

The Stakes Are High In F-15 Sale To Saudi Arabia

The Saudi Arabian government is waging an uncharacteristically vigorous and public fight in Washington to gain congressional approval of the sale of 60 F-15 jet fighters. Both the Saudis and the anti-sale forces, led by the Jewish Lobby and its supporters in Congress, recognize that what is at stake here is the longstanding political alliance between Washington and Riyadh — an alliance on which depends the health of the U.S. dollar.

Following a turbulent meeting with Israeli Premier Menachem Begin yesterday, President James Carter demonstrated his commitment to the sale by meeting with a number of members of the House International Committee and later the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Earlier this week the Saudi Arabian head of Intelligence, Prince Turki ben Faisal, and the son of Saudi Defense Minister

Washington with 20 Senators, pressing Riyadh's case on the sale. At the same time the Saudi Arabian Ambassador in Washington along with the Saudi Information Office have waged an information campaign to ensure Congressional approval.

A number of well-placed sources indicate that the unusual lobbying effort on the part of Riyadh underscores the emphasis the Saudis are putting on the sale as a litmus test of the reliability of U.S.-Saudi relations. Particularly in the wake of the Israeli invasion into Lebanon, if the Jewish Lobby succeeds in blocking the sale, the Saudis may be forced to heed pressure from less adamantly pro-U.S. elements in Riyadh and within the oil producing cartel to raise the price of oil and (most likely) lower Saudi oil production.

Saudi Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani announced from Riyadh on March 22 that the Saudi royal family is not interested in playing along with such games. He declared that the April 3 extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will not discuss the issue of a price rise. Over the recent weeks, the Kuwaitis have been agitating for OPEC to either raise the price of crude or break with the dollar as a means of pricing oil in favor of the City of London's Special Drawing Right (SDR). They have gained substantial support from a number of producers with the key exception of the powerful Iranians.

Fighting Dirtier

The day after Carter's meeting with Begin, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee leaked a report to the *New*

York Times concluding that the arms sales would make Saudi Arabia a target for an Israeli preemptive strike in the event of renewed warfare in the Mideast. Such a conclusion suspiciously complements various scenarios emanating from the offices of Energy Secretary James Schlesinger and National Security Council director Zbigniew Brzezinski threatening either a U.S. or "surrogate" Israeli invasion into the Persian Gulf to secure oil resources. An aide to a Senator also noted that there are rumors circulating on Capitol Hill that the Israelis will make Saudi Arabia a target in the case of war whether or not the F-15s are based at the Tabuq base — the nearest Saudi base to the Israeli border.

Furthermore, a spokesman for the committee boasted of another tactic to block the sale's approval: "investigation" in Saudi funding of PLO terrorist activities, in particular the raid into Israel which was followed by the massive Lebanese raid by Israel. The Committee spokesman admitted that the "Saudi-U.S. alliance will be finished" if these tactics succeed.

Attacks Against Lance

Paralleling the campaigning to shoot down the F-15 sale, a press campaign is being renewed against former Office of Budget and Management director Bert Lance, who is working out joint banking ventures with a number of prominent Arab financiers, primarily Saudi Arabians. Lance is part of a faction of American industrial and banking interests which see Saudi Arabian oil and petrodollars as crucial for economic growth. In this connection the City of London and the Jewish Lobby have repeatedly attacked the Arabian-American Oil Company — which services nearly all of Saudi Arabia's massive oil output. The *New York Times'* leak on March 22 notes that one option the Saudis could exercise against the U.S. in the event that the F-15 sale is not passed is to nationalize Aramco.

And the nationalization of Aramco is, in fact, the centerpiece of plans being promoted by London's allies in Washington to break up OPEC and take over the world oil markets at the expense of the Aramco partners, Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, and Socal. There is a fight over this throughout Washington: A debate has opened up between the State Department and the Treasury Department over whether OPEC will remain the predominant source of oil in the 1980s. C. Fred Bergston, a close collaborator of Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal is proposing that President Carter authorize

more World Bank investment in non-OPEC Third World oil development, a policy which would greatly enhance British Petroleum's status in the world oil markets. Presently BP is known to control more non-OPEC oil resources than even Exxon. A State Department spokesman earlier this month issued a statement denying the forecast that non-OPEC sources could meet the growing demand for oil in the 1980s.

