

Sabotage Attempt

Although Administration spokesmen did not stress the point, the Arabs have been equally insistent on full U.S. commitment to a peace and economic development package for the Middle East, and view the plane sales as a barometer of that commitment.

Continuing efforts to destroy U.S.-Arab relations on all fronts were highlighted by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan's visit to the U.S. last week, before which he announced that Israel would prefer not to have the U.S. aircraft if it meant a sale to the Saudis. Dayan's statement ran directly counter to the position of the Israeli government, and was subsequently withdrawn. Even fervently pro-Israel members of Congress were shocked by Dayan's blatant wrecking operation. "Dayan should shut up," said Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.).

A second sabotage effort was an "interview" with President Carter by reporter Trude Feldman, published by the *New York Times* News Service, quoting Carter as saying that Mideast peace "would be based substantially on Begin's self-rule plan" for the West Bank. As intended, the article created a momentary uproar in Egypt, but it quickly died down when the Administration explained that there had been no change in U.S. views on a Mideast settlement, and implied that Carter's diplomatic praise of Begin's contribution to a Mideast agreement had been distorted.

Surprisingly Mild

Observers at the Senate plane sales hearings described the questioning of Administration officials as "surprisingly mild" in view of the welter of statements from Congressional leaders opposing the package concept last week. A letter from Vance to Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), stressing that the Administration had no intention of interfering with Congress's legal power to review and vote on the sales separately but reserving the President's right to make the final decision on the sales after action on all three was considered, removed one obstacle, and subsequently Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd and House Speaker Tip O'Neill backed the sales.

A "resolution of disapproval" co-sponsored by 22 of the 39 members of the House International Relations Committee yesterday was described as "purely conditional" by one member of the committee's staff, who explained that some of the cosponsors might well "reevaluate the practicality of opposition" if modifications including a commitment to future sales of F-15 to Israel were included in the package. The House committee will hold hearings on the sales beginning May 8, following Senate hearings expected to conclude May 5. If either committee fails to vote a disapproval resolution, the Administration will be well on its way to victory, since opponents of the sales will have to secure a floor vote in both houses by May 28 in order to block the sales.

— Don Baier

WASHINGTON WHISPERS

Anyone Want A Vice-President?

The other day, when the hotshots of the Washington press corps gathered outside the White House East Wing waiting for Jody Powell to brief them on the Camp David meetings, Walter Mondale passed through the crowd unnoticed. No sooner had Mondale passed out of sight than he ducked around the corner, ran back, and approached the throng of reporters once more, this time calling out, "hey, fellas, the Vice-President is coming through, he'll be here any minute, anyone want to interview him?"

Double Take

During a recent press briefing, when Jody Powell was experiencing yet another savaging at the hands of the Washington press hounds, he criticized a headline from the *New York Times*, saying he had never seen a headline that was completely truthful. One irate reporter jumped to his feet to query Powell, "you mean you've never seen a headline that tells the truth? What about the one, 'Carter Wins'?" Powell replied, "I thought it was true at the time, but I've had occasion to wonder since then."

Like A Bridge Over Troubled Waters

The latest affairs of Senator Ted Kennedy, the Young

Pretender, have brought out the cheek among Washington wags. One clucked, "He may have gone from Chappaquiddick to chapstick, but it seems he still has problems with chippies. He's been advised to try chaps, but Jerry Brown has him (boxed in) there."

Sun Worship, California Style

Speaking of Jerry Brown, it seems that his sun worship is picking up recruits. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin joined Jerry in the announcement of a joint California-Israel Foundation for Solar Research. Brown also announced that "former" Chicago Eight member Tom Hayden will play a major role in charting the state's development of solar energy, and will personally represent Brown at the Western States Energy Conference. The only heat anyone every heard Hayden generate before was on the end of a night stick.

Schlesinger Asks For Curbs...

Energy Czar James Schlesinger is always asking for controls, so this tidbit from Chicago should come as no surprise. A top officer of Commonwealth Edison was heard to say of a recent meeting with the Czar: "He told us to stop organizing for Clinch River (the Fast Breeder Facility at Clinch River, Tenn.—ed.) or else. His exact words were 'call your dogs off because I've got a worse bite than they do.'" Rabies shots may soon be required of all those traveling to D.C.