

World and Nation

Economists: Interest rates to stabilize

WASHINGTON (AP) — Interest rates, which fell dramatically last year, are likely to show much less movement in 1987 amid concern by the Federal Reserve Board over a weaker dollar and rising inflation, economists predicted Monday.

During 1986, a variety of interest rates, including home mortgage rates, fell to their lowest levels in nine years as the Fed pursued an aggressive policy of lowering rates in order to stimulate a sluggish U.S. economy.

Fed policy-makers convene again today for their first strategy session of the new year, a key meeting at which they will establish money growth targets for 1987.

While the results of the session will not be revealed until Fed Chairman Paul Volcker testifies before the Senate Banking Committee on Feb. 19, many private economists are looking for a more cautious Fed approach.

While these analysts don't believe the central bank will try to push interest rates higher, they don't expect an effort to pull rates lower either.

The Reagan administration, facing political heat because of the record \$170 billion U.S. trade deficit last year, has allowed market forces to push the value of the dollar lower, contending that a weaker dollar is needed to stem protectionist pressures in Congress.

A lower-priced dollar theoretically makes imports more expensive while making American products more competitive on overseas markets. But a weaker dollar also carries a threat of higher inflation and loss of the foreign capital America needs to finance its huge federal budget deficit. The belief is that foreigners would be less willing to invest in this country if a dollar devaluation cuts into their profits.

Releases of Soviet prisoners don't clarify Kremlin policy

MOSCOW (AP) — Dissidents and the West have praised the release of dozens of political prisoners, but those freed are only a small fraction of the total held and it remains unclear whether Kremlin policy toward dissent is changing.

The action in the past week may have been a gesture to deflect accusations of human rights violations as the Soviets prepare for an international peace conference in Moscow later this week and seek to host a human rights meeting in the spring.

Whatever its purpose, the release is far short of the amnesty for dissidents that has been rumored since Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner, were freed from internal exile in Gorky just before Christmas.

Those said to have been freed by decree of the Supreme Soviet, the nominal national parliament, represent the range of Soviet dissent — from a Latvian nationalist to a teacher of Hebrew and a Catholic activist.

Dissidents and diplomats say they are not sure of the Kremlin's reasons for releasing this particular group while leaving others in prison for

similar offenses, and they hesitate to predict a softening of its attitude toward organized political opposition.

The crackdown of the late 1970s and early 1980s destroyed the network of political opposition groups and religious activists in the Soviet Union.

Releasing some imprisoned dissidents does not mean the government will tolerate resumption of the activities for which they were sentenced, particularly if they try to revive the political organizations.

Bringing those groups back to life would be difficult in any case because many leaders now live in the West.

Most estimates of the number of dissidents in Soviet jails and labor camps put the total at about 1,500. Anatoly Shcharansky, released to the West a year ago, said in an interview published Sunday in the *New York Times* that he believed the total was 5,000 to 10,000.

The mass release fits a pattern of gestures by Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev that appears designed to quiet Western criticism and demonstrate that some previously forbidden subjects such as religion and em-

igration now can be discussed.

In keeping with past secrecy, however, no public announcement of the release has been made.

No common bond is apparent among those freed and even their exact number is not clear.

Sakharov and Bonner said over the weekend that 42 prisoners were affected, but Sergei Grigoryants said a warden at the Chistopol prison, where he was serving a term for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, showed him a list of 51 people chosen for early release. Grigoryants was among those freed.

Alexander Sukharev, president of the Soviet association of lawyers, said Monday in Vienna that about 50 people were set free. He said they asked the Supreme Soviet for pardons, "disassociated themselves from their past crimes (and) pledged to follow Soviet legislation."

Some of those freed, however, said they made no such request and were not required to sign any documents.

Western diplomats, who commented about the mass release on condition of anonymity, said they were perplexed by the selection.

Book: U.S. atomic weapons system important target for Soviet strike

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. atomic weapons command system has become one of the largest, as well as one of the most important, targets for a possible Soviet strike, says a book published Monday.

An attack on any of more than 1,500 key points in the system might be misinterpreted as an attack on the whole, triggering a devastating American response, said Ashton Carter, a Harvard professor who helped edit the book and contributed two chapters.

"The distinction between initiation and retaliation would probably

become blurred," Carter said at a news conference.

The book, "Managing Nuclear Operations," finds good and bad in the intricate systems devised to manage superpower nuclear arsenals.

The good news, contributor Donald Cotter said, is that in 40 years of handling nuclear arms, neither the Soviet Union nor the United States accidentally has launched an intercontinental ballistic missile or exploded a nuclear bomb by mistake.

The bad news, and the heart of the issue, the book says, is that al-

though the weapons can be tested underground without breaking treaties or endangering lives, the operating systems cannot be tried out in conditions resembling war.

More bad news is that the 750-page book, written by 22 government and academic experts who are supposed to understand nuclear issues, raises more questions than it answers.

