

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN

St. Paul, Minnesota

September 4, 1974

It is a great pleasure to meet with so many friends in this fine organization. I have been a longtime supporter of the National Council of Jewish Women. I have supported you for two reasons: First, you have devoted your efforts to bettering the lives of the disadvantaged -- both young and old -- through education, service and social action. Second, you have stood for the creation of a viable and strong state of Israel.

In St. Paul and throughout the nation, the National Council of Jewish Women is involved in the type of endeavor which you can be justly proud -- helping people so that they can better help themselves.

When government is often too big and too preoccupied to lend a helping hand, the women of the National Council have been available to do their part in their communities all across the nation.

Isaiah Said:

"Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."

Well, the desert has been made fertile again.

A way has been made in the wilderness.

A people have grown strong and rich in spirit.

With God's help, with the spirit of a people yearning for freedom and with the aid of those around the world who believe in freedom, Israel has prospered and will continue to do so. And Israel has survived against almost insurmountable odds.

Today Israel faces two serious problems.

The first is remaining strong and prosperous.

The second is building a lasting peace with her neighbors.

It is clear that the Yom Kippur War took a heavy toll on Israel.

The mobilization of young men reduced economic productivity.

The cost of the war ran into billions. The loss of expensive military equipment meant that Israel would have to deplete its precious reserves of foreign currency to buy new weapons for its self-defense.

I am pleased that the United States came to the aid of Israel with supplemental military aid amounting to \$2.2 billion and that \$1 billion of that sum was in the form of grant assistance - I helped on this.

This aid was badly needed to keep Israel strong to maintain the balance of power and to convince the Arab world and the Soviet Union that we would not desert our friends.

Israel will need more assistance in order to preserve its fragile economy and maintain its military strength.

We will soon be considering our foreign aid bill. I want to inform you that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took a very close look at the Administration's request for Israel. We found the sum provided in the bill -- \$50 million -- to be insufficient. We increased aid to Israel by \$200 million bringing it to the level of our aid to Egypt.

Of one thing I am sure. There is no better investment for peace and stability in the Middle East than a strong and secure Israel.

The United States is now playing a key role in helping to fashion a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Secretary Kissinger's skill and his persistence have brought about a successful troop disengagement on the Egyptian front. We have obtained a similar agreement on the Syrian front.

But there is a dark cloud on the horizon in the Middle East. In the past months since the Israeli-Syrian troop separation, Syria has received massive quantities of Soviet weapons.

Experts say today that Syria is now so strong as a result of Soviet arms shipments that she could go to war against Israel without the cooperation of other Arab states.

This is a truly alarming fact. It demonstrates that despite Soviet verbal expressions of bettering relations between East and West, despite Soviet assurances that it was following a path of peace and reduction of tensions around the world, the Soviet Union is deliberately aggravating tensions between Israel and Syria. If war breaks out between these two countries, as some are predicting it could, then I believe it fair to place a major share of the blame on the Soviet Union for its unwillingness to use caution in supplying arms to one of the most belligerent and hostile Arab governments in the Middle East.

If true detente is to occur between the United States and Russia, then the Soviet Union must stop fueling the winds of war in the Middle East.

The very arduous task of a final and permanent settlement in the region must begin soon.

These will prove to be the most difficult and most important of all negotiations.

To be successful, many things must occur on all sides -- it will be a complicated process, indeed.

But I am certain that one of the most important factors in building a lasting peace in the Middle East will be the commitment of the United States to the security of Israel.

And I say to you today that despite our improved relations with the Arab world -- relations which I endorse and approve -- the American commitment to Israel needs to be maintained and strengthened.

-- The people of Israel need to know that the United States will not desert them and allow them to stand alone in any international forum -- be it the United Nations or any other body.

-- The people of Israel need to know that America will not be bullied or pressured by economic blackmail from any nation.

-- The people of Israel need to know that the American people believe that the national security of Israel can never be the subject of any negotiation.

The Congress of the United States knows of Israel's needs and will respond with compassion and understanding.

We have given our support to Israel during her hour of need. But at a time of fragile peace, our commitment to a friend isolated from other nations as a result of unprecedented economic pressures -- must never waiver.

This is the path to successful negotiation.

This is the path to lasting peace.

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