

Friday, December 26, 1976  
Jerry Landay

SST

*The world's first supersonic airline service began today - in the Soviet Union - where a Tupolev-one-forty-four jetliner has begun twice-weekly flights between Moscow and Alma Ata - capital of the Kazakh Republic in Soviet Central Asia. The plane covered the nineteen-hundred-miles in about two hours - less than half the time normally taken by conventional jets. For the time being, however, officials say the Tupolev will carry NO passengers - only cargo and mail - because of some "unresolved questions" about the aircraft - namely - it's reliability - and its noise.*

*Senator Proxmire of Wisconsin - the Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee has criticized those Federal agencies whose job it is to regulate banks. His targets were the Federal Reserve Board - the Comptroller of Currency - and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation - all of whom - Proxmire says - spend far too much for travel, office space and furnishing. Proxmire has already introduced legislation that would consolidate all three agencies into a Federal Bank Commission - a move, he says, that would save at least Ten-MILLION dollars a year.*

## FORD-DRUGS

President Ford - like President Nixon before him - has announced he's taking strong action - to stem the flow of illegal drugs - across American borders. Mr. Ford indicated he's particularly concerned - about the "Mexican connection." Mexico - now the major source of heroin in this country. Mr. Ford said he's personally talked to President Luis Echeverria about the problem. And he's done the same - with the leaders of other nations from which narcotics flow in abundance - Colombia, and Turkey. And the President again called on Congress - to enact his ~~proposal~~ proposal for mandatory - minimum sentences - for drug traffickers.

## SYRIA

Syrian officials have taken pains - today - to chalk up those Egyptian reports of a crackdown on the Syrian Communist Party - as a case of much ado about nothing. Not true - say the Syrians - that President Assad ordered three-hundred Communists arrested. Nor is it true - they say - that Syrian Communist leader Khaled Bekdash - fled into exile. They say Bekdash is on a routine tour of Eastern Europe. One can only speculate on why Egyptian newspapers carried the reports. But it could have something to do with the running feud between President Sadat and President Assad - a feud that began with the signing of the Sinai accords - between Egypt and Israel.

## KIDNAP

*The U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa is asking the Ethiopian government to help gain the release of an American communications expert - the latest kidnap victim in the rebellious Province of Eritrea. Ronald Mischalke of Mabel, Minnesota, is the fifth American citizen taken captive in Eritrea in the past five months - by rebels who demand a cutoff of American military supplies to the Ethiopian military regime. The rebels want to secede - and establish an autonomous government - in Eritrea.*

## LEBANON

*In Lebanon bitter fighting between Christians and Moslems flared again today - with mortars and sniper fire in three Lebanese cities. In Beirut alone, police said at least forty were killed - another hundred wounded. The bullets were NO respecters of persons - one victim: A housewife standing in line to buy bread for her family. As rival gangs of gunmen roamed the streets, the National Radio warned citizens to stay in their homes and offices. The overall toll in eight months of fighting is now six-thousand-five-hundred dead - some thirteen-thousand wounded.*

MAO

*The leader of China is eighty-two today. Mao Tse-Tung - who has ruled his nation for over a quarter of a century - and the Chinese Communist Party for years before that. And foreign observers in the Chinese Capital - Peking - say Mao remains firmly in command - despite reports of a mild stroke - and problems of concentration. The official Chinese news agency - did not report on Mao's birthday. There apparently being no special celebrations planned - to mark the event.*

PLANTS  
**CHINA**

*The Chinese Communist Party's official newspaper - "People's Daily" - has warned that "dark clouds of a new world war are hanging more heavily" because of the rivalry between Moscow and Washington. The article also indicated that President Ford has failed to convince Chinese leaders that the U.S. has NO desire for world domination - or is seeking world peace.*

For Lowell Thomas - so long until Monday - 1/1

Harry Lunde - T.B. - News



## PLANTS

*Who is man's best friend?...his dog?...his cat?*

*...Or is it perhaps that leafy plant growing inside his house*

*...a pet which, after all, doesn't bark ..or damage the*

*furniture. A profusion of plants, both exotic and ordinary,*

*are taking over offices, stores, living rooms and kitchens.*

*National Geographic Magazine reports that in the year*

*Nineteen-Seventy-Four, Americans bought more than a*

*hundred-MILLION dollars worth of houseplants, sixty-four*

*percent more than the previous year. And Nineteen-Seventy-*

*Five is expected to be an even bigger year for the plant*

*boutiques.*

*For Lowell Thomas - so long until Monday. I'm*

*Jerry Landgy - CBS-News.*