

# Business Briefs

## Haiti

### Businessmen decry economic sanctions

Gerard Bailly, president of the Haitian Chamber of Commerce, said in late October that the sanctions organized by the United States "will create a social and economic catastrophe in Haiti. And our neighbor countries will be responsible for the situation. I hope that Haiti will not have to face such a crisis any longer."

An independent radio station reported that 160 U.S.-controlled companies were moving their operations, and that more than 40,000 Haitians would lose their jobs. A spokesman for the U.S. Association of Manufacturers said in a Voice of America broadcast that U.S. companies would be forced to leave: "We have been betrayed by the U.S. government for having decided to impose this economic embargo."

## Space

### Hubble telescope makes important discovery

"By far the most significant result Hubble has made so far." With this description, the program manager for the Hubble Space Telescope, Ed Weiler, drew attention to a little-noticed discovery of hydrogen clouds that are not supposed to exist, in a conference call with the press Oct. 22.

According to Big Bang cosmology, hydrogen clouds condensed from a uniform gas at a certain phase in the evolution of the universe, and at a later stage they condensed further into galaxies or else dissipated. This should be testable by the presence or absence of such clouds at different distances from us.

Light reaching us now from objects 2 billion light-years distant should show no hydrogen clouds, according to the theory. But when John Bahcall of Princeton used the Space Telescope's Faint Object Spectrograph to take spectra of well-known quasar 3C273, the spectra showed the existence of intervening hydrogen clouds. A second look by Ray Weymann

with the Hubble's High Resolution Spectrograph found even more clouds. These results appear in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters* of Aug. 10, an issue devoted entirely to Hubble results. Since then, such clouds have been found at similar distances by looking at the spectra of other quasars.

Weiler asked, "How did these clouds survive to this day? Are they being created somehow by some mechanism we don't understand?" He told *21st Century Science & Technology* magazine that these findings do not confront the Big Bang theory, but only constitute a constraint on it.

## Soviet Union

### Import cuts mean lack of industrial supplies

Drastic cuts of imports have created a critical under-supply for key civilian industries in the former U.S.S.R. Exports dropped by 30.3% and imports by 45.2% in the first nine months of this year, according to the official trade statistics.

In addition to shortages of vital spare parts in the textile industry and other industrial sectors, prefab products like sheet metals, synthetic fibres, yarn, as well as raw products like wool, rubber, and chemicals for the pharmaceutical industry are very much needed. Meat and refined food products—baby food above all, powdered milk, flour—standard and also special medicines are being sought abroad by the Russians, Ukrainians, and the other republics.

## Disease

### AIDS out of control, cholera spreads in Mexico

AIDS cases in the Mexico have increased by 50% in the last six months, according to Emilio Pavia Carrillo, coordinator of the Program for the Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases at the Yucatan State Health Secretariat.

Official statistics show that last May, there were 6,000 AIDS cases, and by October, this had increased to 9,000.

The increase, Pavia Carrillo said, has completely overwhelmed the health sector's ability to respond. In Yucatan alone, 184 cases have been detected and another 72 could be confirmed in the next two months. If this is the case, the number of cases for 1991 will have increased by 100% compared to 1990.

This report is combined with several others indicating the rapid spread of cholera in the country. In Tabasco state, outbreaks have occurred in 13 of 17 municipalities, and the incidence is particularly high among Indian populations. Throughout Mexico, according to the Health Ministry, 528 new cases of cholera have been identified over the past 30 days. Tabasco and Chiapas are the two states most affected. In the northern highlands of Puebla, another 90 cases have been detected.

## Environmentalism

### Norway study attacks 'global warming' data

A recent study by the Norwegian Polar Research Institute delivered a strong critique of "global warming" data. The study, "Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and Global Warming: A Critical Review," rips to pieces the "scientific" grounding for U.S. government assertions of a "global warming" caused by man-made emission of fossil fuel into the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

The study points to the basis for the claim that man-made emissions are the source, by noting that evidence is drawn from two sources of data: measurement of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and of CO<sub>2</sub> in glacial ice. They point out that the "historical" data from 19th-century estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> "were carried out with an error of up to 100%," and that modern comparative studies which use such worthless data have chosen to reject older values which they deemed "not representative," a form of scientific fraud which the Oslo researchers euphemistically call introduction of a "subjective factor in the estimates of the pre-industrial level of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere."

