

Charges, denials fly in Mideast

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Monday countered Egypt's charge that Israelis sabotaged Jerusalem peace talks with a claim that Cairo reneged on a Sinai demilitarization pledge. Prime Minister Menahem Begin said stalled negotiations can resume when Cairo softens what he called its strident anti-Semitic tone.

U.S. envoys, meanwhile, held "exploratory" talks with Israeli leaders aimed at getting talks back under way.

In Cairo, the semi-official newspaper Al-Akhbar said Egypt was launching an extensive diplomatic campaign, sending envoys to Europe and Africa in an effort to generate public opinion against Israel.

Begin, defending his policy in a 70-minute speech to the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, accused Egypt of creating an atmosphere in which negotiation was impossible.

"All this contempt between nations came all of a sudden as negotiations were at their peak and Israel was showing good will," Begin said, thumbing through a thick file of extracts from Egyptian newspapers.

He said Egyptian President Anwar Sadat reneged on a pledge he made during his historic visit to Jerusalem last November, that Egyptian troops would not cross the natural mountain spine, running along the

western edge of the Sinai Peninsula. Begin said Israel based its offer of complete withdrawal from the desert wilderness on Sadat's pledge that his army would remain 120 miles from the Israeli border.

Sadat called his foreign minister home from Jerusalem talks last Wednesday, stalling negotiations on principles for peace that opened the previous day.

The Egyptian leader told his Parliament Saturday that Israel sabotaged the Jerusalem conference. He said Begin deceived him by agreeing in preliminary talks at Ismailia, Egypt, on Christmas Day that Jewish settlements in Sinai were a side

issue and then making them a central topic when full-fledged talks began.

At the urging of President Carter, Sadat said parallel military talks, scheduled to resume Sunday, in Cairo could continue as planned. But Israel said it would not send its defense minister back to Cairo until Egypt halted its "campaign of vilification."

Despite the hard tone of Begin's message, political observers described the speech as moderate.

Begin said Israel "left the door wide open" for resumption of talks. "If we see in the next few days that there are no more insults there will be no obstacle to our defense minister's return to Cairo."

World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Joint fishing venture not dead

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — A proposed joint fishing venture in which Americans would catch hake for processing aboard Soviet ships isn't dead despite two advisory council rejection votes, an official of the firm says.

Wally Pereyra, vice president for U.S.-U.S.S.R. Marine Resources Inc., said a Commerce Department policy statement supporting such joint ventures might revive his firm's proposal.

Gay ordinations split church

NEW YORK — The United Presbyterian Church was thrown into the forefront of the battle over ordination of acknowledged homosexuals Monday after a committee report recommended that they be accepted.

But there were indications that a majority of the denomination's 2.6 million members strongly opposed such a position, making its adoption highly questionable.

Belgian industrialist kidnapped

PARIS — Masked gunmen ambushed an automobile carrying Baron Edouard-Jean Empain in central Paris Monday and abducted the Belgian nobleman, who is one of Europe's richest industrialists and heads a giant conglomerate with interests in the United States.

Hours after the late-morning abduction, the 40-year-old baron's family still had not received a ransom demand, authorities said. There was no firm clue to whether he was kidnapped for money or for political motives.

Carter budget hikes defense, energy, education expenditures

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pres. Carter sent Congress a 1979 budget Monday calling for \$25 billion in tax cuts, higher spending on defense, energy and education, but no big outlays for wholly new

programs.

Even so, the magnitude of the proposed spending, \$500.2 billion, brought critical comment from some key members of Congress.

"I would like to see us under

\$500 billion," House Speaker Thomas O'Neill told reporters.

Rep. George Mahon, D-Tex., chair of the House Appropriations Committee, recalled that a \$6 billion budget was considered unbelievably high in 1935, the year he entered Congress.

Mahon applauded Carter's announced intention of working with the private sector of the economy to reduce unemployment. But he said accompanying proposals for spending and large tax cuts to stimulate the economy involve considerable risks and "the greatest risk appears to be inflation."

The budget estimates \$439.6 billion in receipts against the outlays. This would leave the government operating in the red by \$60.6 billion, only a little less than the estimated \$61.8 billion deficit for the present year.

Chairman Robert Giaimo, D-Conn., of the House Budget Committee, said the contemplated deficit is "much too high in times of solid economic growth."

Nuclear plant leaks radioactive material

PLATTEVILLE, Colo. (AP) — A cloud of radioactive material escaped from a stack at the Fort St. Vrain nuclear power plant today, authorities said.

The amount of radiation that escaped was not known, said a spokesman for Public Service Co. of Colorado, which owns the plant. A plant spokesman said the cause of the leak was not immediately known.

The plant was evacuated and four or five workers were being treated for possible radioactive contamination, said Don Bower, Weld County sheriff.

The Colorado State Patrol and

the sheriff's department sealed off all roads into the area, but there was no evacuation of the farmhouses scattered through the vicinity.

Bower said the cloud of radiation was moving away from the plant in a southwesterly direction toward Denver, 35 miles away.

The Fort St. Vrain plant, the only nuclear power plant in Colorado, is not yet in full operation. A leak in a steam pipe recently forced curtailment of startup operations.

The radiation was released into the air about 8:30 a.m. PST from a stack in the reactor, said William Fitzmaurice, manager of information for Public Service.

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