

the nation

Amtrak turns away 756,000 riders

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Amtrak turned away a record 756,000 ticket seekers last month, officials said Wednesday.

"We've never had anything like that," said Amtrak spokesman Joe Vranich. "I'm not in the prediction business, but recent data leads me to believe we are doing even better than during the Arab oil embargo

even though fewer passenger cars are available."

Amtrak's May revenue was \$36.1 million, up more than one third from May 1978 revenue of \$24.6 million, he said.

"If we had another 1,000 cars, we could fill them up today," he said. Currently, the Amtrak fleet has 1,200 passenger cars.

The May ridership and revenue

figures are scheduled to be delivered to the White House and Transportation Secretary Brock Adams who has sought a 43 percent cutback in the Amtrak system.

Adams has said most of the past ridership increases were confined to lines which the government plans to continue in operation.

But his spokeswoman Fran Lewine said: "The department has

asked Amtrak for statistics on ridership to determine whether the passenger increases are due to the energy problem, the United Airlines strike or the grounding of DC-10s."

Adams had called for — and Congress so far has approved — a core Amtrak system including the Boston-Washington corridor, several corridor-type operations out of Chicago, three or four transconti-

mental long distance routes and three or four north-south routes.

In May 1978, Amtrak turned away only 68,000 ticket seekers. Vranich said those turned away could have been from an individual who called several times in a row — or one individual seeking four tickets.

Vranich said "ridership is up on the trains we plan to keep and also on trains we don't plan to keep. That is a fact."

Adams' plan is the first wholesale cutback in passenger train service since 1971. Congress still could take some actions which would save individual trains.

Vranich said other indications of a record breaking Amtrak year are an increase of 128 percent in advance reservations.



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FDA allows sale of 30 day contacts

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration Wednesday approved the sale of a contact lens that can be worn constantly for up to 30 days at a time, but said it will be available only to cataract patients.

The lens is made of the same material as regular contact lenses, "except for a slightly higher water content that enables the lens to remain in the eye for a longer period," the FDA said.

It said the 450,000 Americans who undergo cataract surgery every year may find the product valuable because some of them cannot use regular glasses, regular contact lenses or lenses that are surgically implanted. There are an estimated 5 million post-cataract patients in the United States.

"Special glasses for cataract patients often cause impaired peripheral vision," the agency said. "Regular contact lenses require good eye-hand coordination to insert and often cannot be inserted by older people who most often have cataract surgery."

Two companies — Soft Lenses Inc. of San Diego, Calif., and Cooper Laboratories Inc. of Mountain View, Calif. — received FDA permission to market the lenses.

"Details as to when the lenses will be available and other marketing data should be obtained from the companies," the FDA said. "Patients who have had cataracts removed should contact their eye specialist."

Vance denies Carter is appeasing Russia

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Cyrus Vance Wednesday lashed back at Sen. Henry Jackson's charge that President Carter is appeasing the Soviet Union in a number of areas. Vance called Jackson's criticism "misguided and simply wrong."

Jackson said in a speech Tuesday night the new strategic arms treaty represents "appeasement in its purest form" and reminded him the British government's attitude toward Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

"The failure to face reality today — like the failure to do so then — that is the mark of appeasement," Jackson said.

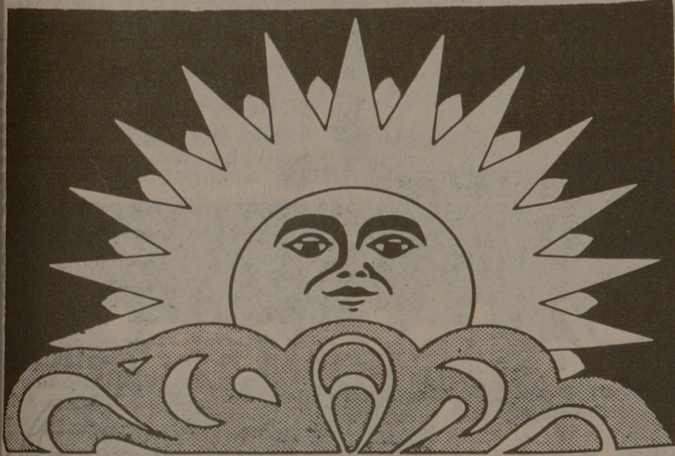
But Vance called a State Depart-

ment news conference Wednesday and responded with unusual bluntness to Jackson, a key figure in the coming Senate debate on SALT II.

"To describe the policy of this administration and the policy pursued by President Nixon, President Ford and Secretary (of State Henry) Kissinger as appeasement is in my judgment misguided and simply wrong," said Vance.

But he saved his sharpest criticism for SALT:

Jackson compared today to the 1930s "when one government pronounced after another was issued to assure the British public that Hitler's Germany would never achieve military equality — let alone superiority."



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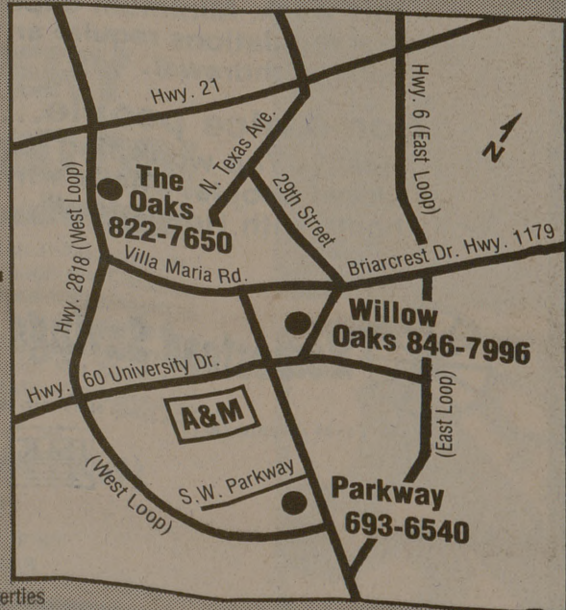
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