

At A Glance . . .

Missing in Action--A letter believed to be a 1972 North Vietnamese letter documenting that Vietnam held more than 600 POW's stirred up tensions in both Washington and Hanoi Tuesday. Vietnamese officials declared the letter "a pure fabrication", but veterans' groups and families of missing servicemen hope that this finding will stop normalization of relations with Vietnam to put more pressure on the Vietnamese to reform. The document was found in Soviet archives and was written by a Vietnamese General.

Fillbuster Butter--President Clinton says he aims to plow through the Senate Republicans' gridlock which is holding up his \$16 billion economic stimulus plan. He outlined several points for his package, including 50,000 summer jobs in New York; 22,500 summer jobs in Pennsylvania; waste-water treatment funds to allow Milwaukee to clean up the contamination in its water system; rehab of 100 low-income housing units in Duluth, Minnesota; and a new fire station in Kansas City, Kansas.

Health Care Credit Card--Health & Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala stated that a computerized "health security card" will guarantee access to medical care for every legal resident of the United States. "We're talking about a fundamental change in structure and in financing of the existing system," said Shalala. A form of indirect sales tax called value-added tax is under consideration to finance the new system. Shalala said that short-term price controls are on the table, and the idea of negotiating with doctors to provide more services to rural areas is being seriously discussed. The card, which is expected to be rejected by those who believe that it is an invasion of privacy, is the proof that a patient is in an approved health plan.

"It's threatening our livelihood"--Tobacco farmers are beginning to feel the pinch of anti-smoking sentiments. The proposed tax on tobacco products has enraged North Carolinian farmers. "People won't pay \$4 for a pack of cigarettes," says farmer Bonnie Barwick. The number of smokers is at 26% now, compared to the high of 42% in 1965, and tobacco production has gone down 2%-3% in each of the past three years. Apart from the standard non-smoking sections in restaurants and the like, smoking is now restricted or forbidden in many offices, schools, and other public buildings, including major league baseball stadiums, and McDonald's is testing entire non-smoking restaurants.

Subpoenaed Socialists--12 leaders of the failed 1993 hard-line coup went on trial yesterday, an anti-Yeltsin supporter Ivan Lubov stated, "It is President Yeltsin, not these innocent men, who should be tried for treason against our motherland." According to a recent Gallup Poll, 59% of Russians believe life was better under Communism, as Yeltsin's recent economic reforms have led to 2300% inflation last year. In a poll conducted by Russia's Commonwealth TV, only 30% of Russians favor punishing the accused coup plotters, while 20% prefer setting them free. Nearly all of the accused have become hometown heroes, regularly signing autographs, giving interviews, and receiving standing ovations.

King ruled L.A.--The city of Los Angeles is wary awaiting the verdict of the Rodney King civil trial against four LAPD officers accused of using unnecessary force to subdue him. Marines, National Guard, and police are all training in special riot tactics, and three-foot high concrete barriers have been placed in front of the federal building where the trial is taking place. Such precautions are necessary, considering the aftermath of a riot sparked by the acquittal of the four officers of most charges in a criminal trial last April. The rioting left 54 dead and more than \$1 billion in damage.

Seventh inmate killed--The inmate death toll at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility rose Tuesday as Dennis Weaver, 43, was found dead in a cell of the K cellblock. A scuffle which turned into a riot led to several convicts taking hostages and listing 19 demands, which are still being negotiated. One official said that the initial scuffling may have been staged to give inmates a chance to take control of the prison.

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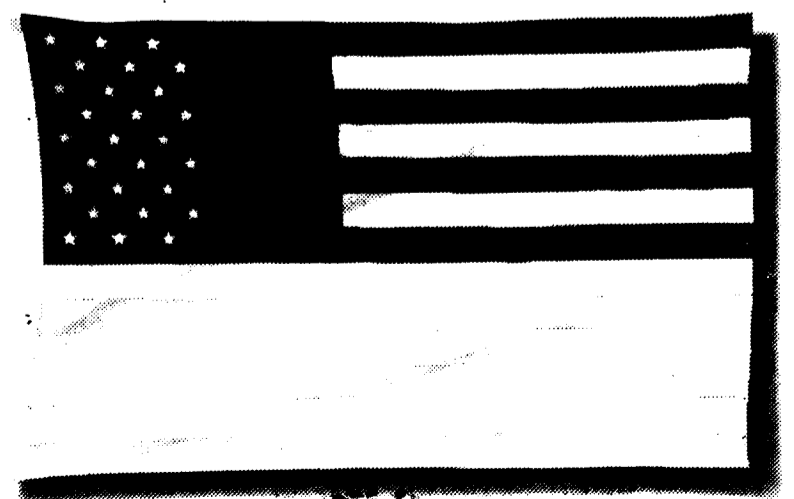
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