

News briefs

Amin's power increased

NAIROBI, Kenya (UPI) — Uganda's Defense Council held an emergency meeting and named Idi Amin chief of staff of the armed forces, giving the burly president day-to-day command of his battered army in what seems a last-ditch effort to stop the march on Kampala.

The Tanzanian forces reportedly were virtually within striking distance of Entebbe Airport, Amin's main supply link with the outside world.

All emergency military supplies Amin has recently received from Libya came through Entebbe, and any successful attack on the airport would be a devastating, possibly fatal, blow to the dictator's eight-year rule.

The diplomatic sources also said a force of Ugandan exiles had attacked the industrial center of Jinja, 45 miles east-northeast of Kampala, unleashing hit-and-run attacks throughout Uganda's second largest city.

Radio Uganda, which has one of its large transmitters in Jinja, canceled regular news shows yesterday and broadcast only music.

The Tanzanians, who have been concentrated near the southern Uganda town of Masaka for 10 days, began their major new offensive yesterday with a sudden push up the major highway toward Kampala, the sources said.

Yemen conflict escalating

KUWAIT (UPI) — Pro-Western North Yemen said its Marxist foes in South Yemen attacked border positions with Soviet-built MiG21 jet fighters yesterday, and South Yemen reported heavy ground fighting.

International concern grew over the escalating conflict on the edge of the Western world's vital oil shipping lanes. A U.S. spokesman in Washington said it appeared fighting was intensifying in some border regions despite the cease-fire that was to have ended the 13-day war last weekend.

"Both sides have accused the other of breaking the cease-fire, including

the use of air strikes for the first time," State Department spokesman Kenneth Brown said. "It appears that the level of fighting has decreased in some areas but intensified in others."

South Yemen claims its forces are not involved in the border fighting between the two tiny states at the southwest tip of the Arabian peninsula.

In Sanaa, North Yemeni Prime Minister Abdel Aziz Abdel Ghani met with U.S. Ambassador George Lane yesterday for talks described as concerning "bilateral relations."

Mexican oil prices rise

MEXICO CITY, Mexico (UPI) — The price of Mexican oil, currently set at \$14.10 per barrel, will go up next month, the head of Mexico's state-run oil company said in an interview published yesterday.

Jorge Diaz Serrano, head of Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex), told the government newspaper El Nacional that Mexico will raise oil prices at the end of March when this year's first quarter expires.

But Diaz Serrano did not indicate how much of an increase Mexico would charge for the 1.5 million

barrels that it produces daily. "When the three-month period ends, our (oil) prices will surely go up," Diaz Serrano said.

Pemex set its current oil price of \$14.10 per barrel last Dec. 31 for the first quarter of 1979. The oil company has the authority to raise prices depending on world market conditions.

Mexico currently is ranked as the world's 13th largest oil producer, and Pemex has announced that it plans to increase its production in 1980 to 2.25 million barrels per day.

Taiwan legislation killed

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The Senate yesterday rejected two amendments aimed at improving Taiwan's diplomatic status in America and the vote margin indicated compromise legislation approved in committee probably would pass without major change.

On a vote of 57 to 38, the Senate rejected an amendment proposed by Sen. Gordon Humphrey, R-N.H., to set up a U.S. liaison office in Taipei instead of the private corporation the administration has proposed to handle future relations.

It also rejected, on a 62-33 vote, an amendment offered by Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., to refer to the island as "Taiwan" rather than "the people of Taiwan," in the legislation.

Dole said the House version of the enabling legislation uses "Taiwan" instead of "people of Taiwan."

But the Senate unanimously approved a Dole amendment calling on the administration to make an annual status report on how the new relationship with Taiwan is faring.

Since Washington and Peking opened embassies in one another's capitals March 1, the United States no longer recognizes Taiwan as a nation.

So, until the legislation establishing the American Institute on Taiwan is approved — and funding is made available — the State Department has said only limited services can be provided for citizens doing business with Taiwan.

Galaxy found to be huge

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Astronomers have discovered that a "very blue" galaxy known as NGC 1961 is the largest of its kind, with 10 times the mass of the Milky Way and billions of "hot young stars," the National Science Foundation said yesterday.

While man has known the galaxy existed for more than 100 years, it was studied for the first time recently by three astronomers who were surprised to learn how huge it was.

One of them, Vera Rubin of the Carnegie Institution in Washington, said NGC 1961 is the biggest spiral galaxy known.

Spiral galaxies — including the Milky Way in which Earth is located — are filled with gases, bright stars and dust while those in the spherical category have other characteristics.

NGC 1961 got its rather Orwellian name in a routine way. Astronomers classify galaxies on a standard list known as the New General Catalog — thus the NGC — and give each a number.

In our own galaxy, she said, new stars are always being formed and old ones exploding in an ongoing process, but on NGC 1961 "a very large number of stars must have been formed at one time rather suddenly."

Panther's trial opens

OAKLAND, Calif. (UPI) — The state opened its murder case against Black Panther leader Huey Newton yesterday with testimony from a former prostitute who said she saw Newton shoot another streetwalker to death.

