

STATEMENT BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
BEFORE THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
November 5, 1973

Mr. Chairman, I appear today before your distinguished Subcommittee in support of the President's proposal ~~to authorize~~ ^{for} \$2.2 billion in military grant assistance and credit sales to Israel.

I consider this legislation ~~important~~ ^{of great importance} to the maintenance of peace in the Middle East.

If the balance of power is to be upheld, if the ceasefire is to continue, and if direct negotiations are to occur, the Arab world and the Soviet Union must realize that Israel cannot be overwhelmed by military force.

Only a strong Israel will be able to convince Egypt, Syria and their allies that a resumption of the war is fraught with serious and certain danger to their forces.

Only a strong Israel will be able to convince the Soviet Union that it must restrain ~~its~~ Arab

~~leader~~ ^{+ governments} in order to avoid the expenditure once again of billions of rubles to resupply Arab armies and air forces.

I support the President's request in the spirit of a genuine bipartisan foreign policy.

With this legislation, the Administration is proposing a plan of assistance which carries out the clear intent of resolutions sponsored by over two thirds of the Senate and sixty percent of the House. - ~~now a word of caution~~

I am sure that we realize that this figure of \$2.2 billion is but an estimate of Israeli needs. It is imperative that the Executive Branch, with the close cooperation of the Appropriations Committees and the Committees on Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs, arrive at a figure based on careful evaluation and documentation of Israeli losses and future requirements. (We do not want to appropriate large sums of money in a hurried manner without adequate safeguards.)

also, there must be information on the Soviet Resupply effort

On the question of the Administration's request for \$200 million for Cambodia, ~~the~~ the Congress should carefully consider the needs

of the Cambodian government for these additional funds. I do not believe the Cambodian people should be left defenseless in the face of increased fighting which will likely come at the beginning of the dry season in December. But a note of caution should be voiced. This commitment to supply ammunition ~~should~~ ^{must} not be expanded in a manner contrary to the law which states that American combat involvement in Indochina be terminated.

On October 18 I introduced S. Res. 189 which called for the United States to maintain Israel's deterrent strength by continuing to transfer to Israel, by whatever means necessary, phantom aircraft and other equipment. On that day I was joined by 66 of my colleagues in this expression of support for Israel. We were endorsing on-going efforts by the President and Secretary Kissinger to provide Israel with the equipment needed to defend itself from Arab aggression. An additional three members of the Senate have since cosponsored this resolution, for a total of 70 sponsors.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask that the text of S. Res. 189 and the complete list of co-sponsors be included in the record of this hearing.

I believe a definite and pressing need now exists to justify the authorization of this emergency appropriation.

It has become evident that the military losses suffered by Israel were due, in part, to its unwillingness to launch a preemptive first strike in order to preserve the cease-fire^{which had been} initiated by our government. In the early hours and first days of hostilities, Israel lost aircraft and armor in such amounts as to threaten its capability to deter the advance of the Egyptian and Syrian armies.

Our resupply efforts announced on October 15 in the face of massive Soviet airlifts to Egypt and Syria prevented the military balance from being *dangerously* upset.

Despite the American resupply, Israel continued to suffer losses in the fighting as a result of the provision of highly sophisticated Soviet anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons to the Arab forces.

I understand that Israel has lost over 700 tanks and more than 90 fighter aircraft in the conflict. Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush has documented the approximately \$1 billion in military equipment Israel has recently purchased from the United States to replace its losses and keep its supplies at adequate levels.

In view of past Soviet actions in recent weeks, as well as in 1967, we can be sure that the Soviet Union has and is already undertaking resupply efforts to Egypt and Syria which will far surpass American support of Israel. We know that numerous Soviet ships are on their way to Arab ports, not to mention Soviet air cargo transports which land daily in Egypt and Syria.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it is important for the Subcommittee to take note of the tremendous financial burden which this war has placed on Israel.

It has suffered significant losses of costly aircraft and armor.

Its economy has been disrupted, with 30 percent of its labor force mobilized.

The cost in the loss of young men cannot be measured at this time.

It is estimated that the war was costing Israel \$250 million a day. And this rough estimate does not take into account general economic and manpower losses. It is clear that Israel is unable to afford to equip itself with all of the tools needed for its self-defense.

Israel, a country of three million people, already spends approximately 34 percent of its total budget on defense or 20 percent of its total GNP. Before the war an Israeli citizen earning almost \$5,000 paid 50 percent of this sum in taxes. The Israeli government has already announced a compulsory "war loan" which will take another 7 to 12 percent from an individual's taxable income. An income of approximately \$10,000 was taxed at the rate of 63 percent. The pre-war external debt of Israel was about \$4.5 billion. It is the highest per capita external debt in the world.

The individual and collective cost of defense in Israel was astronomical before this war. I am sure that it will become even greater in the weeks and months ahead. Added to these high costs are the continual expenditures for the resettlement

and absorption of Soviet Jews which have already cost Israel nearly \$400 million this year.

The sum requested by the President will help to relieve the already enormous burden assumed by Israel to pay for its defense. In view of the still uncalculated costs of this conflict and its undetermined effect on the Israeli economy, I strongly support the provision of this legislation which gives the President authority to determine what percentage of the \$2.2 billion shall be grant military assistance and what portion should be in the form of foreign military sales credits.

I would state, however, that the Administration should notify the Committees on Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs and the Appropriations Committees in advance of any final determination of the grant-credit apportionment of these funds, as well as supplying a quarterly report of sums disbursed.

Mr. Chairman, there is neither diplomatic nor military stability in the Middle East as we meet today. The situation remains extremely tense despite the presence of U. N. forces and the intense diplomatic efforts underway. Major issues

concerning the return of prisoners of war and the ultimate determination of cease-fire lines remain unsettled. These unresolved problems could cause the fighting to resume.

However, it is clear that if Arab forces violate the cease-fire, they would only do so because they perceived that the Israeli forces were in a weakened state. I believe the Congress has a responsibility to prevent such an event from occurring.

An overwhelming Congressional expression of support for Israel has been followed by the submission of a Presidential request to fund emergency military support. I believe we have a responsibility to approve and enact this legislation in the coming days. At stake is not only the defense and security of Israel, but also the success of the negotiations and eventual peace in the Middle East.

Arms Control in the Middle East



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