

REMARKS OF CONGRESSMAN LES AuCOIN
OREGON COMMITTEE FOR ISRAEL BONDS
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In George Orwell's book, 1984, the people were duped by something called "doublethink."

It was best reflected by the slogan: "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength."

Orwell happened to write that a year after the State of Israel was founded. Today, in the 33rd year of Israel's life, the author could take stock of a new phenomenon in American thinking and add one final line to that slogan. The line would be: "Your adversary is your friend."

I know of no other way to describe the revisionist thinking -- that may be on the upswing in America -- with regard to who our friends actually are in the Middle East.

Specifically, it's becoming very fashionable just now to think of Saudi Arabia as our "friend." In the media, you can find increasing references to the Saudis as one of the "moderate" Arab states.

And in Europe, if you were to make a judgment based on the statements of those lionhearted, courageous allies, you would believe that Saudi Arabia is almost more of a force for peace than Israel.

This thinking has gone so far that the new Administration has proposed selling the Saudis new, offensive arms -- in the theory]

that this will buy their loyalty and support and will protect them from their enemies.

Well, my friends, I'm not interested in theory. Tonight, this is going to be a conversation about reality.

America has a dependable friend in the Middle East and that friend is Israel -- not Saudi Arabia.

You tell me. What friend would raise the price of oil 1000 percent in the last eight years? What friend would trigger a savage rate of inflation in this country? What friend would bring the Third World to the brink of bankruptcy? What friend would endanger the American banking system by coercing billions of dollars in questionable loans to underdeveloped countries who are being flattened by those same oil prices?

Moderation? Is it moderate to state that the solution to the Mideast crisis is a "holy war" leading to the extinction of Israel and her armies and her people?

I think not.

Nor is there truth in the notion that the Saudis are moderates on OPEC oil pricing. I concede that the Saudis have resisted certain price hikes advocated by the Libya's and Iraq's of the world. But if any American thinks that that's doing us a favor, they're very, very wrong indeed.

The Saudis' real motives were stated in what had to be an unguarded moment by Shiek Yamani himself. It was in January and it was at the University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia. And it blew the cover off Saudi Arabia's intentions. Yamani said the following:

"If we force Western countries to invest heavily in finding alternative sources of energy, they will. This would take no more than seven to ten years and would result in reducing dependence on oil as a source of energy to a point where it will jeopardize Saudi Arabia's interests."

There you have it. Instead of drowning us under a bucket of water, the Saudis prefer Chinese water torture instead -- banking that a more systematic approach will bleed us more completely in the long run and that America will be too much of a sleepwalker to react effectively.

That's the "friend" who now asks us for some of the most sophisticated weapons on the face of the earth -- weapons that would be a sure threat to Israel and, just as importantly, to the security interests of the United States.

Let me lay it on the line.

I passionately oppose this arms sale. I will use every ounce of influence I have as a member of the Appropriations Committee to head it off, and I'm prepared to see this fight through to the end.

No discussion of Israel can be made without focusing on this life or death issue.

So let's look at the weapons the Saudis have asked for and which the Administration has agreed to sell.

First, we're looking at extra equipment for the F-15 fighter aircraft the U.S sold Saudi Arabia in 1978. But this isn't just any kind of extra equipment -- this equipment transforms these aircraft

into deadly offensive weapons.

I'm talking here about sophisticated "Sidewinder" air-to-air missiles installed on those F-15's -- missiles that are more accurate and deadly than most of the missiles deployed in the Middle East. I'm also talking about special fuel packs which, when mounted on the F-15, increase its range from 450 miles to 1,000 miles. Jerusalem is 860 miles from the capital of Saudi Arabia; Tel Aviv is 900.

Finally, there is the AWAC. This is an incredibly sophisticated airplane jammed full of the most advanced computers, data-processing machines and communications equipment.

AWACS can be used for defensive purposes -- for the early detection of an enemy attack. But it is also more than that. It is a flying command post with devastating offensive potential -- especially when it is used to direct aircraft such as the F-15. Its computer can track 400 planes at one time and flash that information to various airborne and ground stations. It can pick up the movement of any object moving at more than 80 miles an hour within a 250-mile radius. It can even detect automobiles moving on highways at those speeds.

Thus, it could pick up Israeli jets and direct F-15 long-range air strikes against them -- before those jets had even left the runway. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger agreed that AWACS flying inside Saudi borders would be able to see nearly every Israeli aircraft as it rose from its base, track the planes, and radio that information to Syria or other adversaries of Israel.

If AWACS are placed in Saudi hands, America will have also

removed Israel's ability to fight a pre-emptive war -- a vital option for a small country outgunned by the combined forces of its neighbors.

On top of that, an Arab surprise attack, in coordination with Syria, Jordan and Iraq, will be possible if AWACS are deployed to cover all of Israel's airspace.

Now I said that this was going to be a conversation about reality. The facts are these: Saudi Arabia has been unable to say "no" to its Arab hard-line neighbors in their boycott of the Camp David framework for peace negotiations....they have been unable to resist the economic boycott inflicted on Egypt after President Sadat moved forward for peace.

Now you tell me; does anyone here believe that the raid on Entebbe could have been done if the Saudis had had AWACS monitoring those Israeli rescue planes? And what about the Yom Kippur War in 1973? There were over 2,500 Israelis killed and 7,500 wounded in a war Israel almost lost.