The prosecution asserted its opening arguments that Newton shot Kathleen Smith, 17, in a fit of pique over her failure to recognize him.

Newton said outside the courtroom he is innocent and accused the state of conspiring to convict him.

Newton, who fled to Cuba after the murder charge but later returned on

his own, spoke to reporters during a recess.

Prosecution witness Michelle Jenkins, 20, testified she was positive Newton was the man she saw get out of a Lincoln Continental on Aug. 6, 1974 and walk up to Smith with a pearl-handled gun. The next thing she saw was Smith lying on a sidewalk with a hole in her neck "and the side of her neck was blown out."

She said that Smith had waved at the car, which then circled the block. She said Newton got out, approached her and said "bitch, don't you know who you're talking to?"

Billy Carter treated

LONG BEACH, Calif. (UPI) — Billy Carter, the president's beer-guzzling brother, was paying \$242 a day yesterday for treatment for alcoholism at the Navy Hospital which treated former first lady Betty Ford and Sen. Herman Talmadge of Georgia.

Carter, 41, was flown Tuesday to the Navy's Alcoholic Treatment Center from a Georgia hospital where he had been under treatment for bronchitis.

Tandy Rice, Carter's booking agent and president of Top Billing Inc., said Carter would remain at the Navy

hospital for five to eight weeks and would personally pay for the treatment which the hospital said would amount to \$242 per day.

"The tempo, stress and strain of Billy's life, as evidenced by the events during the last six weeks, have built to a frenzied crescendo," Rice said. "The pressure on Billy increased daily and Billy gave in to it."

"The strain of the Libyan issue and the unfortunate statement concerning Jews has been enormous. All of this, compounded by Billy's health problems, has been difficult for Billy to handle."



UPI Wirephoto

Georgia on My Mind

Ray Charles, thrilled by a standing ovation, accepts applause from state senators and representatives after he performed the new state song, "Georgia on My Mind." Charles, a native of Albany, Ga., recorded the hit in 1958. The legislature adopted Charles' version as the state song last week, and the blind singer will be given a braille copy of the proclamation by the governor.

Cancer-low radiation link called inconclusive

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A government lawyer said yesterday Americans must learn to "live with uncertainty" since the government does not know how much cancer is caused by low level radiation, but he also recommended fewer x-rays be used.

F. Peter Libassi, general counsel of the Health, Education and Welfare Department and chairman of a federal task force on radiation, told Congress studies made so far on the effects of low-level radiation are too inconclusive to prove its link to cancer.

But Libassi said greater protection against radiation could be provided, particularly by reducing its use in medical diagnosis and treatment.

He said about 526 million x-rays are taken each year in the United States and they are the source of most of the man-made radiation to which Americans are exposed.

Radiation is measured in "rems," with a single rem representing the minimum dose known to produce biological damage to tissue. Exposure to anything below five rems a year is considered a low dose.

Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, chairman of the subcommittee Libassi testified before, asked the attorney if he thought the five-rem federal standard was safe or whether it should be lowered.

Labassi hesitated, then said he was not qualified to answer.

Glenn then asked if any of the other five task force members present could answer the question.

None spoke up. They included top officials from the National Institutes of Health, the Center for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration's Bureau of

Radiological Health, the Defense Nuclear Agency and the Energy Department's environmental section.

But Libassi said both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission are reviewing the standard and would "ultimately come to some conclusion."

As for the link between cancer and radiation, Libassi repeated the conclusions the task force reached in its latest report last week.

"There is not now enough evidence to come to any conclusions," he said. "We just can't tell you how much cancer is caused by low-level radiation."

"We're going to have to live with uncertainty," he said.

"It is not our function to recommend changes in standards and we will not do that even in our final report to the White House," Libassi said.

Proposed Social Security rollbacks denied

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The House Ways and Means Committee yesterday rejected Republican efforts to roll back increased Social Security taxes, and scrapped many changes the administration sought in the Social Security program.

The tax writing committee did promise to develop legislation eventually to reduce or eliminate the Social Security tax increases scheduled to go into effect in 1981.

But it defeated a motion by Rep. Barber Conable, R-N.Y., the ranking committee Republican, that would have rolled back Social Security taxes to last year's levels.

That, Conable said, would have saved taxpayers about \$8.9 billion.

The 25-11 vote was along straight party lines except for Rep. Willis Gradison, R-Ohio, who voted with the Democrats. There are 24 Democrats and 12 Republicans on the committee.

As had been expected, the committee scrapped the administration's plans to end paying lump sum death payments, eliminate the minimum benefit for new beneficiaries, phase out students' benefits, terminate parent's benefits when the youngest child reaches age 16, and offset Social Security benefits of retired federal employees.

Administration officials estimated earlier this year the changes would save about \$519 million in fiscal 1980.

The committee approved a subcommittee report that said, "These are controversial proposals, which the administration has not yet transmitted to Congress in legislative form, and beyond expectation that they would be enacted in time to have the impact on the fiscal year 1980 budget that the administration has included in its budget."

It pledged to develop legislation to reduce program costs in the retirement and survivor benefits area.

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