

Lebanese officials say kidnapped Soviets are alive

By ED BLANCHE
Associated Press Writer

BEIRUT, Lebanon — A telephone caller said yesterday that two of four kidnapped Soviet Embassy employees had been killed, but intelligence sources said they were alive and the abductors produced photographs of them with guns at their heads.

The instant photos, in color, were accompanied by a message saying they would be killed unless a Syrian-backed offensive against fundamentalist Moslem militiamen in the northern port of Tripoli was stopped.

It could not be determined when the photographs were taken.

They were delivered to a Western news agency in Beirut with a statement that said: "We will start carrying out the death sentence on the first hostage at 9 p.m. (2 p.m. EDT) sharp unless the atheistic campaign against Islamic Tripoli stops."

But hours after the deadline passed there was no indication any action had been taken against the hostages.

Associated Press reporters in Tripoli said there was no letup in the militia push on the Islamic Unification fighters, who were cornered around the port with their backs to the sea.

President Reagan called the abductions "cowardly," the Soviet Union said it was taking "all necessary steps" to free the victims, and Syria offered "any assistance in our capacity" to gain the release of the Soviets and 14 Westerners held by kidnappers in Lebanon.

Leftist militias backed by Syria, the Soviet Union's main ally in the Middle East, have cornered fighters of the Islamic Unification militia in Tripoli, 50 miles north of Beirut.

Two of the men in the photographs were identifiable as the kidnap victims from pictures in their residence permits, photocopies

of which were circulated by the kidnappers earlier in the day. Lebanese authorities verified that the permits were authentic.

The photos and statement purportedly were from the Islamic Liberation Organization, Khaled Ben al Walid forces, the Beirut Sector. It is a Sunni Moslem group linked to the Islamic Unification movement.

The anonymous telephone caller, claiming to speak for the fundamentalist organization Islamic Holy War, said earlier Tuesday that two of the Soviets had been killed. But Lebanese intelligence sources said they were alive and had been held in predominantly Moslem west Beirut since they were seized there Monday in two separate abductions.

The intelligence sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press two were being held by the Hezbollah, or Party of God, and the others by Islamic Holy War, or Jihad Islami. Both are fundamentalist Shiite Moslem groups.

Islamic Holy War also claims to hold six Americans and four Frenchmen kidnapped since March 1984. It has said it will free them if Kuwait releases 17 men imprisoned there for bombings in 1983, including attacks on the U.S. and French embassies. Kuwait refuses.

The anonymous caller who said he spoke for Islamic Holy War said the two Soviets killed were the commercial attache and the embassy doctor. When they were kidnapped Monday, police identified the commercial attache as Oleg Spirin and the physician as Nikolai Versky.

The other two Soviets abducted were the cultural attache, Arkady Katakov, and Valery Kornev, the embassy second secretary.

There have been several anonymous calls since the embassy employees were kidnapped. All the callers claimed to represent the kidnappers. All demanded that Syria halt the offensive against Islamic Unification in Tripoli.

The intelligence sources said they could not do anything about the abductions because west Beirut is controlled by militias.

Official sources said President Amin Gemayel, a Christian, told the Soviet charge d'affaires, Yuri Suslikov, at a meeting Tuesday that the captives were alive, but said achievement of their freedom was "for others to perform."

That was viewed as a reference to such figures as Nabih Berri, who is Lebanon's justice minister and chief of the Shiite militia Amal, and Moslem religious leaders who have influence with extremist factions.

Some of the religious leaders have been trying to secure the release of six Americans and eight other Westerners held by extremist Moslem kidnappers.

The Soviet Union, in its first public response, said, "Competent Soviet agencies are taking all necessary steps in order to save the Soviet citizens," but did not elaborate.

PSU tax on bank will go to court

By SCOTT A. ALDERFER
Collegian Business Writer

Due to a question of constitutionality, a county judge ruled Monday that the University will be allowed to appeal Centre County's property tax assessment of the on-campus Mid-State Bank and Trust Co. facility.

Judge Charles C. Brown Jr. overruled the county's preliminary objections that the University failed to complete its appeal through the county Board of Assessment Appeals.

The University filed its suit in January to defend its tax-exempt status as a state-owned university after the county assessed the University \$1,858 in property taxes and said the space leased to Mid-State in the Penn State Bookstore on campus qualified as commercial space.

In his decision, Brown ruled that the University may bypass the county Board of Assessment Appeals and be heard by the Court of Common Pleas. He said the question of the county's authority to assess the University property is beyond the board of appeals' jurisdiction.

"Instead of requiring that (the University) go to the Board of Assessment Appeals, because of the nature of the issue involved — that being the constitutionality, the due process — I decided they should bring the matter before the Court of Common Pleas rather than go to the board," Brown said.

"The county was saying there is a procedure for persons who are not happy with decisions made by the county regarding assessment of taxes. The University took the position that, while this is true in the normal case, this is not the normal case," he said.

Since the University is part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the question of whether the county may tax University property is a constitutional issue and should be heard by a court of law, Brown said.

The University argued that the county does not have the power to tax its property and that there are issues involved that are not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Assessment Appeals, Brown said.

Dean McKnight, Mid-State's area vice president, said that because Mid-State had to bid against other banks for the on-campus facility, he could not give any information about the terms of the lease.

"We are bound by the lease we have with the University and we will accept whatever decision the University comes up with," said Wayne Miller of Mid-State's marketing department.



