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Founder of Jewish institute reported linked to arms deal-

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Michael Ledeen, a consultant to the National Security Council who reportedly was involved in events leading up to the sale of U.S. arms to Iran, is a writer and an academic with conservative views and good contacts in Israel.

Mr. Ledeen, 45, once worked as a special adviser to former Secretary of State Alexander Haig. He is now a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank with a conservative orientation.

A well-known figure in government and journalistic circles here in the capital, Mr. Ledeen has been identified in Israel and in the United States as a key player in the initial talks that eventually resulted in the sale of weapons, through Israel, to Iran in the summer of 1985.

Mr. Ledeen refused to comment Saturday. He asked a reporter to call back during the week. Last week, he said he would not answer questions about the affair because his wife, Barbara, a Pentagon consultant, recently had a baby.

Last week, Mr. Ledeen testified before a closed session of the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is investigating revelations that proceeds from the sale of U.S. arms to Iran were diverted to the Nicaraguan resistance.

Mr. Ledeen has said his involvement in any Iran program ended in November 1985, and he was unaware of payments to help the resistance.

Mr. Ledeen's name also was raised in connection with a 1985 meeting with arms merchant Manucher Ghorbanifar, an Iranian expatriate, who, along with Adnan Khashoggi, a Saudi Arabian, were middlemen in the deals. Mr. Ghorbanifar and Mr. Khashoggi were interviewed by Barbara Walters on ABC's "20-20" show last Thursday.

Mr. Ledeen told associates that he met Mr. Ghorbanifar several times in Europe between July and December 1985, the Chicago Tribune reported a month ago.

The exact details of how the arms shipments began in 1985 are cloudy, but Israeli officials in Jerusalem said Mr. Ledeen told former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the early spring of 1985 that the United States wanted to re-establish contact with Iran.

Washington apparently looked to Israel because the Jewish state had maintained a network of ties with Tehran even after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The officials, speaking on condition they remain anonymous, said Mr. Ledeen told Mr. Peres of President Reagan's concern for William Buckley, the CIA station chief who was kidnapped by pro-Iranian Shi'ite Moslems in Beirut in March 1984. An ex-hostage, David Jacobsen, says he thinks Mr. Buckley died in captivity in June 1985.

Hours after speaking with Mr. Ledeen, Mr. Peres talked to Al Schwimmer, the U.S.-born founder of Israel Aircraft Industries, according to a report in Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper. Mr. Schwimmer had become an independent arms dealer after running IAI for 26 years.

It was Mr. Schwimmer's idea to barter weapons for Mr. Buckley's freedom, and Mr. Schwimmer turned for help to Israeli arms dealer Yaacov Nimrodi, according to the paper.

Mr. Ledeen is a founder of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, a group that tries to educate Americans about the need for a close military relationship between Israel and the United States.

The New York Times reported that the first overture to the United States came in late 1984 from Mr. Ghorbanifar who said he wanted money to help gain the release of the American hostages in Lebanon.

Details of the offer were passed along to the administration by Theodore G. Shackley, a former CIA official and a friend of Mr. Ledeen, the newspaper said.

In a 1980 article in "New York" magazine, Mr. Ledeen called Mr. Shackley "one of the CIA's most esteemed officers," who was "driven out" of the agency by former President Jimmy Carter's CIA director, Stansfield Turner.

Mr. Shackley also has been a consultant for Stanford Technology Inc., the Northern Virginia firm that employs retired Gen. Richard V. Secord and Iranian-born businessman, Albert Hakim, wrote Peter Maas in "Manhunt," his book about convicted CIA agent Edwin Wilson.

Gen. Secord and Mr. Hakim are

under investigation in the Iran-Contra affair, Justice Department officials say.

Mr. Maas also wrote that in February 1982, Mr. Ledeen, then at the State Department, approached a federal prosecutor saying "he [Mr. Ledeen] had heard disquieting rumors about an investigation of Shackley and [former Pentagon official Erich] Von Marbod." The FBI was investigating them in a case involving alleged overcharges from a shipping concern, but no charges were ever brought against the two.

Mr. Ledeen writes frequently for major publications about terrorism, Italy, Western Europe and Central America, his areas of expertise, according to a biography distributed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

He was formerly a professor at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., and at the University of Rome. He was also executive editor of the

center's publication, "The Washington Quarterly."

At a media conference last summer, Mr. Ledeen said Western news organizations contribute to terrorism by overreporting specific incidents.

"We ought to be asking the press to do a bit of self-censorship," he said. He also criticized many reporters for trying to put a "spin" on their stories to try to influence policy.

He called this "policy recommendation masquerading as news story."

One of Mr. Ledeen's most controversial articles, written with Arnaud de Borchgrave, now editor-in-chief of The Washington Times, appeared in The New Republic just before Jimmy Carter's defeat in 1980.

The story said that Billy Carter, the president's brother, has received \$50,000 in travel money from the Libyans, which he did not report. A Justice Department investigation found Billy Carter had lied to government officials, but no charges were ever brought.

Mr. Ledeen also analyzed, for the U.S. government, papers collected during the 1983 invasion of Grenada, and concluded that the previous government received Soviet support.

Mr. Ledeen's work won high praise from another expert on terrorism, Neil Livingstone of the Institute of Terrorism and Sub-National Conflict.

"I have great respect for him as a scholar and a writer," said Mr. Livingstone.