

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

TAMPA, Fla. — A Russian sailor who jumped ship in darkness and hitchhiked 45 miles in a week-long bid for freedom, was granted asylum in the United States Tuesday.

Igor Alexandrovich Ponomarenko, 19, was told he could remain in America after meeting with immigration officials and representatives of the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

"He felt his freedom of expression was too limited in the USSR. He would have more opportunity in the U.S.," said Joseph McFadden, director of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in Tampa.

After the decision to grant asylum was made, Ponomarenko agreed to meet with the Soviet attache, who interviewed Ponomarenko for 35 minutes to determine whether the decision to defect was made freely.

The tone of the conversation with the Soviet attache was gentle, said McFadden, who also observed the discussion. But he added that the Soviet official mentioned that the defection would probably hurt Ponomarenko's parents, although McFadden said it was not said in a threatening way.

Ponomarenko fled from Tampa after abandoning ship and hitchhiked with truckers until he bumped into a used car salesman, Byron Smiddy, who hid him for five days. Smiddy said, "My heart really went out to him."

HAMPTON, N.H. — Acting on the governor's orders, police Tuesday picked up and threw aside anti-nuclear activists protesting the arraignment of 12 fellow demonstrators arrested during the weekend "seige of Seabrook."

About 150 demonstrators, the remnants of an estimated 1,500 who repeatedly were repelled in attempts to occupy the Seabrook nuclear power plant construction site, gathered at the wood-frame courthouse here to protest the arraignments.

The protesters slashed tires on two police vans and blocked a sheriff's van being used to transport the 12 demonstrators back to jail from the Hampton District Court, police said.

State and local police then moved in, grabbing demonstrators and flinging them out of the way. The protesters — who had not resisted when police used Mace, tear gas, hoses and riot clubs to force them away from the plant during the weekend — this time fought back, kicking and swinging.

"Force was met with force, as much as was needed," said Hampton Police Chief Robert Mark.

McKENZIE BRIDGE — A fire fed by 40-50 mph winds burned out of control Tuesday about 10 miles north of here in the Willamette National Forest.

The fire charred more than 300 acres and crews had no estimate of when the blaze would be contained, said Forest Service spokesman Sam Frear in Eugene.

He said more than 200 people called in to fight the fire faced forecasts of continuing strong winds in the area, which is about 45 miles northeast of Eugene near the Linn-Lane County border.

Officials said airplanes could not be used to drop fire retardants because turbulence caused by the winds. Cause of the fire was under investigation.



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Carter pledges inflation fight

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pres. Carter renewed his commitment Tuesday to do "whatever it takes" to fight inflation, even if this means unpopular economic policies that could damage him politically.

In a nationally broadcast news conference, his first in nearly two-and-a-half months, Carter said he supports efforts by the Federal Reserve Board to tighten credit.

Carter said bringing rising prices under control remains "a top priority." If actions aimed at stemming inflation prove workable, "that's what I will do," the president asserted.

Although inflation has soared to an annual rate of about 13 percent, the president said his economic program has reduced unemployment and cut the federal deficit. The program has achieved "very beneficial results," Carter said, adding that he intends to maintain it.

In his first public response to an offer by the Soviet Union to withdraw 20,000 troops from Central Europe if NATO holds down its deployment of missiles in Western Europe, Carter said the Russians were "offering to continue their own rate of modernization as it has been, provided we don't modernize at all."

"It's not quite as constructive a proposal as at first blush it

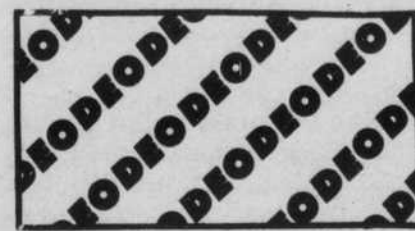
seems to be," the president said. He did call the offer "interesting," however.

"I think it's an effort designed to disarm the willingness or eagerness of our allies adequately to defend themselves," Carter said. The president said he would prefer to modernize the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and then negotiate with the Soviets.

The news conference was the president's first since July 25, which took place just after Carter completed his Cabinet shake-up. It produced a variety

of questions on his political fortunes since an apparent presidential candidacy by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy surfaced.

But Carter side-stepped most of the questions, suggesting to one reporter that she was delivering a campaign speech for the Massachusetts Democrat.



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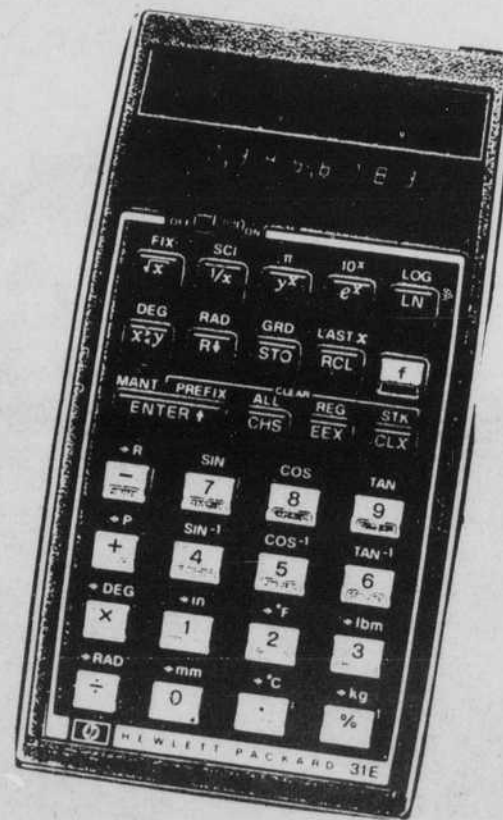
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