

WASHINGTON DATELINE

By Trude B. Feldman

ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

Presidential Press Secretary Ron Ziegler refused to confirm or deny that the Administration this week shipped to Israel approximately 18 F-4E Phantom jet planes.

It was revealed here that the initial shipment of the bombers would be delivered as early as next week; and subsequently, all the aircraft would be shipped by the end of the year.

Despite reports to the contrary that the Israelis have received replacement aircraft, these will be the first aircraft sent to Israel by the Nixon Administration.

In an unusually challenging give-and-take with newsmen on the Mideast, Ziegler, at his twice-daily briefings, repeatedly stated that he is not in a position to comment on the nature of military assistance to Israel, or the degree.

"This is no time to discuss such elements," he said. "I would say again that the U.S. intends to see that the military balance in the Mideast doesn't become unbalanced. If additional assistance is required, then it will be granted."

When asked if the military balance had shifted since last week, Ziegler responded: "Our assessment is that the military balance -- and we are continually assessing this -- has not at this time become unbalanced."

Meanwhile, a group of distinguished educators and scholars requested the Nixon Administration to extend aid to Israel in order to restore the essential military balance between Egypt and the Jewish state. Thirty professors sent a strong statement advocating such aid to Henry Kissinger, the President's Advisor for National Security Affairs.

Among those indicating their disapproval of Administration policy in the Mideast were Arthur Schlesinger, a professor at the City University of New York, and a former advisory to President Kennedy; John Kenneth Galbraith, professor of Economics at Harvard, and former Ambassador to India; Edward Teller, professor of Physics at the University of California; and William P. Bundy, of the Massa-

chusetts Institute of Technology, and former Assistant Secretary of State.

The professors charged that the Soviet Union installations of missiles in the zone of the ceasefire strongly violates the terms of the truce and directly challenges the American role as peacemaker in the area.

Their statement also reminded the Administration that Israel had signed the ceasefire pact on the basis that the U.S. assured her that such an agreement would not jeopardize her security.

"However," the statement stressed, "today, Israel's position has been weakened by the Egyptian and Russian exploitation of the truce, and America's credibility has been placed in doubt."

"We believe it to be the moral responsibility of the U.S. as well as in our national interest, to keep faith with Israel and to maintain the substance of the ceasefire."

"We also believe that failure to do so contradicts the purposes of the American initiative and dooms in advance the hope for a settlement."

The eminent group of educators called on President Nixon and his Administration to take prompt steps to restore the essential military balance between Israel and Egypt.

"Without such redress," they maintain, "there can be no fruitful negotiations, no believable guarantees, no stable frontiers, and thus no peace in the Mideast."

At the State Department, Spokesman Robert McCloskey described as "deplorable" the decision of the guerrillas to hold Jewish and Israeli passengers aboard the hijacked planes in the Jordanian desert when others were taken to hotels.

He was asked whether the U.S. would allow Israel to bargain separately with the guerrillas for release of her people.

"I hope that won't be the result," he said.

As for the possibility that the hijackers may release all but the American Jews and the Israelis, McCloskey said: "My hope is that we won't have to face such a decision. That would add cruelty to cruelty."

He was questioned: "Suppose the U.S. was offered a deal by the terrorists for release of all gentiles, keeping the American Jews for

later negotiations . . . ?"

"These hypothetical questions are awfully difficult to answer," he said. "I would not put forward a government position against such a possibility only to say it would be our hope that we would not have to face such a decision."

When Ron Ziegler was asked a similar question -- can't you say whether the American Government would or would not accept any deal with the Israelis which excluded Jewish-American passengers regardless of whether those guerrillas said they were Israelis -- he responded: "No, I don't think anything would be served for me to speculate with you on the hypotheticals of the negotiations. I can only state our objective: it's to obtain the release of all the people and the aircraft."

McCloskey's statements, plus the failure by the White House press secretary to erase the impression that a peace-meal deal was a possibility, irked a number of Senator and Congressmen.

Senators Abraham Ribicoff (D. Conn) and Joseph Tydings (D. Md.) immediately sent a telegram to President Nixon -- with nine other Senatorial signatories -- which read:

"The unwillingness of State Department and White House spokesmen to rule out specifically any possibility of an arrangement with the Palestinian terrorists that would free only some Americans while permitting others -- because of their religion -- to remain in captivity is shocking and totally unacceptable."

"We call upon you to clarify this issue at once and make it clear that the U.S. will not be a party to such an arrangement."

"It is essential that Palestinian terrorists and all Governments understand that the U.S. will not be a party to any agreement that distinguishes between American citizens on the basis of religion, race or creed."

The telegram to Mr. Nixon was signed by Senators James B. Allen (D. Ala.); Alan Cranston, (D. Calif.); William Proxmire (D. Wisc.); Philip Hart (D. Mich.); Burch Bayh, (D. Ind.); Thomas Eagleton, (D. Miss.); Fred Harris, (D. Okla.); Albert Gore (D. Tenn); and Henry Jackson (D. Wash.).

Only after reports of possible discriminatory measures on the release of passengers

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