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U.S. military readies for Bolivian drug raids

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — U.S. helicopters with American military pilots are expected to begin flying anti-drug police on raids this week against cocaine laboratories hidden in the Bolivian jungles, officials said Wednesday.

American officials said six Black Hawk helicopters with pilots and support personnel were at a jungle camp in Beni province awaiting the order to begin operations against the clandestine laboratories. At least 100 American soldiers based in Panama were expected to arrive in the next day or two.

A U.S. Embassy officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said about 80 members of the Bolivian anti-narcotics force known as the Leopards would take part in the raids, which could last up to two months.

This impoverished, landlocked country of 6.4 million people produces half the cocaine that reaches U.S. and European markets, according to U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration figures.

Edward Djerejian, deputy White House press secretary, said in Washington that 160 army personnel would participate, and confirmed that six Black Hawks were involved. He said President Reagan approved the operation.

U.S. troops "will not participate in the actual operation, per se," he said. "They're in a support role, and I have to underline that. Every effort is being made to avoid placing U.S. personnel in situations where they might become involved in a confrontation."

American pilots will fly the heli-

copters, but Bolivian police will direct the operation, he said.

The U.S. pilots have been ordered to shoot back if fired upon, one U.S. official in Bolivia said.

President Victor Paz Estenssoro has given the soldiers diplomatic immunity.

American officials here had said Tuesday that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration would coordinate the raids. Djerejian did not comment on the agency's role.

About 15 DEA officers are in Bolivia. The American officials here said they were expected to go along on the raids.

The operation comes one month after Reagan signed a directive declaring drug trafficking a threat to U.S. national security.

Bolivian officials expressed anger about the breach of secrecy and an

Interior Ministry spokesman said that consideration was given to calling off the operation because the element of surprise was lost.

Officials of both governments had requested a news embargo until the

raids began, but reports appeared in Bolivian dailies Tuesday, citing the arrival of U.S. Air Force Galaxy C5-A transport planes carrying the helicopters.

First reports of the operation

from Washington came later Tuesday.

U.S. officials say this is the first time the American military is being used in anti-drug operations on foreign soil.

Campaign against narcotics escalates

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The arrival of U.S. troops and aircraft in Bolivia to help eradicate clandestine cocaine laboratories is the latest salvo in a war against the narcotics trade in the Western Hemisphere.

Drug traffickers' wealth and power are so great that Latin leaders suggest only an international effort can combat it.

President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico has called for a hemispheric conference of law enforcement officials this year to discuss the problem.

"Any strategy that any country attempts to develop in isolation, would be, I fear, insufficient or ineffective," Attorney General Sergio Garcia Ramirez recently told foreign correspondents.

Mexican officials also have expressed concern about using the U.S. military along the border to help stop narcotics traffic from Mexico.

Major drug scandals have ranged from the Bahamas and tiny Belize to Panama and such major nations as Mexico and

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Olympic flame to visit A&M

By Mary Frances Scott
Staff Writer

The Olympic flame will pass through Bryan and College Station Thursday as part of its 4,600 mile relay from its permanent home in Pikes Peak to the Olympic Festival in Houston.

It will enter College Station about 8 p.m. at the Southwest Valley Athletic Park on Rock Prairie Road and will wind through the city and parts of the A&M campus.

The flame then will be carried to the Chamber of Commerce building on University Drive.

The last leg of the College Station portion of the route will be manned by College Station Mayor Larry Ringer, City Manager King Cole and former Aggie football star Dave Elmendorf.

Elmendorf is a former All-American in baseball and football for A&M who went on to play nine years as a defensive back for the Los Angeles Rams.

The trio, along with more than 30 other local runners, should arrive at the Chamber of Commerce at 4:45 p.m. for a celebration recognizing local athletes and coaches participating in the Olympic Festival. Music and refreshments will be offered free of charge.

By the time it leaves the area, more than 80 local participants will have passed the torch from hand to hand. After leaving Bryan the torch will continue toward Houston for the completion of its "Run Through Texas History" and the opening ceremonies of the festival.

The festival, which will begin in Houston July 25, showcases the nation's best amateur athletes during non-Olympic years.



Photo by Tom Ownbey

On Target

Tricia Pacilio, a senior Spanish major, practices her shooting Wednesday afternoon. Pacilio, who shoots for the Texas A&M Target Archers, was talked into buying a bow by her physical education instructor last year and has been shooting ever since.

