

World and Nation

Mediterranean maneuvers going OK

Sources say Libya avoids U.S. jets

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Libya dispatched an unusual number of its planes toward U.S. aircraft carriers operating in the Mediterranean Wednesday, but there were no confrontations or incidents as the first day of an American exercise came to a close, Pentagon sources said.

During the first day of the U.S. maneuvers, which began as scheduled Tuesday night, more than a dozen Libyan flight operations were conducted over the Mediterranean with planes flying toward the Coral Sea and Saratoga, said one high official who asked not to be named.

In each case, as American F-14's and F-A-18's were directed towards the Libyan jets, the Libyans turned for home before they were confronted, the official said.

He added that there had been no evidence of hostile intentions.

The source agreed that based on the first day's experience, Libya was dispatching substantially more planes toward the 6th Fleet than during the last week of January, when the two U.S. carriers last conducted maneuvers in the area.

The source added, however, the United States had seen such Libyan air activity during earlier exercises in past years and attached no particular significance to it.

Both the U.S. and Libyan jets are operating in international airspace, the source said, and the Libyans have turned toward home well before drawing close to the carriers themselves.

The Libyan flights "are giving us

excellent training," the official concluded.

The official refused to say exactly how many Libyan planes had moved toward the fleet before turning around but added there had been instances, in which Libya sent out a jet fighter accompanied by other planes.

The planes have ranged from Soviet-built Mig fighters to French-made Mirage jets and even a Soviet-made transport plane, the official said.

Other Pentagon sources, meantime, said the Navy had detected no evidence of a large-scale Libyan exercise promised last week by Libya leader Col. Moammar Khadafy, nor had there been any effort by Libyan fighters to intercept Israeli civilian

airliners flying across the Mediterranean.

On Feb. 4, Israel intercepted a private jet after it departed Libya and forced it to land in Israel in an abortive search for terrorists.

Khadafy responded by saying he had ordered his own air forces to begin searching for Israeli airliners.

The U.S. carriers first moved into position off Libya's coast last month in what administration sources described as a "show of resolve."

Like the January exercise, the current maneuvers are being conducted within the so-called Tripoli Flight Information Region.

The region is a broad area off Libya's coast which includes the Gulf of Sidra, a large, U-shaped body of water that cuts into the central Libyan coastline.

NASA not convinced booster at fault

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — NASA insisted Wednesday it is not yet convinced a booster rocket caused the explosion of space shuttle Challenger and said both the rocket's manufacturer and space agency experts agreed to the launch in unusual sub-freezing weather.

At the same time, the space agency released internal documents that showed a history of concern with the "O ring" seals where the four segments of the solid rocket booster are joined. In report after report, the huge rubber-like rings' elasticity and ability to contain gases were mentioned as critical items to be looked at.

Attention has been focused on the seals because films of Challenger's Jan. 28 liftoff show a plume of flame appearing to spurt from the right rocket booster toward the shuttle's main

tank loaded with volatile fuel. The ability of the seals to contain gas and flame is under close scrutiny.

"The cause is still an open issue," William R. Lucas, director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Marshall Space Flight Center told a news briefing. "We are investigating every part of the shuttle and not attempting to focus in too early."

After scrubbing a launch on Jan. 27 for other causes, NASA engineers discussed the weather by telephone with space shuttle contractors, including some at Morton Thiokol Inc., which manufactures the booster rockets in Utah. The overnight low temperature was expected to be 24 degrees, said Lawrence B. Mulloy, director of the booster rocket program at Marshall, in Huntsville, Ala.

"At that time no concern was expressed by the solid rocket motor manufacturer or my people on the solid rocket motor relative to the predicted temperatures," he said.

Rather, he said, the discussion turned on whether the shuttle was ready for launch again in a short 24-hour "turnaround" period.

Later that evening there was another telephone conference, Mulloy said. Thiokol engineers had looked at NASA data on the possible effect low temperatures might have on O ring performance.

"The initial recommendation of the Thiokol engineers was that we should launch within our experience base — which was that the O ring temperatures should be 53 degrees."

Scharansky to renew fight for free emigration

JERUSALEM — Anatoly Shcharansky said Wednesday he will resume the campaign for free emigration of Soviet Jews that led the Kremlin to put him in prison and labor camps for more than eight years.

Israel radio also said he sent forms to Moscow formally inviting his 77-year-old mother, Ida Milgrom, and his brother Leonid to Israel on the basis of family reunification.