## Briefly

The attempt to measure CO<sub>2</sub> in air bubbles trapped in glacial ice as also representative of older CO<sub>2</sub> levels, is just as worthless. They point out that far from remaining "frozen," CO<sub>2</sub> levels in ice "can be largely enriched or depleted in comparison with the original atmospheric level . . . [by] twice or more the atmospheric level."

The study also reveals the worthlessness of today's data on CO<sub>2</sub> levels, because of the place U.S. government "scientists" have chosen as their "ideal site" to monitor global CO<sub>2</sub>. "The Mauna Loa [Hawaii] observatory has been regarded as an ideal site for global CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring. However, it is located at an active volcano, which has on average one eruption every 3.5 years. There are permanent CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from a rift zone situated only 4 kilometers from the observatory and the largest active volcanic crater is only 27 kilometers from the observatory. These patterns of the site have made 'editing' of the results an established procedure which may introduce a subjective bias in the estimates of the 'true' values."

### **Economic Policy**

#### **German steel leader attacks 'shock therapy'**

Citing the "very great discrepancy in efficiency between the eastern and western European steel industries," Ruprecht Vondran, managing director of Thyssen AG and head of the German steel federation, warned in a Paris seminar Oct. 25 that Europe faces a savage trade war over markets and prices with the desperate economies of eastern Europe if the European Community continues to ignore serious underlying problems. The comments were interpreted as an attack on the monetarist "shock therapy" model applied against eastern Europe.

Vondran cited examples of pricing on western markets of steel products which had "nothing to do with the actual production costs. The eastern European market is out of joint. Prices and costs bear no relation to each other."

Vondran said that there are two ways the steel market of an expanded Europe could merge. The first would be an unregulated trade

war for market share. "This would be a bout fought with the gloves off. Western European producers will do their best to defend themselves against a price chaos in their domestic markets caused by eastern deliveries. A stronger price squeeze would endanger the very existence of many West European steel makers. Eastern European companies on the other hand will do anything to earn hard currency."

Alternatively, he said, "Politics should create space so that the eastern producers can become more like us step by step. *They must be given time* to transfer their companies to private ownership or to some equivalent form. They must be given the opportunity to . . . increase their efficiency." He outlined several steps in such a "guided market transition" in which western steel makers, which recently completed a painful reorganization during the 1980s, would provide needed technical assistance to modernize eastern steel output.

### **Medicine**

#### **NASA to study radiation's effects**

One of the potentially most dangerous hazards of long-term space flight is exposure to radiation. At the Lawrence Berkeley Lab (LBL) in California, a Specialized Center of Research and Training in Radiation Health is being established with a NASA grant to explore the health problems that humans may encounter in interplanetary space.

LBL's Bevalac particle accelerator strips electrons from heavy elements, and accelerates and focuses the nuclei into a beam traveling close to the speed of light. These particle beams will be used to "mimic conditions that astronauts might encounter on the Moon, Mars, or other interplanetary voyages," LBL announced.

The Bevalac can produce a wide spectrum of radiation, from protons to heavy ions, and is currently a national facility for the clinical treatment of certain types of cancer and life-science research. A major goal of the center will be training and education in health effects of radiation.

● **THE BUSH** administration has just adopted new regulations that will cut about \$5 billion in federal Medicaid matching funds to the states, even though Medicaid is the fastest growing portion of state budgets. State spending on Medicaid increased 19% last year, and will top 25% this year.

● **NIGERIAN** economist Adebayo Adedej told a Reuters interviewer that his country, Africa's most populous, must seek a 10-year moratorium on foreign debt payments. "I think we should say to the international community we are going to put our house in order and . . . to enable us to do that and revitalize our economy, we need a period of debt moratorium."

● **CONSTRUCTION** has begun on two Advanced Boiling Water Reactor nuclear plants in Japan. The units at Tokyo Electric's Kashiwazaki-Kariwa power station are being built by General Electric 140 miles northwest of Tokyo. There has not been an order for a nuclear power plant that has not been canceled in the United States since 1977.

● **FRENCH** Energy Minister Strauss-Kahn has stated that a European Commission-proposed energy tax to fight "global warming" is "like trying to fight alcoholism by taxing orange juice."

● **BIRTHS** in the United States have dropped this year for the first time since 1985, reports the Department of Health and Human Services. Through July, births fell more than 50,000—and that does not include data from several states—as compared with increases of more than 100,000 each year since 1987.

● **THE EMPIRE STATE** Building is to be sold for just \$40 million, 10% of its former market value, the Oct. 31 *Wall Street Journal* reported. The Prudential Insurance Co. will sell the structure to a member of the family of J. Peter Grace, chairman of W.R. Grace & Co.