Nationwatch
Accidents plague Titans

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Large as a result of requests by Sen. David Pryor (D-Ark.), the Air Force has released a list of 125 incidents involving Titan II missiles from 1973 to 1979. In August, 1979, a fire in another site in Arkansas caused great pressure inside the rocket before the flames were extinguished. A senior technician remarked that "Only great skill kept the missile from exploding.

The fuel used in the Titan II is a hypergolic liquid hydrazine and unsymmetrical dimethyl hydrazine mixture that reacts with an oxidant, nitrogen tetroxide, to spontaneously ignite and produce thrust. The Air Force would like the missiles to be replaced by the safer solid fueled Minuteman III or MX missiles. The liquid fuel is corrosive and has caused major propellant leaks since 1976 by destroying seals in the missiles. Also, 19 minutes have needed one or more fuel tank patches as a result of corrosion, which indicates that the missile skin is weakening.

Part of the problem with the Titans is that, because they are supposed to be retired, there are no spare parts available; hence, repairs must be improvised by engineers who are on location.

Reporters and congressional aides have discovered other incidents involving the Titan II besides those on the Air Force list. Friday's accident was not the first at the Damascus site. Two years ago, a gas cloud from the site killed 20 animals on a nearby farm and resulted in the farmer having permanent neurological illness. After Friday's explosion, the farmer remarked to the New York Times, "It makes you wonder — two mistakes in the same place. It's unreal..."

Despite the recent accidents and the 1971 retirement date for the Titan II, a recent Air Force report declares that the Titan II, "would remain a highly reliable, accurate weapons system through the 1990's."

Sports
Red Sox out of it — A combined four-hit, 13-strikeout performance by Ron Guidry and Rich Gossage have made it official: the Boston Red Sox are no longer a factor in the American League East percent race.

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In Guidry's second start since his exile to the bullpen, the left-hander threw a combined four-hit, 13-strikeout performance by Ron Guidry and Rich Gossage have made it official: the Boston Red Sox are no longer a factor in the American League East percent race. For the first time all season, the New York Yankees appeared to have a team to stand between them and the World Series.

New York does it again — Giorgio Chinaglia led the New York Cosmos to their third North American Soccer League championship in four years. Under the Italian wonder, the Cosmos handed the Fort Lauderdale Strikers a 3-0 shutout before a crowd of 50,768 in rainy RFK Stadium, Washington, DC.

By Jay Clos and Richard Sals

Weather
A spending cold front will bring unsettled weather to New England this morning. The front, which should move through by noon, will be preceded by warm-muggy conditions with some showers and thunderstorms. After the frontal passage, temperatures will fall into the 60's, brisk winds will shift to the northwest, and skies should clear. Cold tonight with lows in the upper 40's. For Wednesday, sunny but cool with thundershowers. After the frontal passage, temperatures will fall into the 60's, brisk winds will shift to the northeast, and skies should clear. Cold tonight with lows in the upper 40's. For Wednesday, sunny but cool with thundershowers.

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