

...if Cuban security forces tried to end the siege by force. Comment from Cuban officials on the takeover. News re- vana said the Cubans were armed with grenades, subma- knives. In Quito, sources close to the Ecuadoran Foreign group included several former soldiers.

ni's health deteriorates

Abdollah Khomeini's health has deteriorated and the 80-year- old is not well enough to see visitors, his chief aide and doctor said Friday. It was the second warning this month of Khomeini's health, which appeared to be worsening at a crucial time when hardline and moderate factions are locked in a bitter struggle to determine which way Iran will go after the ayatollah's death. He will be 81 on May 6.

Executioners behead five

Four convicted child molesters and a murderer were beheaded by the executioner's scimitar-like blade in two Saudi cities Friday in what officials said was an "iron-fisted" example of Saudi government's determination to eliminate crime and strike with severity against those who try to disturb security," the Saudi Interior Ministry announced the executions. It said the five Saudi nationals were beheaded after mid-day prayers on the Moslem sabbath in Riyadh. Beheading is the accepted form of capital punishment under Islamic law, which is the backbone of Saudi Arabia's

Sealers ready for seal kill

Newfoundland — Newfoundland and Norwegian seal hunters, threatened by the threat of a new conservationists' protest, are sign- ing an annual voyage into the northwest Atlantic icefield known as the "iceberg" with the outfitting of ships for the season opening March 10. A storm of protest from people and organizations around the world says the fur-hunters' harvest of harp and hood seal pups is a species with extinction. These accusations are routinely made by the fur industry, governments and the sealers themselves.

ation

in sight for gun control unit

Washington — The federal agency that enforces gun controls would be reduced or abolished under the Reagan administration's budget cutting plans. Any such action undermining the Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms would be a blow for "New Right" conservative supporters of President Reagan or the National Rifle Association, which has tried for years to do the same thing through legislation. Proposals under study would reduce some functions of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and possibly eliminate the agency's gun control unit.

Man facing murder complaint

Las Vegas — A murder complaint will be filed next week against a man accused of killing eight people by setting fire to the Las Vegas Convention Center. The District Attorney's office said Friday. Homicide detected the investigation of the blaze that killed eight people and hundreds others, and turned a stack of evidence over to Assistant Attorney Ray Jeffers. Philip B. Cline, 23, tentatively was arraigned Thursday in Justice Court. Authorities said they believe his story that he started the fire by accident, and were checking links between the suspect and an arson outbreak which has plagued the area for months.

Home burns, but no injuries

New Jersey — Fire engulfed a wing of a nursing home Friday, but no one was injured because the building was unoccupied at the time and all were evacuated, authorities said. It was the fifth fire involving a nursing home in New Jersey in the last seven months. A fire department spokesman said the fire broke out in an unoccupied wing of the Rest Home, an L-shaped, two-story, wood-frame building at Cul-de-sac. "We were just lucky," the spokesman said. A spokeswoman said all the residents, who numbered "about 100," were evacuated to a firehouse.

flight around the world.

Ms. Schelling discounted a report from one of the balloonists at midnight Thursday that the voyage may have to be abandoned because the balloon was leaking.

School-close prank on radio snows Dist. 214

by Margaret Holt

Herald education editor

While it was business as usual for most elementary schools in Wheeling and Elk Grove townships the day after Tuesday's snowstorm, students in High School Dist. 214's eight schools got the day off.

But district officials say that "snow day" had nothing to do with an apparent "snow job" pulled on a Chicago area radio station. The station broadcast an unauthorized report Tuesday evening that Prospect High School, a Dist. 214 school, had canceled Wednesday classes because of the weather.

The radio announcement came while Rod McLennan and Robert Weber, associate superintendents, were debating whether to cancel classes Wednesday, with weather forecasts of bitter cold and harsh wind-chill factors.

Superintendent Edward Gilbert was gone. His return flight from a conference in Washington, D.C., was delayed, forcing him to miss for only the second time in 15 years a decision to close Dist. 214 schools.

But McLennan maintained Friday that the prank announcement was only one factor, saying officials were concerned primarily with forecasts and deciding as early as possible.

"We will not close down a school just because there's a false report," he said.

Normally, a designated administrator calls four radio stations if schools are to be closed because of weather: WWMM, WBBM, WIND and WFYR.

The Prospect announcement, though, was broadcast on WGN, he said, and Dist. 214 officials tried futilely to call that station. "We didn't know how to call the station, how to get through," he said.

Dist. 214 did call the specified four stations at about 10:30 p.m. Tuesday, about two hours after the inaccurate report, McLennan said. But if officials had waited until 4:30 a.m. or so Wednesday, schools might have remained open, he said.

Dist. 214 officials plan to check with WGN to find out how the incident happened, said Gilbert, but they have little hope of identifying who contacted the station. "We think that would be like looking for a needle in a haystack," he said.

It could have been a student or almost anyone, McLennan said. But the apparent prank might have backfired, he said. "It could tempt us to say, 'We'll show them, we'll keep schools open no matter what.'"

first trans-Atlantic manned balloon flight. Last year, he and son Kris claimed the first crossing of North America in the balloon Kitty Hawk.

Ida, who operates tree nurseries in Colorado, and Anderson plotted a

the southeastern peninsula, said to east at 53 mph. feet on course to Americans across Karachi, Pakistan.

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