

Wednesday, August 22, 1990

Families of U.S. hostages request toll-free hotline

Associated Press

Texans with loved ones missing or being held in the Middle East say there's one worry that Washington could help with right away: sky-high phone bills.

They say the State Department should install a toll-free number for information about Americans being held since Iraq invaded Kuwait 21 days ago.

"This is one thing that has bothered me, and I have requested it several times," said Donnita Cole of Odessa, whose husband, John Henry Cole, has been missing from a Kuwait oil field since the Iraqi invasion Aug. 2.

"I'm keeping a tally of my phone bill, and already this month it's going to cost \$600 for long distance calls including those to Washington, she said.

"The times that I mentioned (a toll-free number to State Department employees), it was like it came completely out of left field," Cole said. "Am I the only one who has thought about an 800 number?"

"We asked them," said Marjorie

Walterscheid of Jacksboro near Fort Worth. Her husband, Rainard, was among several American oil field workers who were relocated by Iraqi troops the first day of the invasion.

"I told (the State Department) that with calling our kinfolk, it's going to cost us enough money, and we tried to get a toll-free number" to Washington, she said.

"I'm keeping a tally of my phone bill, and already this month it's going to cost \$600 (to call the State Department.)"

—Donnita Cole, wife of U.S. hostage

But the State Department employee she was talking to just said, "We don't have one," Walterscheid recalled.

Another family member, P.C.

Carr of Aspermont, said a toll-free number "definitely would help." Gary Carr of Keller, near Fort Worth, is another oil field worker who has been missing since the invasion.

Most of the families said they expected their phone bills to be in the hundreds next month.

"I don't think they're spending hundreds of dollars," calling Washington, said Judy Baroody, press officer for a special task force set up by the State Department to deal with the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

She said officials believe that a special phone bank is enough to help the 4,000-some callers each day.

"The decision has been made that the 40 lines they have, they're satisfied with that," she said. "They are calling families back. They are keeping in touch with families."

"This is the first complaint I've heard of people begrudging the money to call," Baroody said.

There are more than 3,000 Americans and thousands of other foreign citizens now under Iraqi control, and President Bush has said they are hostages.

UA scientists plan project to join SSC

LITTLE ROCK (AP) — University of Arkansas scientists say they support construction of a \$13 million system that would link an Arkansas project to the superconducting supercollider project in Texas.

Don Wold, a professor of physics at UA-Little Rock, said the Grande Project would require construction of a particle detector in an old mining pit near Malvern.

The system would detect neutrinos emitted by the supercollider. Neutrinos are particles that can penetrate almost all known substances but have almost no mass, Wold said.

Wold said the university probably would apply for research money available through the Texas National Research Laboratory, a state agency participating with the federal government in the superconducting supercollider project.

The supercollider project, expected to be the world's top high energy physics research center, will be built in Ellis County, near Fort Worth and Dallas.

"It seems to me to be a natural tie-in," said Andre Rollefson, chairman of the physics and astronomy department at UALR.

American troops complain about lack of protective suits

SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — American troops stationed here before the huge buildup of the past two weeks are complaining they have not been issued suits designed to protect against chemical weapons.

"All these guys coming in here get gas masks and the suits, but we get nothing," one Air Force airman said. "They are treating us as if we don't count."

A military spokesman said the shortage was discussed at a command staff briefing Tuesday and more suits are expected to arrive on transport planes "in the next few days."

The enlisted men's comments suggest how deep the fear of chemical weapons runs. Such weapons — and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's willingness to use them — are prime topics of discussion among troops here.

"It's as much psychological as anything," one of the men, an Air Force master sergeant, said of the protective suits.

"We see everybody else with them and hear everything being said about Iraq's gas and chemicals, but we get nothing," he said.

One Air Force sergeant, stationed in Saudi Arabia the past nine months, went as far as calling a news

organization in the United States to voice his complaint.

"I was just fed up with the bureaucracy," the sergeant said Monday. "Why should my guys be left naked?"

Pentagon ground rules prohibit the use of troops' names in news media pool dispatches from Saudi Arabia.

In brief interviews with a dozen men stationed here as part of a standing U.S. military training operation, just one said he had chemical gear.

"I scrounged it up by cutting a deal," the Air Force sergeant said.

The sergeant who called the states to complain said there are about 120 U.S. military personnel stationed at the training mission, most of them Air Force. The men conduct training with the Saudi military and also provide security, communications and other logistical support to a small U.S. compound on a Saudi air base.

Both Saudi and American officials have said they doubted Iraq has the capability to successfully use chemical weapons against the base.

But the men said they still would feel more comfortable with the anti-chemical gear and had requested it several times.

Magellan returns pictures showing Venus' terrain

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Magellan's first radar pictures of Venus were released Tuesday, showing faults and lava flows like those in Hawaii and Idaho and parallel valleys and ridges like those between the Sierra Nevada and Rockies.

The large number of fractures and "Venusquake" faults seen in images from the spacecraft suggest the crustal movements that shaped the landscape are "perhaps even more violent than I imagined before," said Steve Saunders, Magellan's chief scientist at Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"Overlapping lava flows of various ages" and six to 10 miles wide appear as bright and dark splotches, he said.

But Saunders said the pictures don't yet show any of Venus' major volcanoes, whether any of them are active or if the planet's crust is broken into the kind of drifting plates that carry whole continents across the face of the Earth. Previous spacecraft revealed numerous mountainous volcanoes.

The lava flows are "similar geologically to volcanic deposits seen on Earth at Hawaii and the Snake River Plains in Idaho," NASA said in a statement.

The parallel sets of elongated val-

leys and ridges resemble those in the basin-and-range province of the intermountain region of Utah and Nevada, or at the Great Rift Valley in eastern Africa. They show that at least part of Venus' crust has been stretched apart, Saunders said.

Meanwhile, engineers said they still haven't figured out why they temporarily lost radio contact with Magellan for more than 14 hours starting last Thursday.

One leading theory is that a cosmic ray or a high-energy particle from the sun caused a temporary blip in Magellan's computer memory, said spacecraft system engineer John Slonski.

"We're not ruling out a software (computer program) flaw or some hardware problem" or perhaps some unknown electrical fields surrounding Venus, Magellan project engineer Tony Spear said.

As far as engineers can tell so far, "the spacecraft is healthy," he added.

Cosmic ray "hits" on spacecraft electronics can be expected to interfere with Magellan about once each year, Spear said.

Engineers will spend the next week or so trying to diagnose the cause of the malfunction.

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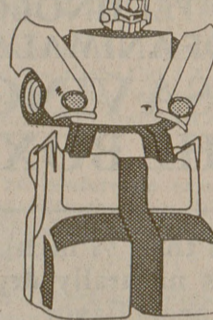
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