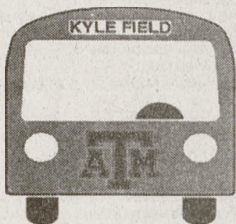


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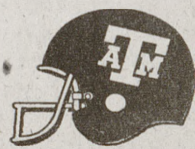
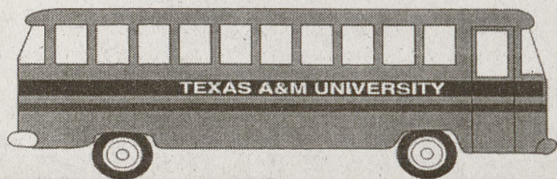


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Smugglers construct submarine

FACATATIVA, Colombia (AP) — In a scheme worthy of Jules Verne that awed even veteran naval officers, Colombian drug traffickers were building a sophisticated submarine to smuggle narcotics, reportedly with help from American and Russian criminals.

The 100-foot submarine could have crossed an ocean, surfaced off Miami or other coastal cities and surreptitiously unloaded its drug cargo. Top officials flocked to the warehouse Thursday to marvel at the lengths that Colombian drug traffickers, who supply more than 80 percent of the world's cocaine and a rising share of its heroin, go to export their illicit products.

When police arrived, there was no one around. Surveillance cameras had been placed on the roof. No arrests have been made.

Navy Capt. Fidel Azula, a former submarine captain and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said even the Colombian navy lacked the knowledge to build such a vessel. "This is unmistakably of superb naval construction," he said.

Seized documents, including blueprints, contained Russian- and American-sounding names. There were indications Russian engineers were involved, including "a very professional engineer who has constructed submarines before," Arreguin said.

Previously, smugglers have outfitted passenger planes and ships to transport drugs, and even built some tiny fiberglass "submersibles" to ferry drugs to a mother ship. But they were mere contraptions compared to this sub, which measured over 11 feet in diameter.

Officials believe the traffickers would have transported the sub in three sections to the coast aboard tractor-trailers.

Indonesia urged to quell uprisings

KUPANG, Indonesia (AP) — Frightened U.N. relief workers were evacuated from West Timor on Thursday, fleeing rampaging militias, and the caskets of three slain workers were airlifted out, draped in blue U.N. flags and covered with tropical flowers.

"This was done at a time when I am in New York, at the United Nations, in order to embarrass me."

— Abdurrahman Wahid
Indonesian president

With the suspension of international aid operations, some 90,000 refugees were faced with potentially disastrous shortages of food and medicines in their squalid camps on the western side of the border that divides Timor island into the Indonesian west and the U.N.-administered East Timor.

At the United Nations, President Clinton urged Indonesia to "bring

those responsible to justice, to disarm and disband the militias and to take all necessary steps to insure the safety of those continuing to work on humanitarian goals there."

Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, humiliated before scores of world leaders at the U.N. Millennium Summit, promised he would work with the U.N. administration in East Timor on removing the hostile militias from the border region. "But to remove such a number of people needs time," he said.

He insisted his forces had tried to prevent Wednesday's attack, which left three aid workers, including an American, and three civilians dead. Witnesses say soldiers stood by without stopping the mob.

"We protected them, but it's a problem of a cultural nature," Wahid told journalists, saying tribal differences fueled the militia problem.

Wahid has often blamed such rogue military elements of triggering bloodshed and mayhem in Timor and elsewhere in Indonesia to derail attempts by his 11-month-old government to build a new democracy after decades of authoritarianism.

Indonesia's official Antara news agency quoted Wahid earlier as saying Wednesday's attack was engineered by his domestic political foes.

"This was done at a time when I am in New York, at the United Nations, in order to embarrass me," he was reported as saying. He did not repeat the accusations when speaking at the United Nations.

Dutch suspect arrested for immigrant trafficking

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The suspected leader of a smuggling ring connected to the deaths of 58 immigrants was under surveillance before the bodies were found, but police had no clear proof he was involved in human trafficking, the justice minister said Thursday.

Benk Korthals told a special parliamentary session that Dutch police had been watching the suspect and others.

The suspect, whose name has not been released in line with Dutch privacy practices, was being "observed once or twice a week for some time," Korthals said. But, he said, the suspects were not being followed the day in June when the Chinese immigrants were packed inside a truck's unventilated refrigeration container for the trip to England.

British customs officers in Dover found the bodies of the Chinese, who had suffocated in the back of the airtight truck during the five-hour ferry crossing from Belgium. Two immigrants survived. The truck was registered in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam.

During an hour-long debate, Dutch legislators cited an article in the respected magazine *Vrij Nederland* that identified one gang member as Gurzel O. and said he was of Turkish origin. The magazine said the ring had been under observation since mid-1998 after authorities received a tip that it was shipping Kurds from the Netherlands to England by yacht.

Korthals told parliament that under the surveillance operation, groups of illegal immigrants were allowed to leave the Netherlands to help gather evidence against the gangs who smuggled them.

But, he said, the Dover case was not among those allowed to proceed. Korthals denied he was aware of any human trafficking activities by the organization before the incident in Dover.

Six people are in custody in the case and an official close to the investigation said another major figure is being sought. Five other suspects were detained and conditionally released after questioning.

A court hearing on the case was expected in September and full parliamentary debate in October.

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