

World and Nation

Libyan jets flying by U.S. cruiser force crewmen to battle stations

WASHINGTON (AP) — Libyan jet fighters, in the first such overt military move since the U.S. bombing raids last year, twice last week flew so near a Navy cruiser in the Mediterranean Sea that the ship's crew was forced to man battle stations, Pentagon sources said Thursday.

The Pentagon, in a statement in response to a reporter's query, confirmed that the Soviet-made MiG-23 "Flogger" fighter jets approached the nuclear-powered USS South Carolina twice on June 17.

Pentagon sources, who spoke on condition they not be identified, said the flights had forced the crew of the heavy cruiser to man battle stations both times.

The cruiser was steaming with two other smaller Navy ships in the central Mediterranean, approximately 100 miles from the Libyan coast, and above Libya's so-called "Line of Death," at a time when no U.S. aircraft carrier was in the region.

Two Libyan jets first approached the cruiser around 1 p.m. local time, flying within seven statute miles of the cruiser, the Pentagon said in its statement. A second flight by another pair of MiG's occurred around 4 p.m., and that time the fighters flew over the ship at an altitude of approximately 6,000 feet, the Pentagon said.

In both instances, the fighters had been monitored by the cruiser almost from the moment

they flew northward from Libya over the Mediterranean, the Pentagon said.

"The aircraft did not demonstrate hostile intent," the Pentagon added.

A Pentagon official, who asked not to be named, elaborated by saying the MiG's did not activate any radar for their weaponry and never maneuvered into a position to fire missiles.

The South Carolina "took every precaution" as the planes approached and was prepared to open fire at a moment's notice, but the Libyans withdrew without making any threatening moves, the sources concluded.

The Pentagon declined to confirm the flights had forced the South Carolina to battle stations, saying only that the ship "was ready for any eventuality had the MiG 23's demonstrated hostile intent."

The Pentagon said the South Carolina had attempted to establish radio contact with the Libyan fighters on both occasions "various times."

"However, no response was received," the Pentagon said.

The sources, ranking officials who agreed to discuss the matter only if not identified, described the jet passes as "the first time the Libyans have come out to sea" since confrontations that culminated in April 1986 with a night-time raid by U.S. warplanes on two Libyan cities.

"We assume they just wanted to take a look-see," one official said, noting the Navy had filed a

"Notice to Mariners" indicating that U.S. ships would be conducting an exercise in the area.

The Line of Death is an imaginary line, drawn by Libyan leader Col. Moammar Gadhafi, across the top of the Gulf of Sidra. That is a large, U-shaped body of water that cuts into the center of Libya.

Gadhafi claims the gulf waters as Libya's, a contention adamantly dismissed by the United States. Early last year, when Navy ships and planes conducted operations below the Line of Death, Libya opened fire with surface-to-air missiles, prompting retaliatory strikes by Navy planes on the missile batteries.

In April 1986, after the Reagan administration determined Libya had helped sponsor a terrorist attack on a West Germany nightclub frequented by American servicemen, Navy and Air Force bombers raided five terrorist facilities inside Libya, causing what the Pentagon described as extensive damage to the targets.

Since that raid, Gadhafi has lowered his public profile amid scattered reports that his grip on the government was shaky. He suffered another setback earlier this year when his military was routed in ground battles with neighboring Chad.

According to the Pentagon sources, activity on the part of the Libyan air force has also been low since the U.S. raids, restricted to periodic flights over land.

Waldheim meets pope; protesters shout at Vatican

VATICAN CITY (AP) — While police kept shouting protesters from approaching the Vatican, Pope John Paul II on Thursday received President Kurt Waldheim of Austria at a controversial audience in the quiet of the pope's library.

About 100 people protesting the pope's meeting with Waldheim shouted "Assassin!" and "Shame!" as Waldheim's motorcade crossed cobblestoned St. Peter's Square. One group held up a makeshift gallows.

The square was closed to tourists as part of tight security around the meeting, which ended Waldheim's diplomatic isolation since he became president of Austria in July.

After the 35-minute private audience, which has been denounced by Jewish leaders in Israel, the United States and elsewhere, Waldheim said he and the pope touched on the controversy over Waldheim's past.

"Yes, I talked with Pope John Paul II this morning about the ac-

cusations leveled against me about what I'm alleged to have done during the war, but in a marginal way," Waldheim said.

"The pope knew from the start the problems that the visit might raise, but he wished it to take place nonetheless," he added. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel said in Jerusalem that the meeting "caused us great anguish," adding: "We might have expected better of the Vatican."

In his speech during the audience, Waldheim said, "As a representative of a predominantly Catholic country, it was to me a special concern, indeed, a heartfelt wish, to pay my first official foreign visit to the head of the Holy Roman church, to which I belong."

