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2:00 4:35 7:00 9:45
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The Battalion
WORLD & NATION

Friday, August 11, 1989

FAA officials defend record of DC-10 jets

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's top aviation official said Thursday that DC-10s are safe, with no evidence to justify grounding the plane despite two incidents in a month involving explosive engine failure.

Federal Aviation Administrator James B. Busey defended the DC-10 at a news briefing as a government-industry task force began examining possible design changes in the McDonnell Douglas plane and other wide-body jetliners to prevent explosive engine failures from disabling the planes.

"It's safe to fly. I would fly in the aircraft today," Busey said of the DC-10 less than a day after a Northwest Airlines DC-10 made a safe emergency landing in Denver with holes blasted in the housing of its tail-mounted engine.

Busey formed the task force last month, citing the July 19 crash of a United Airlines DC-10 that killed 111 people in Sioux City, Iowa, and damaging engine failures that involved a Japan Air Lines Boeing 747 in 1985 and an Eastern Airlines Lockheed L-1011 in 1981.

Investigators said the United DC-10's rear engine apparently disintegrated in flight, knocking out critical hydraulic flight controls that meet in the plane's tail section.

Busey, who has been FAA administrator for six weeks, said it was too early to make comparisons between the Sioux City crash and the Denver landing, which he said showed "the way the system is supposed to work."

The United plane carried General Electric engines while the Northwest plane had Pratt and Whitney engines.

Staff clings to faint hope that Leland may be safe

WASHINGTON (AP) — The mood at Mickey Leland's congressional office turned somber Thursday as aides clung to a faint hope resting on an elusive emergency signal transmitted from the rugged Ethiopian mountain countryside.

As searchers trekked in darkness toward the source of an airplane's distress beacon, the vigil continued for Leland, whose airplane vanished in turbulent weather Monday morning after taking off from Addis Ababa en route to a refugee camp 480 miles away.

As the search entered its third day, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellite picked up a faint emergency signal 84 miles southeast of Addis, far off the flight plan of the plane carrying Leland and 13 others.

"We have some news; it's not definitive news. Obviously that news is a little sobering, that the possibility that they could have gone down in the mountains is sobering," said Leland's spokesman, Alma Newsom.

"But until we get more definition, certainly we're still... positive," she said after being briefed by the State Department.

She also questioned whether Leland's plane could have been in that location, and whether the signal could have come from his plane.

"It's just an odd place for the congressman's plane to be considering what their destination was," she said. "The location just seems so strange that we're not drawing any conclusions. We are not going to let it get us down."

Also, the signal was not on the frequency that would have been expected for the beacon on Leland's Twin-Otter turboprop plane, "which again is additional cause for skepticism."

Nevertheless, Leland's younger brother, Gaston, was in Washington making contingency plans to go to Ethiopia, and his close friend, Houston City Councilman Ben Reyes, had flown into the city Wednesday night to get his papers in order for a flight to Ethiopia. Reyes, however, had not left by Thursday afternoon.

Family members "are under a great deal of stress," Newsom told a crowded Capitol news conference, asking reporters to "back off" the family.

Leland's wife, Alison, who is six weeks' pregnant, their home in Houston.

The faint satellite signal was coming from an elevation of about 12,400 feet, which also was disheartening for those awaiting word of Leland, chairman of House Select Committee on Hunger.

"The area where the signal was detected is in the mountains. That is not terrific news," Newsom said. Searchers were sent into the mountains toward the source of the signal, but Newsom said it would take them four or five hours to reach the distress beacon.

"They are in the mountains, they are on their way. They are climbing," she said. Aerial reconnaissance, however, would have to wait until daylight.

Newsom said the area is not where Leland's plane would have been expected to be, well away from where they were traveling.

Yet, she said, "if in fact it is the congressman's plane, the best speculation would be... that they did try to turn to Addis when they could not land at the relief camp and simply kept going farther south, hoping they could get out of the turbulent weather that they were in."

