World spends $300 billion a year on arms

Feb 29. Worldwide recession and inflation have hurt many companies, but one group of entrepreneurs is definitely not in the red. Arms manufacturers are earning vast sums of money. Their profits come from what a new study calls “an arms race out of control,” worth $300 billion a year. Military spending skyrocketed nearly 45% over and above inflation in the past 15 years, and the countries that can least afford to buy arms have some of the fastest growing appetites. The U.S. and the Soviet Union are purchasing 60% of the arms produced, but military spending in developing countries has doubled since 1960. In the Middle East, arms purchases are up 800% (→ 3/15).

Africans at odds over Western Sahara

Feb 26. Talks among African officials in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, are focusing on rival claims by Mauritania, Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario liberation movement over control of the Western Sahara. Spain granted Mauritania and Morocco control of the area (formerly called Spanish Sahara), but the Polisario group claims it has the right to administer the disputed desert region, and it has recently battled military troops of the two nations.

Soviets beamed microwaves at embassy

Feb 25. Soviet officials have finally admitted that they have transmitted microwaves at the American Embassy in Moscow, but justify it as a means to disrupt U.S. eavesdropping equipment. For 15 years, Washington officials have queried Moscow about beams of low-level electromagnetic radiation, like those produced by radio transmitters. But not until now has Moscow conceded existence of the rays. Listening devices on the roof of the embassy often pick up conversations of Soviet officials riding in their limousines, despite attempts to jam communication lines. Relatively harmless, the beams are irritating to diplomats, and the U.S. has asked the Soviets to stop (→ 6/1/78).

Eskimos lay claim to fifth of Canada

Feb 27. Canadian Eskimo leaders presented a 61-page proposal to Canadian Premier Pierre Trudeau today, in which they claimed over 250,000 square miles of northern land. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge east of the Brooks Range and north of the Alaskan Highway would be divided equally between the Indians and the U.S. But the Alaska Fish and Game Department said the national wildlife refuge is not part of the territory and the Inupiat Eskimos have no title to it.

Military overthrows Argentine President

March 26. Two days after a bloodless coup toppled the administration of Argentine President Isabel Martinez de Peron, Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla was selected to be President of the new military government.

Mrs. Peron, who succeeded her husband, the late Juan Peron, as president in 1974, was arrested and deposed by the junta after she refused to resign under pressure from the armed forces. She is being held in custody, and she is expected to be tried on charges of official corruption.

Since the coup, the junta has imposed martial law, threatened Peronist guerrillas with death and abolished the labor code which gives labor leaders immunity from arrest (→ 4/2).

Patty Hearst guilty of armed robbery

March 20. Patricia Hearst, former hostage of the radical group called the Symbionese Liberation Army, has been found guilty of assisting its members in a bank heist. She was arrested in April 1974 as she drove in a stolen car. She is due to be sentenced Friday.
**Hua becomes China Premier, Mao’s heir**

April 7. In an organized demonstration of support for the recent changes in China’s leadership, more than 100,000 people marched in Tien An Men Square carrying red flags and chanting approved slogans. The marchers showed little emotion, only relief that the shake-up of top-level government officials following the death of Chou En-lai had finally been resolved.

When Chou died of cancer on January 8, his apparent successor was Deng Hsiao-ping, the Deputy Prime Minister. The Communist Party's Central Committee, however, issued an announcement yesterday linking Deng with the riots which have recently occurred and removed him from the government.

Appointed to the post of Prime Minister was Hua Kuo-feng, a man unconnected with any political movements in China. Hua will also succeed Mao Tse-tung as Chairman in the event of his death (→ 9/18).

**Socialist Soares is now Portuguese Premier**

April 25. Socialists and Communists in Portugal united behind Mario Soares as the Socialist leader was elected Premier. His astounding victory comes almost two years after a military coup, engineered by liberals, threw off the shackles of 40 years of totalitarian rule in Portugal. The coup leaders promised democratic reform, but it took longer than expected for rival military factions to agree on a plan for elections. Major progress was achieved when the army was removed from political discussions. In parliamentary elections, Soares received just under 35% of the vote. Communist support gave him the majority he needed (→ 7/14).

**James Callaghan succeeds Wilson as P.M.**

April 5. A change of command took place at the top of the Labor Party in Britain today, and the new leader automatically became the new Prime Minister. Foreign Secretary James Callaghan was elected leader in the third round of balloting. He immediately presented his credentials to Queen Elizabeth. Employment Secretary Michael Foot, who came in second, graciously accepted defeat. He is expected to be a key member of the new Cabinet.

The party election was forced by the unexpected resignation of Prime Minister Harold Wilson last month. Callaghan is expected to follow most of Wilson's policies. On television tonight, the new prime minister said his “first and most vital job is driving down the rate of inflation.” It reached 26% last year. To win approval of an austerity budget and to keep a lid on wage increases, Callaghan needs support of all Laborites. The center and the right-wing Manifesto group are expected to be the most difficult to please.

**Eccentric Hughes, leaving $1.5b, dies**

April 5. An emaciated body was wheeled on a stretcher off a Lear jet this afternoon and guided to the morgue of a Houston hospital. Police stood guard, as if Howard Hughes in death craved privacy as much as he did in life. The billionaire recluse died of a stroke aboard his plane at 1:27 p.m. today. He was 70 years old.

Hughes was born in Texas to a family already rich with profits from a tool company. In the 20's and 30's, he tried his hand at making movies, producing “Scarface” and other box office hits. Jane Russell was among his discoveries. Hughes studied aviation, designing planes and setting speed records. Investments in Las Vegas casinos raised his fortune to $1.5 billion. Of late, he fled from continent to continent, perhaps seeking something he had lost inside himself.

**Barbara Walters weighs a $1m deal**

April 20. The first woman newscaster to reach a position of national prominence has been offered a $1 million-per-year contract. ABC offers Miss Barbara Walters a five-year contract to co-host the nightly news. NBC, her home for 12 seasons, proffers a similar deal. Miss Walters has been hosting the “Today” show, an early-morning grind she publicly deplores. Still, it has made her insights and delivery (tinged by a slight lisp) recognized nationwide.
Chronicle of the 20th century

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