The State Department said Wednesday the Soviet Union has "indicated" Milgrom and other relatives of Shcharansky would be allowed to emigrate to Israel.

Tuesday, Shcharansky walked across the Glienicke Bridge to West Berlin from Communist East Germany. Three other people held in the East and five imprisoned in the West were exchanged on the "bridge of spies" half an hour later.

In East Berlin, he said, he was told to walk a straight line to a car and deliberately took a zig-zag route. "Of course, that's funny, but it was a matter of principle never to agree to anything for the KGB (secret police)," he said.

His brother Leonid, 39, told Western reporters in Moscow that Shcharansky lay down in the snow, demanding the return of his belongings before boarding the special plane taking him to Berlin, but finally left with only a prayer book. He crossed the bridge in borrowed clothes.

50 to be charged with smuggling

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Department of Justice is preparing indictments against about 50 employees of Eastern Airlines believed to be smuggling cocaine from South America, federal law enforcement sources said Wednesday.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the 50 employees are "almost exclusively baggage handlers" in Miami. The handlers are said to be the key to a narcotics pipeline bringing cocaine into the United States from Bogota, Colombia, by way of Miami, where the carrier is based.

The probe has been going on at least two months, the sources said, and it may continue for another two months.

"We think there is a small cadre of handlers who are holding out baggage" to circumvent a narcotics net set up by U.S. Customs officials, one of the law enforcement sources said.

The sources said that Customs officials employed sniffer dogs to detect drugs. The baggage handlers involved in the drug shipments have, for example, kept baggage containing cocaine away from the conveyer belts at the Miami airport until after sniffer dogs are taken away, the sources said.

Eastern Chairman Frank Borman said in an interview with NBC News, "We will cooperate every way with the authorities to make certain that none of our airplanes or our employees are involved in that trade."

Contacted Wednesday night by

The Associated Press, Eastern spokesman Mark Wegel said he had seen reports about the drug allegations but that the airline had no comment.

NBC, quoting federal authorities, said the drug-smuggling involving Eastern employees dates back four years, and averaged 300 pounds a week.

One source said that in some cases, the handlers simply keep the bags loaded with narcotics on the planes until Customs checks are completed.

Tuesday, the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, John Lawn, said in California that the indictments were being prepared, but did not name the airline.

Cyanide in Tylenol unlike previous case

Associated Press

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — The type of cyanide that killed a woman who took Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules last weekend differed from the poison that killed seven people in Chicago in 1982, the Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday.

Diane Elstroth, 23, of Peekskill died Saturday after taking two capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol, at least one of which contained potassium cyanide, Dr. Millard Hyland, county medical examiner, said.

FDA spokesman William Grigg said Wednesday that tests conducted on two of three poisoned capsules found in the bottle used by Elstroth showed that the cyanide had a different chemical profile from the chemical used in Chicago in 1982.

The Chicago case remains unsolved.

The poisons used in both killings also differed from the cyanide used for testing and quality control in the Johnson & Johnson plant that produces the painkiller, Grigg said.

The FDA inspected the factory where the pills were made and determined that "there were no indications that it (the contamination) could be the result of the manufacturing," he said.

Grigg said the determination that the type of cyanide in the latest death differed from that found in Chicago or at the manufacturing plant.

Westchester County District Attorney Carl Vergari said earlier Wednesday that the contamination of the capsules "could have hap-

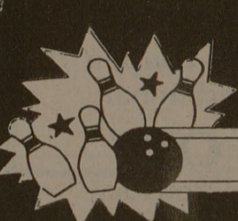
pened anywhere" and several theories were being investigated.

He said tampering at the factory had not been ruled out, despite Hyland's contention that the cyanide found in the Tylenol would have eaten through the capsules in eight to 10 days.

Elstroth took the pills while staying at her boyfriend's home in Yonkers. Notarnicola's mother, whose name has not been released, then took a single Tylenol but was unaffected.

Investigators found three of the remaining 21 capsules also had been contaminated with cyanide.

Notarnicola told police the bottle had been bought at an A&P in nearby Bronxville, but authorities would not say who bought the bottle or when.



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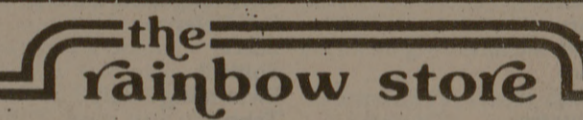
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