Two U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules cargo planes arrived Thursday and spent three hours flying over a path that Leland's plane was supposed to have taken.

A U-2 aircraft also joined the search. U-2s are capable of taking high-resolution photographs over a large area and were once commonly used for espionage missions.

Four U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopters were expected to arrive Friday.

Four Ethiopian Air Force helicopters also were added, joining the U.S. fleet and more than a dozen light planes under the direction of the Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority.

Two of Leland's congressional colleagues, Rep. Gary Ackerman and Al Wheat, flew to Addis Ababa to take part in the search.

Speaker Thomas S. Foley asked Ackerman, a member of Leland's select committee, and Wheat, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, would represent the House in the search. Also making the trip was sergeant-at-arms of the House, Jack Russ.

Government moves to financing woes surrounding landmark thrift bailout

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government began raising the first of the billions of dollars it will need for the big savings and loan bailout Thursday, and a new agency moved to rescue the first of the problem S&Ls that have been contributing to industry losses of \$20 million a day.

The Resolution Trust Corp., formed Wednesday when President Bush signed landmark thrift legislation, planned to announce the rescue of three small institutions, resolving the first of 262 problem cases on its list.

Meanwhile, printing presses churned out brand new signs for S&Ls across the country, reassuring depositors that their money is backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government.

That promise, once implicit in the government's deposit insurance program, is now explicit under the new legislation.

For years, Congress has passed resolutions affirming the government's full backing of savers' accounts up to \$100,000. But, technically, that promise was only as good as the industry-funded insurance program guaranteeing the accounts.

The law signed by Bush authorizes the government to borrow \$50 billion over the next 26 months, for the first time putting taxpayers' money where politicians' mouths were.

The Treasury Department intended to raise the first \$5 billion installment of the bailout, as part of its regular quarterly sale of debt. One third of \$15 billion in 247-day cash management bills sold Thursday will be earmarked for the RTC.

Money from the cash-management bills won't be available until Tuesday. In the meantime, the

Treasury Department has made \$215 million available to the RTC to cover Thursday's transactions.

The three are on a list of 262 failed institutions in 33 states taken over by regulators in anticipation of enactment of the bailout law. By the time it finishes its work, the RTC will have dealt with about 500 ailing institutions.

Analysts expect the bill, the largest financial bailout in the nation's history, to begin restoring public confidence that eroded in the

Public shows mixed reactions after \$285 billion S&L bailout

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The costly federal bailout of the beleaguered thrift industry has provoked everything from anger to ambivalence from the American public, although many depositors say their confidence in the soundness of the nation's banking system remains virtually unshaken.

"Every individual who has money in a savings and loan has to be aware that (the government) insures the money... and the comfort level that the savers should have is directly related to the comfort they have with the federal government," said Ronald Hyde, who keeps checking and savings accounts with thrifts in the Phoenix area.

Echoing the sentiments of a number of Americans, Hyde said he approved of the long-awaited thrift industry rescue plan that President Bush signed into law on Wednesday,

but called the cost for carrying it out "shocking at the very least."

The landmark legislation will require the government to spend a whopping \$285 billion over the next 30 years, more than half of that from taxpayers, to close or dispose of money-losing thrifts.

It is the most expensive industry rescue in history and some experts say it will cost each American taxpayer at least \$1,500.

A spot check by the Associated Press of depositors in cities nationwide suggested widespread resentment that taxpayers must pay for the industry's problems. Most of the thrifts' problems can be traced to the early 1980s when the industry was deregulated, permitting S&Ls to enter a broad array of new, riskier businesses.

"I think it stinks," said Ramiro Salazar, a 55-year-old mail carrier from the Los Angeles area. "The government is spending billions of dollars to bail out these guys who have been making money for years."

California had the largest total state tax revenue, \$36 billion, followed by New York, \$26 billion; Texas, \$13 billion; Pennsylvania, \$12 billion; Illinois, Michigan and Florida, \$11 billion each; and Ohio, \$10 billion. Tax collections in these eight states totaled nearly half of the taxes collected nationally.

