

WORLD IN BRIEF Mexico to return intercepted Chinese

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

July 15, 1993, Thursday

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Section: FOREIGN NEWS; Section E; Page 2

Length: 535 words

Body

The Mexican government announced Wednesday that it will allow three boatloads of **Chinese** to enter its waters but will immediately send home the 658 would-be immigrants. The announcement follows a standoff between **Mexico** and the United States over the **Chinese**, who have languished on three crowded, filthy boats off **Mexico** for more than a week as their fates were debated by Washington and **Mexico** City.

The United States refused to allow the boats to land, and had asked **Mexico** to accept the **Chinese**. Mexican officials denied their decision was a result of U.S. pressure and cited humanitarian motives. In Washington, State Department spokesman Joseph Snyder welcomed what he described as **Mexico's** "humanitarian decision."

"The government of **Mexico** has decided, in the face of the United States's refusal, to allow the entry of the three boats into territorial waters," said Mexican Undersecretary of Foreign Relations Andres Rozental at a news conference. He added that **Mexico** would pay to **return** them immediately to China and had asked the **Chinese** government for its help.

ASIA

BORDER FIGHTING: Russian troops retook a border post in the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan after a fierce fight with Muslim rebels, officials and news reports said. The battle along the Afghan border was so intense that Russia's defense minister, Pavel Grachev, said Russia should reinforce the frontier with more troops, fighting vehicles, attack planes and possibly bombers, the Interfax new agency reported. Civil war broke out last year in impoverished Tajikistan after pro-Communists ousted an alliance of democrats and Muslim fundamentalists.

U.S. PRESSURE REJECTED: A Cambodian leader said that U.S. pressure would not prevent the government from accepting a deal offered by the Khmer Rouge to end the country's civil war. "Most important now is that Cambodia should reunite," said Hun Sen, a co-chairman of the interim government. "It should not allow foreign countries to use their economic influence to divide Cambodia." Cambodian leaders are to meet with the Khmer Rouge in September to discuss its proposal to end two decades of conflict.

EUROPE

TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC: Nelly Elgaen of Norway almost danced her welfare benefits away. The 44-year-old woman had heard dancing might help her bad back, which has kept her out of work and on sick leave for almost a year. So she went to a village dance in March and took a few turns with her husband. But her caseworker spotted her and cut her welfare benefits in half. After a four-month battle, the national welfare board restored her full benefits. Her doctor, Dr. Nina Bergersen, said Ms. Elgaen was not yet fit to work despite appearing smooth on the dance floor.

IN ATLANTA

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AMBASSADOR VISITS: Edgar Teran, the Ecuadorian ambassador to the United States, wraps up a four-day business-seeking trip to Atlanta today. Mr. Teran met with business leaders to inform them of new laws in Ecuador that eliminate discrimination against foreign investors. The ambassador also announced that Ecuador, which has an honorary consul in Atlanta, is planning to establish an economic office in the city and boost its consular corps.

From our news services

Graphic

Photo: A U.S. Coast Guard craft delivers supplies to one of three ships carrying would-be **Chinese** immigrants that have been stalled off the coast of Ensenada, **Mexico**. / Associated Press

Classification

Language: ENGLISH931970198

Subject: POLITICAL PARTIES (89%); WAR & CONFLICT (89%); CIVIL WAR (89%); INCOME ASSISTANCE (87%); WELFARE BENEFITS (87%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL BORDERS (78%); PRESS CONFERENCES (78%); IMMIGRATION (77%); FOREIGN RELATIONS (75%); TALKS & MEETINGS (75%); STATE DEPARTMENTS & FOREIGN SERVICES (75%); EMBASSIES & CONSULATES (75%); REBELLIONS & INSURGENCIES (72%); FUNDAMENTALISM (71%); INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (69%); MUSLIMS & ISLAM (66%); RELIGION (66%); SICK LEAVE (50%)

Company: US COAST GUARD (59%); US COAST GUARD (59%); US COAST GUARD (59%); US COAST GUARD (59%)

Organization: US COAST GUARD (59%); US COAST GUARD (59%)

Person: HUN SEN (79%)

Geographic: **MEXICO** CITY, **MEXICO** (79%); WASHINGTON, USA (79%); **MEXICO** (99%); UNITED STATES (95%); CAMBODIA (94%); RUSSIAN FEDERATION (93%); TAJIKISTAN (92%); CHINA (92%); ECUADOR (79%); AFGHANISTAN (79%); NORWAY (79%); EUROPE (79%); NORTH AMERICA (79%); ASIA (79%)

Load-Date: July 16, 1993