Since his election, Waldheim has been isolated because of allegations he was involved in Nazi atrocities while serving in the German army.

The U.S. government has barred his entry into the United States.

Studies show violence is No. 1 killer of youth

CHICAGO (AP) — Violence, including car accidents, has become the leading killer of the nation's young people, overwhelming gains of the last 30 years in medicine's war on fatal disease, according to several studies.

Three of four 15- to 24-year-olds who die are victims of violence, according to the studies. Accidents, primarily auto accidents, account for 53.5 percent of the fatalities and remain by far the leading cause of death in the age group.

But homicide deaths among young people have climbed 300 percent in three decades to become the No. 2 killer, and suicide has climbed even faster over the same period, also surpassing disease to become the third-leading cause of death.

"My sense is that the threshold where violent deaths surpassed illness occurred many years ago," said Dr. Robert Blum, author of the study published in Friday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

"But what we tried to highlight here is how violence has overwhelmed illness to the point where this age group is the only one whose health status has not improved over the last 30 years . . . that now that we've gained some control over organic illness and infectious diseases, we must learn to cope with different, but more preventable causes of death."

The article by Blum, who is director of the Adolescent Health Program at the University of Minnesota,

heads the magazine's theme issue on adolescents and health.

He noted that auto accidents account for about 60 percent of all young people's accidents, and more than half those who die are found to have blood-alcohol levels above the legal standard for intoxication.

Accident fatality rates in the general population have declined about 26 percent since 1950, standing at 42.3 deaths per 100,000 population in 1980. But accident rates involving 15- to 24-year-olds have steadily climbed, reaching 61.7 deaths per 100,000 by 1980.

"In the next few years, one of every five adolescents will live at or below the poverty level, and this will have a tremendous effect on morbidity and mortality," Blum said.

"Poverty means poor hygiene, more adolescent pregnancy, more substance abuse, higher school dropout rates, more crime. Unless we start dealing with the underlying causes of adolescent health problems, we are simply providing Band-Aids."

Blum said the scope of the problem is apparent in the staggering numbers of homicides and suicides among adolescents.

The homicide rate in the general population in 1980 was 10.8 per 100,000 population, a 100 percent increase from 1950. But among 15- to 24-year-olds, homicide was the cause in 15.6 deaths per 100,000 people per year. The numbers rose to 72.5 deaths per 100,000 among black males, largely because more blacks fall below the poverty line.

Syrians preparing to raid Beirut militant strongholds


BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Syrian troops restricted access to the city's Shiite Moslem slums Thursday and prepared to raid militant strongholds because kidnappers have not freed American journalist Charles Glass.

Sources close to the Syrian command said its 7,500 soldiers in Beirut's Moslem sector were ordered to prevent suspected Shiite militants from leaving the south Beirut slums where many of the 25 foreigners missing in Lebanon are believed held.

Fourteen gunmen seized Glass, Ali Osseiran, son of Lebanon's defense minister, and Osseiran's driver June 17 while they drove through a south Beirut stronghold of the radical Iranian-backed group Hezbollah.

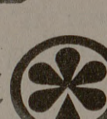
Syria demanded they be freed and the two Lebanese were released Wednesday, but Glass remained in captivity.

No word was available on when the Syrians might act, but nothing is likely to happen until Brig. Gen. Ghazi Kenaan, commander of the troops in Beirut, returns from Damascus.



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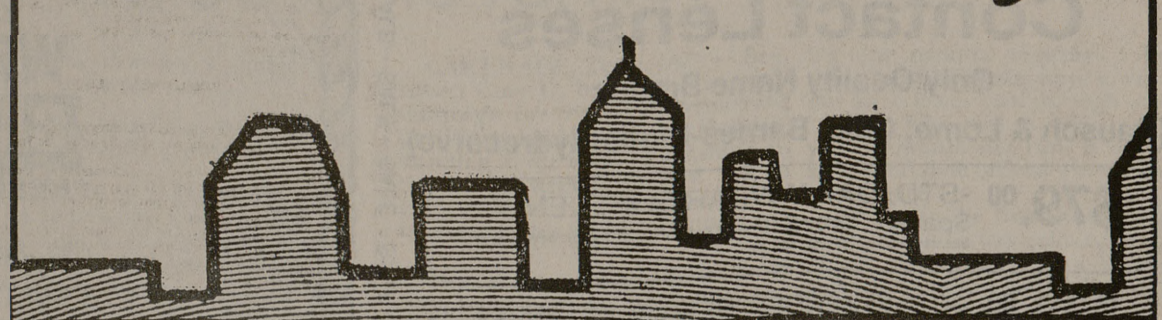
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