

Business Briefs

Space

Rocket industry begins commercial projects

Martin Marietta Corp. has signed an agreement to launch a communications satellite for Federal Express Corporation in what Reagan administration officials immediately hailed as the birth of the nation's commercial rocket industry, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* Sept. 6.

The Bethesda, Maryland aerospace firm, which makes the Titan-class rocket for the Air Force, said on Sept. 5 that it plans to use one of those rockets to launch the Federal Express satellite from Cape Canaveral some time in 1989, using Air Force facilities.

NASA officials also announced on Sept. 9 that NASA will permit a new rocket company to use its Wallops Island, Virginia base to launch small satellites.

The new company, Space Services Inc. of America, based in Houston and headed by former astronaut Donald Slayton, has agreed with NASA on general terms for using the coastal facility for launching Conestoga rockets, according to the *Inquirer* Sept. 9.

The new company has several private contracts and may launch as many as 10 SDI payloads, said company spokesman Walter Pennino. Space Services will reimburse NASA for all launch support operations provided by the government.

International Debt

Non-aligned nations assert economic rights

The economic declaration of the Non-Aligned Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe refers to Peruvian President Alan García's fight with the International Monetary Fund, in its statement on "economic rights."

The report condemns "the use by certain developed countries of coercive measures against certain developing countries," and establishes that Third World countries can

"pay their debt service in a sovereign manner, and only with a percentage of their export income."

The statements condemn blackmail used by developed countries, which condition the sales or supply of vitally needed resources to payment of financial obligations.

The report also reiterates the proposal made by slain Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, for an international conference that would analyze the world financial crisis, including the debt problem, and propose necessary reforms of the international monetary system. The report also affirmed the need for a "political solution" to the debt crisis.

Biological Holocaust

Millions of rats plague Africa

Adding to the infestation of locusts and grasshoppers plaguing Africa, an invasion of millions of rats is now affecting an area from Senegal to southern Chad.

The *London Times* on Sept. 10 quotes experts saying that the rats are expected to do widespread crop damage. This plague was entirely predictable, since the earlier drought massively depleted the higher species of rat predators.

Asked about such a threat in mid-August, the headquarters of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization commented, "We do not care about rats; we only care about the locusts." At the time, French experts at the anti-locust research center in southern France rang the alarm bell on the ecological catastrophe that would be caused by several years of drought, followed by heavy rains.

The West African country of Niger has appealed for international aid to support its efforts to save this year's crops from devastation by rats and grasshoppers.

Agriculture Minister Allela Elhadj Habibou said on Sept. 5 that the Sahelian state needs assistance to deal with the menace during the next two harvests. More than 198,000 acres of crops have been sprayed with insecticides by plane or truck in the departments of Niamey and Dosso in west-

ern Niger, he said. A further 119,000 acres are currently being treated in other parts of the country.

Habidou also said that 12 tons of rat-poison had been used throughout Niger to prevent crop damage from rodents. Niger also plans to train 5,000 village brigades to reinforce officials dealing with the problem.

Austerity

Medical cuts killing babies in England

Doctors in Great Britain are being told to allow very small premature babies to die because treatment is too expensive, British Dr. Peter Fleming, consultant at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children, has charged.

According to a front-page item in the *Times* of London on Sept. 5, with the headline, "Babies die because of National Health Service cuts," Fleming claimed that neonatal units are turning away severely ill babies.

He said administrators of these units reproach him when he insists that these babies be attended to: "They say: 'If you let the children die, they wouldn't need intensive care for so long.' The loss of a small baby causes less grief in society than someone else."

The Invisible Hand

Threats issued against García

The Washington correspondent of the *London Daily Telegraph* on Sept. 9 threatened reprisals against Peruvian President Alan García for his break with the International Monetary Fund and limited-payments policy on Peru's foreign debt.

Writes Frank Taylor: "The many private banks now holding Senior García's increasingly worthless IOUs may soon embark on a co-ordinated campaign of seizure against

Peruvian assets abroad." The "news" item was headlined: "Banks' anger grows over Peru debt."

