

does not hesitate to say that the CIA willingly kept his reports under their elbows, and that neither the National Security Council nor the White House were really made aware of them. They would have thus proceeded to stifle an affair vital for the security of the United States and the world. The *Aviation Week* article blew the cover off. During the first week of May, just before leaving for the

London summit, President Jimmy Carter was content with saying that there were "some errors" in the article in question. Several days later, a White House official declared that it was "inexact to pretend that the problems brought up by this article had not been discussed at the highest level..."

Austrian Chancellor Kreisky Behind Mideast Gun-Running Scandal

AUSTRIA

The clearest example of how Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky has repeatedly violated Austrian neutrality with his gun running to the Mideast is the recent "Munitions Scandal" watering of Kreisky's Defense Minister, General Karl Luetendorf. Luetendorf was forced to resign on May 31 for his involvement in shipping munitions to Syria in December 1976. Social Democrat Kreisky, however, has escaped free of criticism for expediting the shipment of 3,000 sharpshooting rifles to Syria under the cover of "sport rifles" during May of this year.

According to the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 which reconstituted postwar Austria as a neutral state, it is a violation of neutrality for Austria to export arms to a country in a state of war — such as the state of war between Syria and Israel. Austria's former occupying powers, the U.S., the Soviet Union, France, and the United Kingdom, are pledged to guarantee this neutrality.

Although the months-long watering of Luetendorf was nearly ignored by the Viennese press, one daily, *Die Presse*, reported that Luetendorf was actually sacked because of his failure to reform the 40,000 man Austrian army, and not for the munitions scandal. Luetendorf has been replaced by one Otto Roesch, Kreisky's former Interior Minister and the leading Social Democratic security expert in Austria. Roesch was Undersecretary of Defense from 1959 to 1966, and as Interior Minister directed the security arrangements after the December 1975 terrorist assault on the Vienna OPEC conference.

Luetendorf's forced resignation came after an Austrian parliamentary investigation committee charged that he did not tell the Chancellor all he knew about a Dec. 7 shipment of 600 rifles and 400,000 rounds of ammunition to Syria. Although this shipment was blocked by Viennese airport customs officials as a probable violation of Austrian neutrality, Luetendorf's friend and arms dealer, Alois Weichselbaumer, managed to get the munitions to a Yugoslavian port before he was caught.

The press, however, did not pick up the scandal until

Jan. 12. Although both Luetendorf and Weichselbaumer initially insisted that the shipment was comprised of "sport rifles" bound for Tunisia, Weichselbaumer gave evidence against Luetendorf during the April-May parliamentary investigation that the rifles were shipped to Syria.

Kreisky's Deal

While Luetendorf was being grilled by the investigation committee, Kreisky was appearing before the parliamentary Foreign Policy Committee to expedite shipment of 3,000 rifles to Syria — a deal that Luetendorf and Weichselbaumer had set up in 1975.

In September 1975, Luetendorf, Weichselbaumer, and Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlass agreed that Syria would purchase at least 2,000 Steyr-Mannlicher SSG sharpshooting rifles and would discuss an additional \$210,000,000 purchase of arms and vehicles for the Syrian Army. The Luetendorf shipment of 600 rifles and 400,000 rounds of ammunition was also discussed at this meeting. The initial 2,000 SSG rifles that were shipped to Syria labeled "sport rifles" are the civilian twin of the military SSG, and Weichselbaumer later sold the Syrians conversion kits so they could officially convert their new rifles into the military version.

None of these arrangements were mentioned in the press, and nothing was heard about SSG until an Austrian embassy official in Damascus recognized the SSG as the gun a Syrian soldier was holding over a dead Lebanese in a news photo released from Lebanon.

In April, officials from Kreisky's Chancellery appeared before the parliamentary Foreign Policy Committee to document Kreisky's support for another shipment of 3,000 SSG "sport rifles" to Syria. Kreisky shocked the parliamentarians, submitting testimony from the Swiss Foreign Ministry, the Swiss Military Department, and the Swedish government claiming that there were no violations of neutrality when a neutral country such as Austria exported "sport rifles." Kreisky then had official experts from the Vienna police department testify that the SSG could only be considered a "sport rifle." On May 4, the Foreign Policy Committee declined to raise objections to the sale of the 3,000 SSG rifles to Syria. On the same day, Kreisky flew to Syria for two days, unaccompanied by his Foreign Minister, to assure the Syrians that the Luetendorf scandal would not disrupt Austrian arms sales to the Mideast.