News Summary

NYTimes

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International

Carter Administration officials took steps to assure Israel and the Arab countries on President Carter's new Middle East proposals. Mr. Carter took positions at his press conference Wednesday that have been publicly opposed for different reasons by Israel and the Arab states. There was concern among some Middle East experts that instead of furthering the process toward peace, the President's comments could have caused a setback. Thus, the officials attempted to convince both sides that American evenhandedness in the negotiations had not ended. [Page A1, Column 3.]

National-

There were mounting threats of violent retaliation against any show of strength by the police from a handful of Hanafi Moslem gunmen who held more than 100 hostages in Washington in a second day of tension and unproductive negotiations to free the captives. The police strategy appeared to be to wait the gunmen out. [A1:6.]

Acquaintances and neighbors of Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, the leader of a youthful group of Hanafi Moslems, say that he seemed to become unstable after four members of his family were murdered in 1973. For more than 24 hours, his voice bellowed orders and complaints from the eighth floor of the B'nai B'rith-Building in Washington. At times the voice was reasonable; other times it was belligerent, and frequently it was illogical and incomprehensible. [Al:5.]

The public responded vehemently against the Food and Drug Administration's announcement Wednesday that it would ban saccharin, which the agency said is believed to be a cancer-causing agent. "All day long we've been taking calls from people, some of them in tears, demanding that we leave saccharin alone," an F.D.A. official said.

Complaints also came from corporations that use saccharin in their products, the diet food industry and organizations representing diabetics who use saccharin. [A1:3.]

Some manufacturers stopped production of saccharin-based products and turned to other substitute sweeteners. The Sherwin-Williams Company said it would close at least temporarily its saccharin plant outside Cincinnati, the largest in the world. Soft-drink manufacturers, major users of saccharin, said they were not halting production or marketing of saccharin-based drinks, but that substitutes were being readied. [A28:]

The Senate overwhelmingly approved a \$4 billion public works bill after agreeing on an aid formula far more generous to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut than was the House bill. The vote was 74 to 11, with most of the opposition coming from hard-line conservatives. "It was a fairly clear statement that the unemployment problems of the Northeast are national problems," said Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, Democrat of New York, who took a crucial part in working out the Senate bill. [A1:2.]

Metropolitan

"This is the last of the great financial crises," said Felix Rohatyn, chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation when the State Emergency Financial Control Board unanimously approved the New York City plan to pay off its \$983 million short-term debt. City officials said the board's action removed the threat of the city's insolvency. [Al:1.]

Business/Finance

Higher food and fuel prices in a period of unusually cold weather were responsible in February for the biggest increase—0.9 percent—in wholesale he said. [D1:5-6.]

prices in 16 months, the Labor Department said. But the increase in wholesale prices, which are often a forerunner of higher retail prices, does not mean that another severe round of inflation is ahead, according to John W. Kendrick, the Commerce Department's chief economist. "I think we will get down to much lower rates by spring" he said. [D1:5-6.]

Four top officials of the Amrep Corporation, a land developer in New Mexico, received prison sentences in Federal District Court in Manhattan of six months each for fraudulent sales practices. Amrep, a New York concern, is the developer of a community called Rio Rancho Estates. The executives are Howard W. Friedman, his brother, Daniel; Chester Carity and Henry L. Hoffman. Their lawyers said they would appeal the conviction. [D1:1.]

Legislation permitting commercial banks to pay interest on checking accounts, but only to individuals, was urged on Congress by Arthur F. Burns, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Congress would have to repeal the 1933 Banking Act's provision banning such interest, which is generally opposed by banks but favored by consumer groups. In New England, banks have introduced negotiable orders of withdrawals, which are basically checks drawn against interest-bearing deposits. The banks pay 5 percent, but Mr. Burns believes the rate should be reduced if the experiment becomes nationwide. [D1:4.]

Stock prices, initially depressed by a Government report of an increase in wholesale prices, rallied late in session, led by International Business Machines and sugar-related issues. The Dow Jones industrial average closed up 3.83 points to 946.73. [D1:5-6.] New York's Muncipal Assistance Corporation bonds advanced strongly in the tax-exempt bond market in response to Mayor Beame's announcement of a plan to repay New York City's short-term debt without the help of the banks. Three M.A.C. bond issues each rose 11/2 points. [D2:3.] An exported sharp' rise in sugar futures following the Food and Drug Administration's announcement that it would ban saccharin in food and beverages was nipped by profit taking. The May contract closed at 9 cents a pound, up from 8.97 cents. [D3:1.]

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"It is one of the very unfortunate parts of our Senate debates, when we get on measures of this kind, that people look at what it means for their state instead of what we are trying to do generally for the country."—Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, in a Senate debate on formulas for public-works aid. [A25:1.]

"Let's face it, we're talking money. No great principle is involved here."—Senator John Durkin of New Hampshire in the same debate. [A25:1.]

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CORRECTION

In an article Wednesday on a malpractice suit against the school in Copiague, L.I., The Times incorrectly identified a lawyer who informally advised the school counsel. His correct name is Max Margules.