Taylor said that while Alan Garcia is undergoing a "surge of popularity" at home and has "grudging respect from other hard-pressed Latin American nations . . . the view from the world's money capitals is somewhat different."

Using an apt comparison, Taylor continued: "Welshing on millions of dollars in loans goes through no better with the international banking community than it does with the Mafia. . . . Peruvian sources said that certain American banks had already begun to move against the country's assets. Government funds had been seized on three occasions this year, they said, but would not give details."

Technology

New military laser will have medical uses

A military laser developed to guide missiles from tanks may someday be used to vaporize fatty material off the insides of artery walls, Dr. Ellis Jones, professor of cardiology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia announced in early September.

"It's a fantastic partnership between military technology and medicine," Jones said in a telephone interview with UPI Sept. 7. "The laser is very advanced, way far ahead of anything devised specifically for medical use."

The laser, called TEA for transverse excitation at atmospheric pressure, generates short but powerful pulses of energy. "The combination of high energy and short duration means it can hit the target without injuring anything around the target. That was the purpose behind developing it for a tank and that's why it is perfect for this type of operation. . . . This is the first laser that has proven it can work without damaging tissue."

In medical usage, the laser would probably be guided through the venous system by delicate fiber optics.

Free Enterprise

Crédit Suisse ties to terrorism revealed

Zurich's Crédit Suisse bank has been identified as one of the financial centers of Syrian-sponsored terrorism, centered on the Armed Revolutionary Lebanese Faction (FARL). More than \$1 million belonging to the terrorists is deposited in the bank in five different numbered accounts, each with five signatures, it has been learned.

According to reliable sources in Rome, Crédit Suisse has also been exposed by Rome investigative judge Domenico Sica as one of the main channels for the transfer of Libyan money to terrorists in Europe. In a report written at the beginning of the summer of 1986, Judge Sica, who had been investigating Libyan-European terrorist connections during 1982-83, discovered that approximately 20 banks had been used by the Libyans, among them two branches of Crédit Suisse.

Nazi Medicine

Court upholds murder of mentally ill patient

A Dutch appeal court decided on Sept. 11 that a doctor was justified in taking the life of a woman suffering from severe mental problems, a ruling which legal experts say considerably broadens the scope of euthanasia in the country.

The court upheld a previous decision that an unnamed doctor acted reasonably when he agreed to a 95-year-old woman's request to kill her in 1982 using a "medically acceptable method." The choice of someone of that age as a test case for euthanasia was undoubtedly deliberate, to offer a "clear case" for those pushing euthanasia.

Mercy killings are not formally permitted in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe, and attempts earlier this year to change Dutch law foundered when a senior advisory body said the time was not ripe for new legislation.

Briefly

● A TECHNICAL agreement between the United States and Italy on the Strategic Defense Initiative has been concluded, and Italian firms will get SDI contracts, the Italian daily *La Stampa* reported Sept. 10. A "memorandum of understanding" will be signed in mid-September.

● ARMCO, INC. may be forced into bankruptcy by the loss of income due to a strike which began late on Sept. 5 at its Middletown Ohio plant. Both Armco and Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel are presently operating under Chapter 11 reorganization, which allows for the plants to operate protected against creditors.

● THE ARMAND Frappier Institute and Atomic Energy Canada have begun construction of the Canadian Centre of Irradiation to study the use of gamma-rays to preserve foods. Such a study is necessary even though some countries already use irradiation, said a spokesman, because it will take time to find the required radiation level for bacteria found in Canada.

● WEST GERMANY'S full withdrawal from nuclear power, as demanded by the Social-Democratic Party, would cost Germany \$7.5 billion per year, according to a new study by the Bayerwerke AG in Munich. This estimate compiles the costs of adjusting the energy supply from nuclear to coal technology, for the adjustment of the production cycle in the industry to coal-based technology, and for higher production prices when fossil fuels are used.

● THE UNITED STEEL Workers Union has announced that USX Corp. has assigned contractors to dismantle the Dorothy 6 Blast Furnace at its Duquesne Works near Pittsburgh, and that the union will not attempt to stop the action. "It comes as no surprise, and we don't intend on taking any action that stands in the way of the demolition," said Andrew Palm, USW District 15 director.