N.J. — "What would make Japanese education better? Is that possible?" an American educator asked the delegation from Japan. "We hear it's perfect."

The retired Japanese diplomat suppressed a smile, shook his head and replied, "We think it's struggling."

So the dialogue began on a jocular note as East met West over lunch at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, where three members of a blue-ribbon Japanese council came last week in their search for ways to improve their schools.

They told their host, Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation and former U.S. commissioner of education, of their discontent with the quality and breadth of higher education in Japan, where two national universities — Tokyo and Kyoto — sit atop a sharp pyramid that produces the Japanese elite.

Ryozo Sunobe, the retired diplomat, spoke admiringly of the U.S. system in which many of the most prestigious universities, such as Princeton and Harvard, are private.

Drawing shapes in the air with his hand, Sunobe expressed the hope that Japan's sharp pyramid could be converted into a broad, thin box with numerous top-flight universities.

"Everybody wants to go to Princeton" or rather, its Japanese equivalent, and those who cannot feel deeply disappointed, said Sunobe.

"We should have more variety of higher education . . . so that every student can be happy and can (enter) the university of their choice," said Sunobe, a professor of international relations at Kyorin University, a small private institution in Tokyo.

Sunobe, Toshitsugu Saito, president of the Japan Junior Chamber of Commerce, and Ryoichi Kuroha,

editorial editor of the Nohon Keizai Shinbun, were among 25 people chosen last year by the government to scrutinize Japan's highly centralized school system. They and three other council members are on a two-week tour of schools and campuses in the United States and Great Britain.

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