Shultz Testifies On U.S. **Arms For Middle East**

Secretary of State George Shultz stressed that while the Reagan Adminisatration has decided to defer the sale. of any new arms to the Middle East, including F-15s and other equipment to Saudi Arabia. this does not mean it

does not plan to sell

weapons to Arab states

WASHINGTON (WNS) in the near future.

"I think our interests are arguably served by (the) strength of countries in the Middle East in addition to Israel," he said in response to questions in the opening session of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's two months of hearings on American foreign policy.

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Richard House Foreign Affairs that consensus. Committee's subcommittee on Europe and the study this question, I Middle East.

Shultz's came after Sen. Rudy find" that continued arms Boschwitz (R. Minn.) sales to Saudi Arabia noted that every four and other Arab countries led boycott against Isyears the Administra- are needed. "I can't say tion presents Congress at this time specifically with a weapons package that," he added. "But I for Saudi Arabia despite the strong opposition to it in Congress. Boschwitz pointed out that Sen. Richard Lugar (R. Ind.), the Committee's chairman, said he has

decision revealed by hearings in an attempt to Murphy, achieve a consensus on Assistant Secretary of foreign policy. Bosch-State for Near Eastern witz said that proposing and South Asian Affairs, to sell arms to Saudi while testifying to the Arabia would not lead to

> But Shultz said "as we comments in my mind that we will

Shultz confirmed the scheduled the series of certainly wouldn't sit here and say that you expect should proposals introduced."

Sen. Alan Cranston (D. Cal.) said he believes. weapons'sales should be deferred as long as the Saudis act in ways that are damaging to both don't have much doubt U.S. interests and Israel. He said Saudi "oil has been blackmail" used to enforce an Arab rael which he said has contributed to Israel's economic difficulties.

Shultz replied that he did not believe the boycott was responsible for Israel's economic problems. He said the U.S. is ready to help Israel and will "do what is necessary." But he said Israel has to take steps to improve its economy which he said it is now trying to do. "We are working very closely with the government of Israel and sympathetically," he said.

Friday, February 8, 1985

his prepared statement, Shultz said the U.S. remains "committed" to President Reagan's September 1, 1982 Middle East peace initiative "as the most promising route to a the solution of Palestinian problem. We will be intensively engaged this year in consultations with our Arab and Israeli friends to explore opportunities for progress." But he also noted that "recent events have reminded us that the Arab-Israel conflict is far from the only source of tension in that part of the world."

Responding questions, Shultz said he would press for Senate ratification of the UN convention against genocide. Reagan annouced support ratification last September in a speech to B'nai B'rith International. But the Senate failed to adopt it in its rush to adjourn for the elections. However, the Relations Foreign Committee promised that it will be reintroduced this year.

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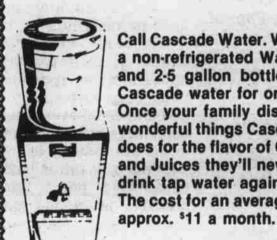


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