Cruisin'
In what might well have been a scene from the 19th century, this horse and buggy seem to be sailing along and totally enjoying yesterday's brisk fall afternoon in Belleville. The photographer, who believed he may have stepped in to "the twilight zone," wasn't quite sure whether the horse's feet were even touching the ground.

Grubb approved by Senate

By KRISTINE SORCHILLA
Collegian Staff Writer

The state Senate approved the nomination of former University Senior Vice President for Administration Richard Grubb as Secretary of Agriculture yesterday.

Grubb was approved by the Senate with one dissenting vote, said state Sen. J. Doyle Corman, R-Centre.

"I am extremely excited and delighted that his nomination was passed so overwhelmingly," Corman said.

"I am delighted by the overwhelming support," Grubb said after his approval to the post. "The vote simply confirms that agriculture has top priority in the Commonwealth."

As secretary of agriculture, Grubb will maintain an association with the University as an ex-officio of the University Board of Trustees.

Grubb was named acting secretary of agriculture in May to replace Penrose Hollowell, who resigned in April following a shoplifting conviction.

Grubb's nomination by Gov. Dick Thornburgh last June received mixed reactions from state farm organizations. Grubb said although most farm organizations supported him, the Pennsylvania Farmer's Association opposed his nomination.

"They are not opposed to me personally," he said. "A lot of farm groups have supported me, and I have been and will continue to work for all groups equally."

The Pennsylvania Farmer's Association contested Grubb's nomination because he did not meet the association's qualifications for a secretary of agriculture, said Jan Carson, news media director for the association.

"A secretary of agriculture must be aware of the thinking of farmers in the state," Carson said. "Because (Grubb) is an academic administrator, he is not directly involved in agricultural organizations. Involvement in the academic scene is a lot different than involvement in the grass roots area of agriculture."

Despite doubts about his qualifications, association members testified before the Senate committee that they had no opposition to Grubb as a person or an administrator, Carson said.

Grubb grew up on a farm and

continued to work on one through college. He received a bachelor's of science degree in agricultural economics and rural sociology, a master's of science degree in agricultural economics and a doctorate in higher education from the University.

Grubb's administrative abilities, farm experience and degrees in agricultural areas do not mean he is informed on recent agricultural developments, Carson said.

"A lot of people were raised on farms, but that doesn't mean they know what's going on on farms today," she said.

As secretary of agriculture, Grubb said he will work to implement and

propose policy development and planning in agriculture. Grubb said he will also examine the overall health of state poultry and livestock as well as implement a general animal health program.

"Agriculture is a changing industry, and it is up to the department to lead the way in proposing and guiding changes," Grubb said.

Grubb is on an unpaid leave from his University position. He said he will return to the University when the Thornburgh administration ends.

However, Grubb said he will not be limited by his short term as secretary of agriculture because, "there's a lot you can do in a year and a half."



Richard E. Grubb

Heckler resigns as HHS secretary

By SUSANNE M. SCHAFER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Margaret Heckler stepped down yesterday as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to become ambassador to Ireland but President Reagan denounced reports that she was forced from the post as "malicious gossip" and "falsehood."

"I think Mrs. Heckler was justifiably upset by the kind of gossip that was going around," the president said as she stood at his side. "I don't know where this was coming from. It was malicious, it was false. She executed the policies that I wanted for the agency."

There had been persistent reports that the White House staff, particularly chief of staff Donald Regan, had disapproved of Mrs. Heckler's performance and had applied pressure to get her out. The department, with 145,000 employees, has a \$330 billion budget — the largest in the government.

"I've never been able to find the individual responsible for this," Reagan said of reports that the White House was displeased with her work.

"She has done a fine job at HHS," the president said, during a brief appearance in the White House press room. "As a matter of fact, if she hadn't done such a good job, I wouldn't have been so eager to seek her out to be the ambassador to Ireland."

The president said a successor to Mrs. Heckler had not been chosen.

White House deputy press secretary Albert Brashear said Mrs. Heckler will remain at HHS until she is confirmed as ambassador by the Senate.

"It shouldn't take long," Brashear said of the confirmation process, noting that the Senate is in session.

Mrs. Heckler fidgeted with her hands and appeared nervous as the president talked with reporters. She said Reagan had persuaded her to take the new post and that she considers it "an honor and an exciting challenge."

Mrs. Heckler once described the Irish ambassadorship as "a lovely position — for someone else."

Asked about that, she said she "looked upon this assignment with new eyes having heard the presentation that he (Reagan) made and having also his assurance that it was my choice to stay on as secretary of HHS or become ambassador to Ireland."

Reagan was asked if she could have stayed on.

"Yes," he said.

On Capitol Hill, House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., a Democrat from Mrs. Heckler's home state of Massachusetts, said it was known that "they" have been trying to get rid of Mrs. Heckler.

Mrs. Heckler is of Irish stock. Her full maiden name was Margaret Mary O'Shaughnessy.

wednesday

weather

Today abundant clouds with glimpses of sunshine later in the day. The day will be cool with a high of 61 degrees. Tonight, a gradual clearing by the morning hours. Low near 45 degrees.....Heidi Sonen

Correction

Because of a reporter's error, it was incorrectly reported in yesterday's *Daily Collegian* that resident assistants are not covered under the University's present liability insurance for alcohol-related incidents.

RAs are covered under the policy and are backed by the University as long as they enforce the University's alcohol policy, according to Stan Latta, a member of the University President's Task Force on Alcohol.