Work on the new law is expected to continue through the end of the year.

MOSCOW (AP) — Headless aliens from space invade Russia!

"Huge hairy creature" terrifies villagers in the Volga valley!

Possible UFO lands in Moscow! Although President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's reforms haven't spawned U.S.-style supermarket tabloids, glasnost has changed the Soviet media, as evidenced by these recent stories.

The change is evident on state-run television, once a showcase for morally uplifting and dull "Boy-Loves-Tractor" movies about building communism. Now, six days a week as part of the breakfast TV program "120 Minutes," gray-haired mystic Alan Chumak waves his hands on camera to cure viewers from Minsk to Vladivostok of what ails them.

Soviets with heart disease are requested to watch the self-described journalist on Tuesdays. On Fridays, Chumak will help viewers get rid of allergies. People with stomach bugs or bone and muscle aches should tune in on other days.

The inability to watch the program is not a problem. Leave the set on, and a jar of water, juice or massage cream placed by the TV screen

supposedly will be "charged" by Chumak's gestures and can be used later for treatment.

Since the days of the wild-eyed monk Rasputin, hypnotist and confidant at the court of the last czar, Russians have been intrigued by the occult and fantastic, and stories about UFOs, vanished planets and ESP have always had an eager audience.

With glasnost, or greater openness, such topics are getting more exposure than ever in the once stuffy official Soviet media, despite the firmly materialistic and rationalist ideology of the ruling Communist Party.

In fact, the unlikely organ in the forefront of the weirdness campaign belongs to the party itself. The one million-circulation daily newspaper *Socialist Industry*, an organ of the party's Central Committee, has a mandate to report on the Soviet economy, but often makes space for news items that have nothing to do with either socialism or industry.

On Tuesday, there was an intriguing account of invaders from space landing in Central Russia's Perm region: milkmaid Lyubov Medvedev

told the newspaper, "At about 4:30 in the morning, I was going to the farm when I saw a dark figure seemingly riding a motorcycle. ... When I looked closely at the figure, I noticed there was no motorcycle, but just something resembling a man, but taller than average and short legs."

The creature had "only a small knob instead of a head," Medvedev said. "I was frightened death, ... then it became fluorescent and disappeared."

Beekeeper G. Sharoglavov saw two egg-shaped "fluorescent objects" as big as aircraft hovering a height of 600-1,000 feet. Others in the area also saw aliens with no heads, the paper said.

It quoted V. Kopylov, Communist Party boss in the Chernushinsky region, as acknowledging that "something unusual is going on the territory of our two collective farms."

It was *Socialist Industry* as well that informed Soviets on Thursday of the huge, fleet-footed fiery creature that terrified residents of the Kirov settlement in the Volga basin.

State taxes rose in 1988, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taxpayers paid seven percent more in state taxes in fiscal 1988 than they did in the previous year, the government reported Thursday.

The Commerce Department reported that state tax revenue totaled \$264 billion in the year ending June 30, 1988, compared to \$246 billion in the previous fiscal year.

Tax collections in Hawaii, Montana and Oklahoma posted 20 percent gains each, the department said. Other states registering big gains included Texas, 15 percent; Alaska, 18 percent; Kansas and Maine, 17 percent each; Florida, 16 percent, and South Dakota, 15 percent.

Alaskans also paid more state taxes on a per capita basis — \$2,439 each — than residents of the other 49 states, the department said. New Hampshire had the lowest per capita state tax at \$532. The national per capita tax average was \$1,077.

Three states had decreased 1988 overall tax collections — Wyoming, down by nine percent, and Oregon and West Virginia, falling six percent each, the department said.

California had the largest total state tax revenue, \$36 billion, followed by New York, \$26 billion; Texas, \$13 billion; Pennsylvania, \$12 billion; Illinois, Michigan and Florida, \$11 billion each; and Ohio, \$10 billion. Tax collections in these eight states totaled nearly half of the taxes collected nationally.

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