Officials argue over hazard of A&M toxic waste landfill

By Olivier Uytendaele
Staff Writer

Officials at the Texas Engineering Extension Service and the Texas Water Commission are at odds over the hazard posed by a toxic waste landfill at the Texas A&M Fire Training School.

The school is among 14 possible hazardous waste cleanup sites named Tuesday by the Texas Water Commission.

The Commission's main object of concern is a 9,000-cubic-foot landfill at the site of the training school, according to Max Woodfin, environmental coordinator of the Texas Water Commission.

Woodfin said Wednesday that the landfill was created in 1980 to dispose of soils contaminated by PCBs and other hazardous substances. The contaminated soils were scraped out of a drainage pond at the training school site.

Milton Radke, associate director for programs at the Texas Engineering Extension Service, said that fuels contaminated with the hazardous substances and donated to the University by oil companies were responsible for the soil contamination.

Radke said the landfill was created immediately after the hazardous substances were discovered in the drainage pond.

He said representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Texas Department of Health and the Texas Water Quality Commission all were consulted and on-site at the time the landfill was constructed.

But the Texas Water Commission, which did not take part in the construction of the landfill, is now dissatisfied with the disposal method for the contaminated soils, arguing that there is no lining beneath the landfill to prevent the wastes from leaching into the groundwater. In addition, Woodfin said, the groundwater at the site is not monitored.

Radke, however, said an impervious layer of clay underlies the landfill and that no wastes leach into the groundwater.

"The laws at that time allowed on-site disposal of the wastes because of the soil conditions at the site," he said.

Radke said an independent company in Hearne, Aqua Tech, performs about 10 kinds of tests on water samples drawn from several monitoring wells at the site and submits the test results to the Texas Water Commission's regional office in Waco on a monthly basis.

Bill Colbert, public relations director for the Texas Water Commission, said no type of groundwater monitoring takes place at the site.

"My information says that there is no groundwater monitoring, so we're in disagreement on that," he said in response to Radke's statement. "Where the pond sediments went and around the unlined pit there is no ground water monitoring."

Another disagreement centers around an accident which the commission claims took place on July 24, 1979.

Colbert said 300 gallons of waste oil contaminated with PCBs, benzene and toluene overflowed a storage tank and spilled onto the site as a result of improperly operated equipment.

"Apparently a dike that contained the spill was accidentally opened and the spill got into White's Creek," he said.

Radke said he is not aware that any such accident occurred.

"I know that no such spill has occurred since 1979," he said, adding that if such a spill had occurred, the contaminated soils would have been disposed of in the landfill.

The commission also claims that

water from one of the drainage ponds spills into White's Creek during heavy rains.

Radke acknowledged that runoff has occurred "once or twice in the last three or four years," but said that only a foam used in the fire-fighting drills spilled into the creek. The foam degrades completely within about 30 days and poses no threat to the environment, he said.

Inadequate wind shear training led to crash

DALLAS (AP) — A weather expert says he agrees with the National Transportation Safety Board's finding that lack of wind shear training was partly to blame for the crash of Delta Air Lines Flight 191.

Spokesmen for Delta and the pilots' union have said pilots of the flight were unaware of the severity of the storm and cannot be faulted. The airline and the union contend there was a breakdown in communication between government-contract forecasters and air traffic controllers.

But the board's report Tuesday found that inadequate wind shear training contributed to the Aug. 2 crash at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport that killed 137 people.

John McCarthy, a wind shear researcher at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo., said he agrees with the board's conclusion that inadequate wind shear training was one of the crash's probable causes.

"I believe that this was an example where an earlier decision (to abort the landing) clearly would have saved the airplane," McCarthy said. "In my opinion from reading the record, this information was available to the crew."

He said he believes wind shear was present at the time of the crash and said the crew did not recognize obvious signs, including lightning, that it was hazardous to enter the storm.

Soviets: Nuclear test ban talks to resume

LONDON (AP) — Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze said Wednesday that Moscow and Washington had agreed to resume nuclear test ban talks.

A U.S. spokesman in Washington said, however, that the two countries had agreed to resume talks about limiting nuclear tests rather than banning them.

