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Libyan jets fighters intercept Navy plane

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two Libyan jet fighters intercepted a U.S. Navy surveillance plane flying over the Mediterranean Sea off Libya on Monday, prompting two American fighters to scramble from the aircraft carrier Coral Sea, Reagan administration sources said Tuesday.

The Libyan fighters made no threatening moves toward the Navy plane, which was in international airspace, and flew back to Libya before the American fighters arrived, said the sources, who declined to be identified.

Although he refused to provide any details, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger confirmed the incident late Tuesday when he was briefly interviewed by TV crews. Weinberger said the interception occurred well outside Libyan waters in the southern Mediterranean.

The incident appeared to represent the first direct contact between U.S. and Libyan military forces since terrorists attacked the airports in Rome and Vienna on Dec. 27, killing 19 people, including five Americans.

The United States has accused Libya of supporting the Palestinian terrorist faction that conducted those attacks and has imposed a variety of economic sanctions against the North African country as a result.



Photo by JOHN MAKELY

Hands Off

Nette Garrett (42) of Texas A&M looks for a way to get the ball nearer the goal while Andrea Lloyd (25) of the University of Texas piles on the heat in G. Rollie White Tuesday night. The Lady Aggies lost 73-59. See story page 13.

Unions seen as tool of organized crime

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A blue-ribbon federal commission told President Reagan Tuesday that organized crime is entrenched in America's marketplace and is increasingly using labor unions as a tool to obtain monopoly power in key sectors.

The President's Commission on Organized Crime, winding up the first comprehensive investigation of labor and management racketeering since the McClellan hearings three decades ago, said consumers "unknowingly pay a surcharge to organized crime for a wide range of goods and services," and that federal enforcement efforts are fragmented and inadequate to stem the tide.

Just two days earlier, Reagan, in an article for The New York Times Magazine, wrote that "for the first time in our history, we finally have the mob on the run" and boasted that organized crime convictions had quadrupled since he took office in 1981.

But Commission Chairman Irving R. Kaufman, who presented the panel's report to Reagan at the

White House, said, "There has never been a coherent federal strategy to attack organized crime's corruption of our business institutions and labor organizations."

In a summary released to reporters, the commission criticized prosecutors who merely "count bodies" — convictions — as a measure of success, and said, "Instead, a new strategy must be developed to bankrupt individual mobsters and to discourage union officers, employers, and public officials from accommodating organized crime."

The commission, whose members include Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., and Rep. Peter W. Rodino, D-N.J., chairman of the Senate and House judiciary committees, said that through domination of certain labor unions in major cities, organized crime controls and regulates a number of markets in the construction, wholesale and retail meat processing, trucking, garbage carting, and waterfront industries.

It cited four unions with histories of control or influence by organized crime: The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, The International Longshoremen's Association,

the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, and the Laborers International Union of North America.

The summary did not go into detail about the alleged racketeering activities of any particular group.

The panel said the number of union locals with connections to organized crime is a small fraction of the 70,000 labor organizations in the United States, but they represented major units with thousands of members.

Through theft, extortion, bribery, price-fixing and restraint of trade, organized crime distorts the cost of doing business, and thus increases prices to consumers and results in lower wages to workers, the report said.

Legislative actions recommended by the panel included:

• Effectively authorizing the NLRB to ban collective bargaining with an organization controlled by racketeers.

• Making deprivation of union rights to dissenters, such as a physical beating or denial of access to the hiring hall, a felony.

Mauro will run for second term

By JERRY OSLIN

City Editor

Citing the accomplishments of the General Land Office and the Texas Veterans Land Board under his administration, Garry Mauro officially announced Tuesday that he is seeking re-election as Texas' land commissioner.

Mauro was in College Station on the first stop of a 10-day, 24-city campaign swing through Texas.

Mauro, a Bryan native and a 1970 Texas A&M graduate, said that during his tenure as land commissioner, the Board has had its most productive three-year period in its 40-year history.

In those three years, the Board made 16,000 land loans and 26,000 home loans, he said. By enabling more people to buy homes, the Board helped to create 25,000 new construction-related jobs in the state, Mauro said.

"The people of Texas can honestly say that we have the best veterans program in the country," he said.



Garry Mauro

Mauro said that under his leadership, the GLO squeezed out an increase in revenues from oil and gas production on state-owned land even though prices had decreased 7 percent over the same period.

Mauro attributed the revenue increase to "hard, aggressive management."

"For the first time in history, we (the land office) audited all our oil wells and came up with about \$30 million we didn't know we had," he said.

The extra state income came from unreported royalties and penalties, he said.

In addition to the audit, the GLO, which administers about 22.5 million acres, also collected about \$4 million from unauthorized users of state land.

"The results of this kind of aggressive management comes right back to the Texas taxpayers from the Permanent School Fund," he said.

Income from state-owned lands goes to the PSF which helps pay primary and secondary education costs.

Mauro said the first \$145 in each student's educational costs comes from revenue generated by state-owned lands. Without this revenue, taxpayers would pay an extra 7.2 percent in state taxes and an extra 3.2 percent in local taxes, he said.

Mauro added that before he took office, the GLO paid the first \$106 in students' educational costs.

Student's plant heist foiled by University Police stakeout

By BRIAN PEARSON

Senior Staff Writer

An illegal method of home improvement clashed with a University Police stakeout Tuesday when a Texas A&M student was arrested in connection with the attempted theft of 14 potted plants from the Ornamental Horticulture Club Student Greenhouse.