Who, here, is confident Israel would have been able to finally pull it out if AWACS and retrofitted F-15s had been used in a coordinated Arab attack as Israeli forces, stretched thin across a broad eastern border, tried to defend against pinpoint strikes by heavily armed, long-range F-15s?

This sale does not increase the chance for peace. This sale jeopardizes the peace.

And it violates the commitment made to the Congress, the American public, and the people of Israel, and the world that the highly controversial sale of the F-15s in 1978 would never be matched

up with extra equipment of this kind. It was then and only then that the sale was approved -- and only by a margin of 44-54.

But to add insult to injury, our government has failed to win a single concession from the Saudis in return for this largesse. This can only mean that we hope the sale will bribe the Saudis into good behavior -- or it means we are trying to avoid a confrontation with a government that has made it clear it will be displeased if America disappoints it.

As to the idea of buying good behavior, that's what the Carter Administration thought it was doing in 1978 with the original F-15 sale -- but it didn't prevent the price of oil from rising from \$12.70 a barrel to its present level of \$32 a barrel. And with respect to the second possible U.S. objective, conservative columnist George Will -- a personal friend of President Reagan -- said this: "There is a name for yielding without reciprocation to the demands of another nation in order to avoid a confrontation: such behavior is called appeasement."

But the most important thing here is that this sale not only jeopardizes Israel, it is not in the strategic interest of the United States.

Israel is America's one strategic ally in the Middle East and unlike Saudi Arabia she cannot afford this increase in the arms race. Israel has an average tax rate of 50 percent of personal income and it spends 30 percent of its gross national product on defense. In the United States it's 5 percent. Inflation in Israel has reached 133 percent.

But this sale also works against America because the

technology could ultimately fall into the hands of radical or even pro-Soviet elements. I say this because the Saudi Arabian regime is not stable, is not secure, and there is no guarantee that we would know what would happen to that equipment if the government were overthrown as the Shah's government was in Iran.

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My friends, it's worth remembering on this night that Israel has not asked America once to send a single American soldier to fight its wars. It asks only to be given a chance, its own chance.

With our friendship and understanding, Israel can cope -- as it has shown repeatedly -- with the most frightening adversity. But what it may not be able to survive is an upsurge of revisionist thinking which begins to hint that Israel may not be so important after all -- at least not as important as oil or other resources or interests.

So at this critical time, it's your duty and mine to show why Israel is our friend and why the future of Israel is the future of America and the western democracies in the Middle East. It's our duty to explain why Israel is necessary.

This small state was born out of the devastation of World War II, a home for homeless Jews, the culmination of an ideal and the realization of an idea that only in a Jewish state can Jews be forever free of persecution.

It remains the ideal for Jews everywhere. It remains a goal for Jews in Israel working to fulfill the destiny of the Jewish

state, of American Jews who support the cause, of thousands of Soviet Jews unable to leave the Soviet Union and bearing the daily persecution of the state.

This in itself is reason enough for Israel to exist. But those who fight the existence of Israel and would undermine American support need other "political" reasons. So let me offer a few.

Israel is a genuine democracy, the only one in the Middle East and one of less than 40 in the world. And unlike Egypt, Israel has established institutions. So that even with the fall of a government, we can count on those institutions for continuity. (Even in the case of our friend Egypt, the fall of a single man, Mr. Sadat, could throw us all the way back to the days of Nassar.)

Israel's open alignment with the West reflects a permanent and unconditional orientation.

Israel is a strategic asset -- the one power in the Middle East capable of supporting an American response to any rapid growth of Soviet naval power in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Indeed, if you removed Israel from the Middle East, the region would be more dangerous than it is today and the United States would have less leverage, less security, and less influence on the oil resources of that region.

But as true as those points are, for anyone who has studied the Middle East and its history, such justifications seem craven.

Because they miss the celebration of the human spirit that Israel represents for Jew and non-Jew alike.

Tiny Israel, a nation made up of a people who were the most persecuted in history who nevertheless grant to others the political

and religious freedoms they, themselves, have so often been denied.

Tiny Israel, home of democratic institutions that have never been suspended -- even though it has been on a war footing since 1948.

Sometimes....it's easy for us to believe after all these years that Israel will always be. The Crusaders felt that way and they were in the Middle East for 200 years. Israel is on in its 33rd year.

But Israel will survive as long as it keeps its uncompromising principles. The real question in our generation is whether Israel's friends in the world, and that means you and me, also think of principle as something that cannot be compromised.

And this reminds me of something else in George Orwell's book. It's a quote from one of the apologists for that process called "doublethink."

"What are the stars?" he said. "They're bits of fire a few kilometers away. We could reach them if we wanted to -- or, we could blot them out. The earth is the center of the universe. The sun and the stars go around it:

"For certain purposes, of course, that is not true. When we navigate the ocean, or when we predict an eclipse, we often find it convenient to assume the earth goes round the sun...and that the stars are millions of kilometers away.

"But what of it? Do you suppose it is beyond us to produce a dual system of astronomy? The stars can be near or distant, according as we need them. Do you suppose our mathematicians are unequal to that? Have you forgotten doublethink?"

We gather tonight to make sure that the human mind will never be allowed to find it "convenient" to warp the truth of Israel or to adopt a dual system of principle in deciding the fate of this ideal, this wisp of hope, that we call Israel.