Speaking through an interpreter, Shevardnadze told a news confer-

ence that Moscow had "fundamentally an agreement with the United States to resume negotiations, to resume talks in Geneva on banning nuclear tests."

White House spokesman Edward Djerejian made it clear in Washington that the United States has no interest at the moment in discussing a ban on all nuclear tests, as the Soviets want.

"A comprehensive test ban re-

mains a long-term objective of the United States," Djerejian said.

He said that in the meantime, the United States has to rely on nuclear deterrents to ensure international security.

The United States, the Soviet Union and Britain broke off formal test ban treaty talks six years ago, after making considerable progress, because they could not agree on the issue of verification.

In 1982, the United States decided that instead of a test ban treaty, substantial cuts in superpower nuclear arsenals would be sought.

A British official familiar with the new accord said it was wrong to suggest that the treaty negotiations will resume.

The official, who insisted on anonymity, said he understood that weeks ago the United States and the

Soviet Union had agreed to hold "general talks including nuclear testing issues."

He said there was no suggestion that formal treaty talks would resume.

A U.S. official in London, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said the talks would be held in the framework of regular U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations scheduled to resume Sept. 18 in Geneva.

Trio convicted of kidnap conspiracy

Jury returns verdict in torture trial

KERRVILLE (AP) — A rancher, his son and an ex-ranch worker were convicted Wednesday of conspiring to kidnap drifters and forcing them into slavery in a plot that led to the cattle-pod torture death of a hitchhiker.

The three face up to 20 years in prison for their roles in the conspiracy at a Hill Country ranch. The jury failed to make a specific finding in connection with allegations of a conspiracy to commit murder in the torture death of Anthony Bates, attorneys said.

They were convicted of conspiring to commit aggravated kid-

napping in the abduction of Bates, a one-eyed drifter from Huntsville, Ala., and three others. Bates' body, witnesses said, was burned on a makeshift pyre in March 1984.

The jury deliberated 19 hours over three days to reach a decision in the 11-week-old trial of rancher Walter Wesley Ellebracht Sr., 54, Walter Wesley Ellebracht Jr., 33, and Carlton Robert Caldwell, 21.

Sentencing was scheduled for 1 p.m. today.

Prosecutors relied heavily on tape recordings of alleged torture sessions involving Bates. Witnesses identified voices belonging

to Caldwell and the younger Ellebracht on the recordings.

Defense attorneys did not deny that Bates and other workers had been abused. But they contended there was no conspiracy to kill Bates and argued that Bates and other workers were free to leave the ranch at any time.

Prosecutors said it appeared the jury agreed with the defense on that count, while finding the defendants guilty of conspiracy to kidnap.

Gerald Carruth, a Department of Public Safety attorney who assisted in the prosecution, said, "They must have believed there was no intent to cause the death

of Anthony Bates."

Defense attorney Richard "Racehorse" Haynes said, "I have been happier. I'm not in total agreement with that jury, but I live and die by the system, and I live and die by this jury."

He added that he would seek probation for his client, the elder Ellebracht. He also said the jury verdict appeared to have acquitted the defendants in connection with Bates' death.

Defense attorney Scott Stehling said that since his client, Caldwell, has already served two years while awaiting trial, he could be released even if he gets the maximum sentence of 20 years.

Court refuses to rule: Miller still local sheriff

AUSTIN (AP) — A divided Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that it lacked jurisdiction to consider a legal challenge mounted by the loser of the November 1984 Brazos County sheriff's election.

The 6-3 decision lets stand an appeals court ruling that made Ronnie Miller the winner of the election. Howard Hill, loser of the election, had filed an election contest suit and won at the trial court level.

But an appeals court later threw out the trial court's order that voided the November 1984 election and ordered new balloting.

Miller received 22,146 votes and Hill got 21,984 in the 1984 election. The trial court had ordered a new election after determining that

enough illegal ballots in the general election had been cast to change the outcome.

The appeals court overruled that decision because Hill failed to specifically prove that enough illegal votes were cast in the sheriff's race to change the outcome.

The Supreme Court, in a majority opinion written by Justice Robert Campbell, said it only has jurisdiction to review election contest suits in certain cases, and this one did not meet the criteria.

The dissent, written by Justice William Kilgarlin and joined by Franklin Spears and C.L. Ray, said the Supreme Court had jurisdiction to review the case because the validity of a state statute was an issue.