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World and Nation

Sources: Reagan to ask Congress to OK missile sale

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Reagan is preparing to ask Congress to approve the sale of \$300 million in missiles to Saudi Arabia, congressional sources said Thursday, a request likely to touch off another fight with Israel's supporters when it reaches Capitol Hill next week.

Initially, Reagan was considering a \$1.1 billion deal, but trimmed the package at the suggestion of Republican leaders who told the president a sale of such magnitude might be blocked, two well-placed sources told The Associated Press.

The package initially included \$450 million in electronic equipment for U.S.-built F-15 and F-5 fighter planes and \$250 million in Black Hawk combat helicopters. The Saudis also wanted U.S. tanks and more F-15 jets but — aware of congressional opposition — decided instead to buy all-weather Tornado fighters from Britain and West Germany.

Republican leaders urged Reagan to trim the request to Sidewinder and Stinger missiles on the theory the deal might squeak through, the sources said. The president could then come back later and ask for more weapons for the Arab kingdom.

The sources discussed the proposal only on condition that they not be quoted by name.

The Sidewinders are designed to be attached to the F-15 jets, while the

Stingers are anti-aircraft missiles that could be fired by combat troops.

Apart from the traditional arguments that the Saudis are a force for moderation and stability in the Middle East and a good friend of the United States, this year's pitch to skeptical members of Congress will include the Iran-Iraq war.

Iranian troops are "at the gates" of Kuwait, and the Saudis are committed to go to the defense of the smaller Persian Gulf country, said a State Department official, who insisted on anonymity.

Bernard Kalb, the department spokesman, said the weapons were "defensive" in nature and that "no final decision has been made."

Critics of the Saudis are also trying to hold up delivery of modern U.S. AWACS radar planes already sold to the Riyadh government. Reagan has given Congress a commitment to deliver the planes only if there was "significant progress" toward peace in the Middle East.

Kalb said the administration expected all commitments to be met and that delivery could begin in a few months.

Israel's supporters are questioning the merits of another weapons sale to a major Arab country while Mideast peace efforts are at a standstill.

Hinckley seeking to leave hospital one day a month

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John W. Hinckley Jr., who shot and wounded President Reagan in March, 1981, asked a federal judge to permit him to leave St. Elizabeth's mental hospital for one day a month and spend it in the city.

Hinckley also asked U.S. Judge Barrington D. Parker to move him from the maximum security ward to which he has been confined for the past 21 consecutive months to a less restrictive ward at the hospital.

Hinckley has been in St. Elizabeth's since June 1982, when a jury found him innocent by reason of insanity in the shootings of Reagan and three other men.

Under a special act of Congress applicable only in the District of Columbia, Hinckley is entitled to be released from the mental hospital if he can prove that he is no longer dangerous to himself or to others by reason of mental illness.

In his petition to Judge Parker, Hinckley, acting on his own behalf, said expert testimony he intends to offer at a hearing "will establish that (his) illness is in remission."

He said he will show that movement to a less restrictive ward and city privileges "are appropriate at this time."

He said he would like to be transferred to a less restrictive ward in the same building where he is currently confined.

He has been out on the hospital grounds 20 times in the past two months "and has acted appropriately and without incident," he told Parker.

Hinckley said he thinks he can handle limited city privileges one day a month.

Group suggests tax increase on cigarettes

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Journal of the American Medical Association, increasing its attack on tobacco, has devoted its entire current issue to articles emphasizing the deadly risks posed by tobacco products.

An editorial in Friday's journal, the third special anti-tobacco issue in 18 months, said the AMA regards tobacco products as societies' "greatest current public health problem."

One article suggests that an 8-cent to 16-cent-per-pack increase in cigarette taxes would encourage between 1 million and 2 million young people and 800,000 to 1.5 million adults to stop smoking.

Medical experts say AIDS panic as scary as disease

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Chances of spreading AIDS in schools are remote if not non-existent, medical experts told a national conference of school officials on Thursday, pleading for help in stopping what they called AIPS — AIDS-Induced Panic Syndrome.

Dr. Harold Jaffe of the Federal Centers for Disease Control, referring to a similar disease he called "AfrAIDS," said that if school officials and others base decisions on speculation, the social destruction from the fear of AIDS will soon rival the physical destruction of AIDS itself.

Federal and private researchers said that in most cases there's no reason to keep kids with the deadly disease out of school.

"AIDS is a scary disease," Jaffe acknowledged.

But careful tests show no risk of transmission between family members living in close quarters, he said, and only a very small risk among

health care workers dealing daily with AIDS patients.

"Surely the risk of transmission with less intense contact, such as in schools, offices and churches, would appear to be remote," Jaffe said.

Other scientists made similar comments about the disease.

Dr. Woodrow Myers, Indiana state health commissioner said scientists are unwilling to say there is no chance of students communicating the disease.

Several doctors at the conference, including Dr. Anthony Fauci, coordinator of AIDS research at the National Institutes of Health, said the disease in this country spreads almost exclusively through sexual contact among homosexual or bisexual men, through sharing of needles by intravenous drug abusers or, in a few cases, through transfusions or injections of blood products or through birth by a mother carrying the AIDS virus.

THEATRE GUIDE

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