

Business Briefs

Drugs

Argentina legalizes 'personal' possession

Argentina's Senate voted on Aug. 29 to legalize possession of a "personal dose" of drugs for individual citizens.

The proposal, introduced at a time when illegal drug consumption is skyrocketing in Argentina, was supported by both Peronists and Radical party members, who reportedly feared that a negative vote would have cost them their re-election.

Psychologists and doctors, meanwhile, are expressing alarm at the practices of the Pareger-Bild Foundation in Argentina, a group that aids the families of terminal cancer patients, and reportedly provides heavy doses of morphine for the patients housed in hospices. Specialists who have done work associated with the Foundation report unlimited amounts of morphine available for patients.

This foundation is reportedly tied to circles set up by Anna Freud, the daughter of Sigmund Freud, and is bringing personnel to Buenos Aires from the Royal Marden Medical Hospital of London and the Churchill Hospital of Oxford to give seminars on their methodology.

Industry

Decline in robotics predicted

The robotics industry, once considered a "sunrise" industry, is expected to decline by at least 20% in 1987 from 1986 levels, according to the *Detroit News* on Aug. 18.

Laura Conigliaro, a robotics analyst with Prudential Bache Securities, Inc., told the *News* that robotics sales in the United States during 1987 will be "considerably down."

"The unfortunate thing is that everything revolves around the automotive industry," said Mike Mead, executive vice-president of Kuka Wilding Systems and Robot Corp. in Sterling Heights, Michigan, who estimates 80-85% of Kuka's business is automotive-related.

"Another related and very important reason is that capital spending, in general, has been weak," Conigliaro told the newspaper. "When it is weak, you don't get companies stepping up to the plate and trying out new technology."

In mid-August, GMF Robotics Corp. announced it would reduce its workforce from 700 to 200 by the end of the year.

Germany

Anti-nuke plan will kill jobs, hike taxes

The plan of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) for a non-nuclear economy would eliminate 200,000 jobs in West Germany, according to a study released by the RWI (Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung) in early September.

The dismantling of the nuclear technology sector, part of the SPD program in its campaign for the chancellorship in January 1987, would destroy 100,000 jobs during each of the first two years of implementation.

The plan would also reduce the growth rate of the German economy from 2.5% per year to 1.5%. Such a reduction would cause a drastic drop in the government's annual tax revenue of 7.5 billion deutschemarks. Drastic increases in energy prices and taxes would be necessary to compensate for the losses.

International Aid

State Department cuts off Zimbabwe

The State Department announced on Sept. 2 an end to economic aid to Zimbabwe because of repeated statements from Zimbabwe's government offensive to the United States.

About \$7 million already committed to specific projects will be permitted to go forward, as well as several regional programs;

\$13.5 million already appropriated but not spent this year, however, will not be forthcoming, and plans for any future aid programs will be dropped from the annual foreign-aid request to Congress.

"We deeply regret that Zimbabwe's insensitivity forced us to take this decision," said State Department spokesman Charles Redman on Sept. 2. "The problem is not political differences, but Zimbabwe's unwillingness to conduct its relations with us according to accepted norms of diplomatic civility and practice."

Genocide

World Bank: Reduce Africa's population!

Population control in Africa is becoming the top priority of the World Bank in its approach to the African continent, the *Financial Times* of London reported on Sept. 4, under the headline, "Africa Threatened by Population Growth."

The World Bank has thereby admitted officially that it has no interest in developing the agriculture, industry and infrastructure of the continent, so that the relatively empty land mass could sustain more people at rising standards of living.

The World Bank's report released on Sept. 3 in Washington, D.C. asserts that "strict population control" is the only thing that may prevent Africa's population from reaching 2 billion by the middle of the 21st century.

The report states that an unchecked birth rate in Africa could mean the "loss of long-run potential for higher economic growth and raising living standards, higher maternal and child mortality . . . further degradation of the national environment . . . tighter constraints on extending education and basic health care . . . and falling wages as the labor force grows more rapidly than complementary investments."

The report calls for a five- to six-fold increase in the amounts of international aid currently spent on birth control in the region, and recommends, says the London *Guardian*, that population control become the Bank's priority in the region.

