

Person To Person With The Vice President

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that Israel's Labor Party agrees with that would eventually get him across the table with an Israeli leader.

Q: How much involvement should the Soviet Union have in the Mideast?

A: In my view, the Soviets don't have a useful role to play in terms of bringing peace to the area. I don't see a big hand for them. I do see that if King Hussein can get agreement with Israel on an international framework, for example, involving permanent members of the Security Council to get negotiations started, that would be agreeable to the U.S. if it is agreeable to the Parties.

Q: How can we recapture the spirit of 'Camp David'?

A: If a solution to Taba is finalized, that would be a step towards recapturing that spirit. As a follow-on step, I'd like to see King Hussein at the peace table.

Q: What will it take to bring Hussein to the table?

A: Just what I've outlined -- something of that nature. That's what the Labor Party understands. Abba Eban (Chairman, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee) read a resolution to me in a Knesset (Israel's Parliament) committee meeting supporting that concept. That's a matter for Israel and King Hussein.

Q: What is the result of your private meeting (during the trip) with a group of Palestinians?

A: It was a fruitful session and gave me an understanding of the day-to-day problems they face. There were different cross currents. Some favored a Palestinian state, some favored the homeland concept in affiliation with Jordan. Some were more extreme in terms of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Some were more wary of the PLO. But the meeting gave me a good feeling of the diversity in the Palestinian community. I gained respect for some of the leaders and got a sense of their desire for progress toward peace.

Q: How can the West Bank be settled without Jordan?

A: It can't be settled without Jordan.

Q: Why not?

A: Because Jordan is such an active participant. It has many friends on the West Bank and so much of its history is involved there.

Q: How will Hussein's \$150 million development plan for the West Bank help toward a peace settlement?

A: Improving the quality of life on the West Bank is important in itself. Only in an environment of peace and hope for a better future can you expect people to take risks for peace. King Hussein's plan and the ambitious regional development plan of Prime Minister Peres would

supplement each other in terms of creating a tranquil and hopeful environment.

Q: Why is the U.S. prepared to provide Stinger missiles to Angola, the Fadayeen and others, yet we don't trust Jordan or Saudi Arabia with such missiles?

A: Our policy of providing defensive weapons to Jordan is correct. I'm disappointed that Congress doesn't agree with that policy. On the Saudi sales, our position is well known. We did prevail on AWACs and on some defensive weapons for the Saudis. We want more Sadats and fewer radicals, and we want to keep the moderate Arabs in our corner. There is safety to the whole Gulf area in that, and it is a good thing for our friends in the Mideast, particularly Israel.

Q: Why are we friendly with Saudi Arabia?

A: Because the Saudis have demonstrated over and over again they want to be friendly to us, and when they stand up and protect their territory with their weapons against Iranian airplanes coming in there -- that is in our national interest.

Q: What's our policy on the Iran-Iraq war?

A: We're not taking sides. But what I don't want to see is radicalism like in Iran today spread down through the Gulf coast countries.

Q: What would the U.S. do if Iran won the war?

A: I don't know. We'd be concerned if it resulted in expansion of their kind of extremism, but I don't want to buy into hypothesis.

Q: What's the difference between our unofficial and official policy toward Syria?

A: I don't think there is any difference. We recognize that Syria has a stake in the peace process. But we're also concerned when Syria -- before the landing gear is up on Mr. Peres' plane returning from Morocco -- blasts Israel, blasts King Hassan and cuts its diplomatic ties with Morocco. So we have big differences with Syria on how to approach peace.

Q: Does the Reagan Administration view Syria as Israel does -- a haven for terrorism and a Soviet proxy?

A: We have diplomatic relations with Syria and Israel does not. We'd like to see Syria join in the peace process. Syria is dependent for a lot of its armaments on the Soviet Union and we're concerned about that. I'd love to be able to devise a formula under which Syria would no longer be subservient to the Soviet Union.

Q: Why didn't you go to Syria on this trip?

A: There was no reason to go, but after Syria blasted the Peres-Hassan meeting, it made it even more difficult.

Q: If you went to Syria, couldn't you have tried to help in the release of our hostages?

A: No.

A: Why not?

A: This Administration is doing absolutely everything we can, and if I thought there was one

ounce of light that would have been shed on the hostage situation by my going to Syria, I's have gone. That's how strongly I feel about the hostages.

Q: What was the significance of the Reverend Martin Lawrence Jenco's release while you were in that region?

A: I can't discuss why he was released. We thanked Syria for facilitating the transfer of Rev. Jenco from Syrian custody to the U.S., but in terms of crediting Syria with the actual release of Rev. Jenco from his captors ... I won't comment on that.

Q: Do you take seriously recent threats about killing the other hostages?

A: Yes. We're always concerned about the lives of hostages. We hope the others will also be released, but I have no late information I can shed on that.

Q: Why don't we encourage Syria to become neutral?

A: We have a very competent ambassador (William Eagleton) there and he is trying to do exactly that. But when you're dealing with the factions and problems in Syria, it is extraordinarily difficult.

Q: How can we move Syria away from Russia?

A: We have a long way to go before that happens. One way to get Syria away from Russia is peace in the Mideast. Then, nations wouldn't have to spend as much of their money on armaments.

Q: Isn't Syria a key player?

A: Yes, Syria is a key player, and is very important in the peace process. I wish Syria would be in any evolving of that process, and would be more forthcoming with a willingness to talk.

Q: How high do you think OPEC can raise oil prices by cutting their production? And when will those increased prices start hurting Americans again?

A: I don't know. The jury is still out on OPEC's being able to get its act together. Its members are all over the field. Iran and Iraq are at war with each other and each wants to produce more oil. The Saudis are operating at an enormous deficit, so I think the crystal ball is still cloudy on OPEC oil.

Q: Why did you ask the Saudis to raise oil prices?

A: I did not ask the Saudis to raise the prices. I simply said that, at some point the national security of the United States is threatened if we become too dependent on foreign oil. I did not ask the Saudis to raise prices, but I know that it is not in the national security interest of the U.S. to be heavily dependent on oil from the Persian Gulf.

Q: Is oil a factor in the Mideast equation?

A: Oil is very much a factor and a very important factor. And we have a stake in seeing that the Gulf Cooperation Council (G.C.C.) countries remain free of Soviet domination and remain free from the radical Islam that has prevailed in Iran, and that would threaten the Gulf area if there were an Iranian victory out of the war.

Q: How can we become independent of Mideast oil?

A: We can't become totally independent because the world depends on Mideast oil, but we can see that we don't become over dependent. We will have some dependency -- we, meaning the West, Europe and the U.S. and Japan. Down the line, you can have alternate sources of energy that will perhaps make us less dependent.

What concerns me is that we don't become more dependent. It would be nice if we could become totally independent, but I don't see that.

Q: Are you now pleased that the Saudis made an agreement to restrict production and therefore raise prices?

A: I'm not interested in raising the prices for the American consumer, but I am interested in seeing a price level that doesn't destroy our ability to hunt for domestic oil -- to explore, to

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