By London's calculation, the destruction of Aramco would signal a decisive political defeat to the U.S. industrial interests for which Bert Lance has been

working. Numerous analysts of the Mideast agree that the present Saudi triumvirate, King Khalid, Yamani, and Crown Prince Fahd, will remain loyal to Aramco and the U.S. even if the F-15 deal does not go through. However, it will weaken their defense of a staunch alliance to Washington in the eyes of such Saudis as Planning Minister Hisham Nazir, and the head of the Royal Guard Prince Abdulla, who lean much more in the direction of a loyalty to the City of London.

—Judy Wyer

Saudi Arabian Ambassador: We Cannot Tolerate Delay

Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Washington H.E. Ali A. Alireza responded in a press conference this week to both accusations from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Saudi Arabia supports Palestinian terrorism, and a call for the postponement of the arms sale from Jewish Lobby supporter Senator Jackson.

A delay is just as bad as a rejection...a delay would mean postponement of a year....Saudi Arabia cannot tolerate such a delay.

Saudi Arabia condemns terrorism in all its forms and those who have committed it against any peoples.

Israelis on Saudis: "Luckily, Roosevelt Died..."

Davar, Israeli daily, March 13:

Saudi involvement and the fact that Saudi Arabia is the closest ally of the United States by virtue of the oil and the millions of petrodollars, is our gravest Achilles' heel in our relations with the Administration in Washington. In fact, this is not new. At the beginning of 1945 after the Yalta Conference, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt claimed, after his meeting with the founder of the dynasty, King Ibn Saud, that he had in five minutes

learned more from him about Jewish and Arab relations than he had learned on any previous occasion.

Roosevelt was not mistaken: At that same summit meeting, which was a continuation of the visit by Colonel Hopkins and other envoys, he learned of the abyss-like hatred of the ruler of the "purest" Arab country for the nationalist struggles of the Jewish nation and this only increased his doubts as to whether it was indeed worth giving establishment of a Jewish state following World War II, which brought the holocaust down on us.

Luckily for us, Roosevelt died a short time after that meeting with Ibn Saud and the new constellation during President Truman's time nevertheless permitted the realization of the Zionist objective, despite the warnings of the political and military establishments that the establishment of a Jewish state would endanger the supplies of oil and the U.S. national, strategic, and economic interests and despite the warnings of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow to the effect that this would increase Soviet influence among the Arab countries.

New York Post, by Evans and Novak, March 20:

"Israel wants the U.S. all to itself," one Mideast authority told us. "The Saudi connection drives it up the wall." If true, that means the pro-Israel block in Congress and the American-Jewish community will pressure Carter to void the F-15 aircraft deal, thereby creating trouble between Washington and Riyadh.

Southern Lebanon: Israel's Vietnam?

Military analysts agreed this week that Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon has fallen far short of its original goals, and, as a result, has put Israel in the untenable position of having to fight a protracted Vietnam-style war of attrition with Palestinian guerrilla forces.

Israel's prime aim has been to provoke Syria to respond militarily. With Syria's refusal to fall for Israel's gameplan, Israeli troops continued their drive north. Having siezed the entire area south of the Litani River with the exception of the port city of Tyre, Israel was on the verge of launching the fourth phase of its operation: moving beyond the Litani and occupying a 200-square mile area including the strategic Palestinian stronghold of Nabatiye. The move was not made, though U.S. military intelligence sources assert that the option may yet be activated.

As a result of Israel's failure to provoke Syria, Syrian President Hafez Assad has predicted that "Israel will bleed." Israel's sweep into southern Lebanon did not succeed in wiping out the Palestinian fighting forces, confirming charges that the invasion was, in fact, a political-military disaster for Israel rather than the great victory that the Israeli press has made it out to be.

According to Michael Parks in the *Baltimore Sun* March 23:

The Israeli Army, long regarded as one of the world's best, was little better prepared for its invasion of southern Lebanon and the guerrilla warfare it entailed than the American armed forces were for the conflict in Indochina, according to military analysts now assessing the seven-day operation.