One contributor, Paul Bracken, wrote that the superpowers have not woven ideas on how to end a war "into the fabric of military organizations."

'Premier drug trafficker' held without bond

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — A man prosecutors say is among the world's leading and most dangerous cocaine traffickers was ordered held without bond Monday on drug charges at a hearing where security was so tight the nails in people's shoes set off an alarm.

Innocent pleas for 11 drug-smuggling counts were entered by U.S. Magistrate Harvey S. Schlesinger on behalf of Carlos Lehder Rivas, 37.

The drug ring authorities say he operates is responsible for 80 percent of the cocaine imported into the country, prosecutors said. Lehder is "among the premier — if not the premier drug trafficker — in the world," U.S. Attorney Robert Merkle said at the detention hearing.

Merkle said he had received reports of the weekend assassination of a Bogota, Colombia, councilman who belonged to the political party

cilman was injured, not killed, by two men trying to steal his car and has since left the hospital.

In Coral Gables, near Miami, the

found no bomb, and he would not say if the threats were related to Lehder.

Lehder has admitted to "unprecedented violence," said Merkle, who called him "the personal embodiment of a narco-terrorist."

A private army of 80 Lehder gang members had "cleaned out" Norman's Cay in the Bahamas of other landholders so Lehder could use it as a way station for U.S.-bound drugs, Merkle said.

Schlesinger scheduled a March 23 trial and appointed counsel for Lehder, who said he was broke.

"I have been hounded by the Colombian army for the last four years," Lehder said. "I've been in the jungle for the last four years disconnected from civilization."

"I have been hounded by the Colombian army for the last four years. I've been in the jungle . . . disconnected from civilization."

— Carlos Lehder Rivas, charged with drug trafficking.

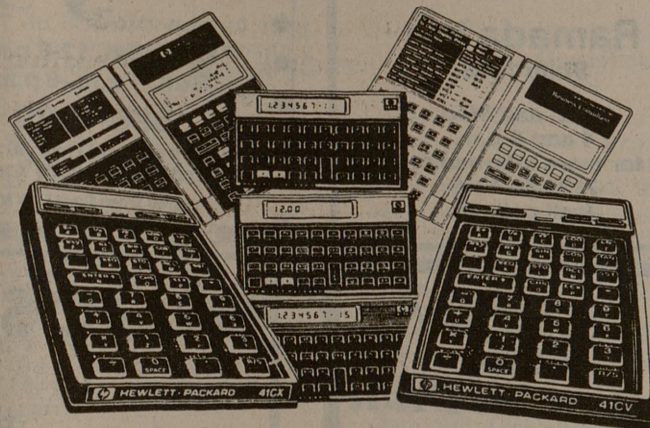
responsible for approving the treaty under which Lehder was extradited last week.

But Merkle did not tie the incident to Lehder. And Bogota Mayor Julio Cesar Sanchez said the coun-

Colombian Consulate received two telephoned bomb threats during

Monday's hearing, forcing a two-hour evacuation of the building, police Sgt. Bob Robkin said. But dogs

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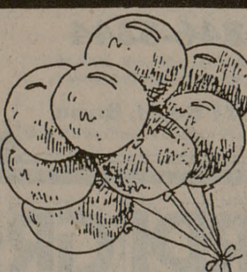
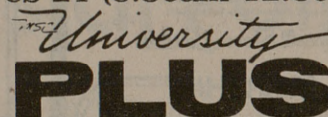
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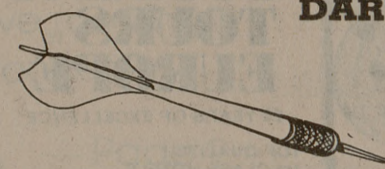
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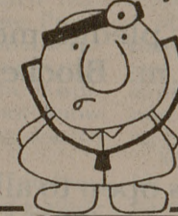
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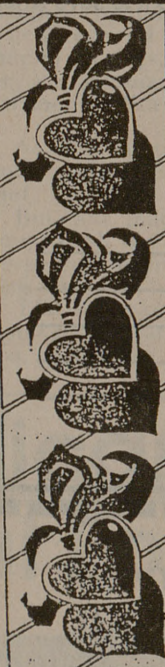
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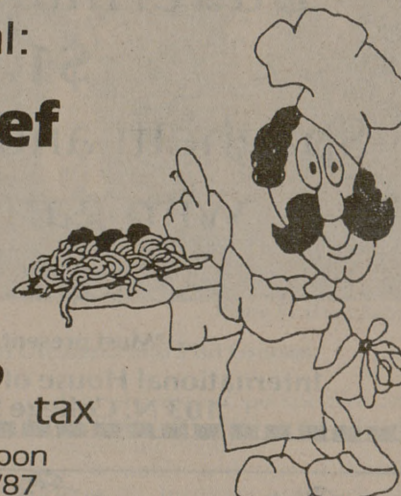
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