Greg Allan Johnson, 23, a resident of 1119 Detroit in College Station and a junior landscape architecture major, was arrested at 1 a.m. Friday, taken to Brazos County Jail and charged with burglary of a building.

Burglary of a building is a second-degree felony that carries a fine of up to \$10,000 and a two to 20 year prison sentence.

Bob Wiatt, director of security and traffic at A&M, said the suspect went to the greenhouse at about midnight, slashed the building's plastic covering with an x-acto knife, went inside, pulled out 14 potted plants, set them outside the building and then left the area.

"He then went to his apartment and asked a girlfriend to accompany him back to the hut (greenhouse), so he could obtain the plants to

brighten up his apartment," Wiatt said.

He said Johnson returned to the area and was seen loading the plants onto the bed of his pickup truck by a University Police detective who was on stakeout in the area. Johnson was immediately arrested.

Wiatt said Johnson would also be referred to the Department of Student Affairs for further disciplinary action.

Johnson's girlfriend was not charged.

Gramm-Rudman cited as cause

Expert predicts major tax hike

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As federal officials surveyed the impact of an upcoming government-wide spending cut of nearly 5 percent, one business analyst predicted Tuesday that the law forcing the cuts also will trigger a major tax increase by year's end — possibly including a consumer tax on gasoline.

Paul R. Huard, vice president of the National Association of Manufacturers, claimed that a tax hike this year is inevitable under the Gramm-Rudman budget-balancing (01903511) law.

He told a business seminar that the Reagan administration and Congress would resist any form of tax increase at first but that Congress would be gripped by paralysis by summer as it struggled unsuccessfully to make additional spending cuts required under the act.

With congressional elections fast approaching, lawmakers will opt for a "quick and dirty" tax hike to avoid triggering sweeping spending cuts in popular programs, Huard predicted.

"The conventional wisdom that you can't pass a tax increase during an election year is no longer valid," he said, forecasting higher taxes on

businesses and some form of energy tax, probably "a tax on gasoline at the pump."

His comments came as federal agency heads sought to make sense of a White House announcement that spending cuts of 4.3 percent in all domestic programs and 4.9 percent for the military will be required on March 1 under the Gramm-Rudman law.

Department officials generally said calculations on what the cutbacks would mean for Americans who benefit from various federal programs would not be known specifically until later in the week.

Congress, however, exempted roughly \$23.6 billion in specific benefit programs administered by the Labor Department, according to department officials.

Among them are the \$22.4 billion Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, \$834 million in black lung dis-

ability payments and the \$211 million federal program that guarantees payments of private pension benefits.

In addition, workman's compensation benefits totaling \$75 million and \$57 million of the \$250 million program to compensate federal employees disabled on the job were exempted, Labor Department sources said.

Officials, however, pointed out that those exemptions include only benefits, and that administrative costs in each of the programs still have to be cut by 4.3 percent.

"We don't have a lot of flexibility from one program to another," David Demerest, a Labor Department spokesman, said of other non-benefit activities under the agency.

Demerest said there would be some "picking and choosing" within

specific programs, but that generally the percentage cuts were fixed and across-the-board.

An analysis by the House Education and Labor Committee said the March 1 cutbacks would result in a \$170 million cut in funds for the federal compensatory education program, a \$224.8 million cut in student aid, and a \$43.6 million cut in the federal vocational and adult education program.

The committee document also said the cutbacks would mean a \$159.2 million cut in the Labor Department's training and employment services budget, a \$15 million cut in a federal jobs program for senior citizens, a \$96 million cut in low-income energy assistance and a \$62.7 million cut in the federal program for handicapped people.

The law is designed to eliminate the federal deficit by 1991 through a series of decreasing annual deficit targets. Automatic spending cuts would be triggered each year if Congress fails to come up with either spending cuts or tax increases to meet the annual deficit targets — beginning with an \$11.7 billion spending cut on March 1.

Social Security payments are exempted from the cutbacks.

FAA set to inspect airlines that hold Pentagon contracts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Aviation Administration, responding to last month's crash of a military charter plane that killed 248 soldiers, on Tuesday announced in-depth inspections of two dozen airlines that have Pentagon contracts.

The airlines range from charter operators such as Rich International and Arrow Air, which was involved in the Dec. 12 fatal military crash at Gander, Newfoundland, to major carriers such as American Airlines, Delta Airlines and Northwest Airlines.

Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole, announcing the new inspections, said that while the cause of the Gander crash has yet to be determined, "we want to assure ourselves and the public beyond a shadow of a doubt that these carriers are operating with the highest standards of safety."

Meanwhile, Pentagon spokesman Bob Sims said military authorities also intend to increase

their surveillance of the airlines with which they do business. They will increase the number of spot checks on civilian jetliners serving military bases, put more "check riders" on military charter flights, and conduct informal reviews of the airlines' performance once a year instead of every two years, he said.

Since the crash of the Arrow Air DC-8, which was carrying U.S. peacekeeping troops home from the Middle East for the Christmas holidays, there has been heightened concern about the safety record of small airlines used as military charters.

It was found that Arrow Air had a history of federal air safety violations during four years and had paid a number of fines including \$34,000 last summer due to deficiencies uncovered in past FAA inspections.

The Pentagon uses civilian air carriers extensively for transporting military personnel and dependants within the United States and to foreign duty stations.