

## SALE OF AWACS DELAYED

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- U.S. special envoy Philip Habib returned to report on his accomplishment in achieving a cease - fire in the Mideast. After meeting with President Reagan, Habib told reporters that the "cessation of hostilities" across the Israeli - Lebanese border could be the first step in achieving overall peace in the Mideast.

"The progress achieved thus far must not be lost," Habib said after a 30 - minute meeting with the President. "Everyone involved must exercise the greatest care and caution. The end of armed attacks which has been achieved could be the first step on the road to greater calm and security," he said.

Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration announced that it would not send to Congress the proposal to sell Saudi Arabia AWACS reconnaissance aircraft until after Labor Day. State Department spokesman Dean Fischer noted however that this does not mean that the notification will necessarily go to Congress in September.

He maintained that the decision on the timetable still depends, as it has in the past to advice from leading Congressional leaders. The Administration has been postponing action since early May because leading Republicans in the Senate have advised that if the proposal was sent to Congress it would be rejected.

This announcement came just a day after the State Department announced the resignation of Robert Neumann, as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia reportedly because he had criticized Secretary of State Alexander Haig for, among other things, not pushing the AWACS sale through immediately. Neumann, Ambassador to Saudi Arabia for just two months had been in Washington lobbying Congress on the AWACS proposal. He reportedly criticized Haig to Senators and was quoted as saying that the U.S. should "crack down" on Israel for its raids on Iraq's nuclear reactor June 7 and terrorist headquarters in Beirut July 17.

Fischer maintained that Neumann resigned for "personal reasons" as he stated in his letter of resignation to President Reagan and not over policy differences. The spokesman did acknowledge that "there were discussions leading" to Neumann's resignation but refused to elaborate.

Neuman, a 65 - year - old foreign policy analyst who headed the transition team at the State Department for Reagan will continue to serve the State Department as a senior consultant. He was born in Vienna of Jewish parents but

converted to Catholicism at the age of 17. As vice - chairman of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic studies, he had been a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause and an advocate of U.S. negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The replacement for Neumann will be Richard Murphy, the 52 - year - old diplomat who Reagan named to the post and reportedly flew directly to Jidda from the Philippines where he was Ambassador since 1978. Fischer acknowledged that the usual practice is for an Ambassador to be confirmed by the Senate and then sworn in before taking up his post. But Fischer said that the U.S. places "high priorities" on its relations with Saudi Arabia. "We felt that it was important that we had a representative there right away," he said.

Also pending was whether the U.S. would resume deliveries of F-16 fighter - bombers to Israel. Fischer said the decision was "still under review." The planes were suspended after the Israeli attack on the Iraqi reactor and a decision was again due July 17 but was then held up indefinitely after Israel's attack on Beirut that day which resulted in heavy civilian casualties.

However, while visiting the U.S. Army base in Fort Benning, Ga. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger told reporters, "I think the planes will be released when a combination of factors happen or when it appears things are stabilizing." He would not be specific what the factors would have to be for the planes to be released.

## NO PROGRESS IN COALITION TALKS

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Premier Menachem Begin has made no progress toward including Aharon Abu Hatzeira's Tami faction in a new Likud-led coalition government. He reportedly offered Hatzeira the Ministry of Labor and Welfare portfolio and a sub - Cabinet post for Tami's No. 2 man, former Laborite Aharon Uzan.

But Hatzeira is said to have insisted on retaining the Religious Affairs Ministry which he held in the outgoing government as a member of the National Religious Party and is demanding

a full Cabinet job for Uzan. Begin, who promised the Religious Affairs Ministry to the NRP, has made it clear that the three-man Tami faction could expect no more than one portfolio in the next government. But he needs Tami's three mandates to achieve the bare majority of 61 Knesset votes necessary to govern.

Begin is continuing his talks with the Aguda Israel. The Aguda is once again demanding an ironclad guarantee from Begin that the "Who is a Jew?" amendment to the Law of Return will be adopted by the next Knesset.

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