

CTON POST

Israel Told U.S. 'After the Fact' About Iran Oil

Israel told the United States last month that it had agreed to purchase a substantial quantity of oil from Iran, the State Department said yesterday.

Department spokesman Margaret Tutwiler acknowledged that the United States was advised "after the fact." The transaction was revealed Monday by NBC News.

NBC said Israel paid \$36 million for the oil to help Iran bolster its military defenses against Iraq and to encourage Iran to use its influence with radical groups in Lebanon holding three Israeli soldiers, eight Americans and other foreigners hostage.

The move had been approved by the United States. However, Tutwiler

said, "Foreign countries do not seek U.S. approval for oil purchases from a third country," adding that the United States has not changed its policy of refusing to make deals for release of the hostages.

Other administration sources said flatly that neither the White House nor the State Department had said anything that could be interpreted as a U.S. go-ahead for Israel's course.

NBC also said Israel had discussed the possibility of selling Iran spare parts for its military equipment, which is largely of U.S. manufacture. Tutwiler said Israel is aware that it cannot sell any equipment containing U.S. technology without Washington's approval and has

promised to respect that prohibition.

According to NBC, the oil deal was arranged by Uri Lubrani, who served as Israeli ambassador in Tehran before the fall of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and who more recently has been coordinator of Israeli policy toward Lebanon.

Influential military, intelligence and diplomatic circles in Israel have said the country needs to seek better relations with Iran, despite the strongly anti-Zionist and anti-Western attitudes of its revolutionary government. It was partly in response to this Israeli argument that President Ronald Reagan authorized U.S. arms to Iran in hopes it would lead to freedom for American hostages.

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