Briefly

The report has been circulated among finance ministers in the West and Africa, ahead of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington during September.

The report praises President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe as the one African country that has taken "family planning" seriously.

War on Drugs

U.S. companies adopt drug testing

Two large U.S. companies have adopted drug testing policies for all employees. Both companies give safety considerations as their primary motivation.

General Electric Co. will screen U.S. job applicants for drug use beginning Oct. 1, and those who fail the urine tests will be rejected, the company announced Sept. 3. "A failure on this test is an automatic rejection of the applicant," said Sam Egbert, spokesman for the corporation. "We're very confident of the procedures we're going to use."

A person who fails the test can discuss the test with the physician responsible for medical evaluation, and may re-apply in six months. Current employees in jobs "where safety is a critical thing," have been subjected to testing for several months, Egbert said. "Our main concern is that we want to make sure we have a work environment that is free of drug abuse," he said.

Eastman Kodak Co. will begin testing workers for drug abuse in October. Kodak's urine testing program will affect all Kodak workers, spokesman Henry Kaska announced on Sept. 3. Employees refusing the tests can be fired.

Those who voluntarily seek assistance for drug use would be eligible for the same kind of benefits as workers with other kinds of illnesses. Kodak will test employees if poor performance prompts supervisors to suspect illegal drug use. "The employee whose performance is impaired by drug abuse can present a very serious hazard to his own safety and to the safety of co-workers and the public as well."

Dope, Inc.

Chicago bank caught in drug deal

A British branch of the First Bank of Chicago was involved in loaning money to members of a \$100-million drug smuggling ring to finance a scheme to channel hashish and marijuana from Pakistan and Thailand to the Newport, Rhode Island area, charged Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth Madden in late August.

The federal prosecutor said the loan was used to buy three small freighters, two fishing boats, floating piers, vans, and conveyor belts, as well as a Portsmouth restaurant. The government contends that hashish from Pakistan and marijuana from Thailand was transported by freighter through Canadian waters to a fishing boat in the Melville section of Portsmouth, then to the former Mount Hope Marina and Restaurant, finally to storage in Middletown, prior to distribution to other points.

Health

Malaria cases in California

A mother and daughter caught malaria, apparently transmitted by mosquitoes, near their rural home on Merritt Island in central California, the first such cases in the Sacramento Valley in more than 30 years, according to local health officials.

Dr. Ronald Roberto, chief of the disease-control section of the California State Department of Health Services, said on Sept. 3 that death rarely results from the type of malaria carried by the anopheles mosquitoes common in the area. He said there have been 223 reported malaria cases in California this year, but added:

"They're virtually all imported. People are exposed overseas and they come here and develop symptoms." The 40-year-old mother and her 18-year-old daughter, however, did not travel abroad during the past year.

● **BRITISH AEROSPACE** Corp. has developed a mobile drug- and explosives-detector called the Condor, capable of rapid examination of cargo containers. The government, however, is hesitant to spend the \$14 million to build enough machines for Britain's airports. Britain is targeted for an increase in cocaine smuggling, according to the *Sunday Express* on Aug. 31.

● **ASEAN** economic ministers failed to reach agreement on a common market proposal following extensive discussions, as the 18th ASEAN meeting ended in Manila on Aug. 31. Philippines Economics Minister Solita Monsod blamed the failure to agree on "the tremendous disparity in growth rates and levels of income," making some countries "more cautious than others."

● **THE ASPEN INSTITUTE** sponsored a conference on "Europe, America, and the World Economy," at Venice's Cini Foundation during the first week in September.

● **THE ATOMMASH** nuclear construction plant at Volgodonsk, U.S.S.R., according to the newspaper *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, has begun producing the first "fast neutron" reactor with a capacity of 800 megawatts. Western scientific attachés said this would be a more advanced model of the BN series of fast-breeder reactors already in experimental use in the Soviet Union.

● **MITI**, the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry, will launch a \$39 million, seven-year development program for computerized translation machines designed to overcome the gap between Japanese and the languages of the developing Asian nations. NEC Corp., Fujitsu Ltd., Hitachi Ltd., and Japan's Electrotechnical Laboratory will participate in the project.