

He went to Mexico and begged for more production from Mexico. Do you know what the Mexicans said? They said: Where were you, United States, when oil was \$13, \$14, \$15 a barrel and our economy was in the bag?

That is what we are hearing as a consequence of our dependence on this source. Some suggest we should consider pulling out troops if OPEC fails to raise production. Obviously, that is contrary to our own best interests, as well.

It is important to point out the inconsistencies associated with our policies and the realization we have allowed ourselves to become so dependent. We were aware of it as evidenced by the section 232 Trade Expansion Act report. The President had it in 1994 by the Department of Commerce and he had it last November and he has not chosen to release it. That is where we are.

I conclude by reminding my colleagues that things are probably going to get worse in some areas of the country. We had the Senator from Maine indicate the difficulties associated with heating oil. Let me advise the Northeast corridor that there may be higher electric generation prices coming this summer in their electric bills. Only 3 percent of the Nation's electricity comes from oil-fired generating plants, but in the Northeast corridor it is much higher. It is estimated that the older oil-fired plants will have to come online this summer and the price will go up because they use a uniform price method to set prices.

In other words, the last energy source that comes online dictates the price for the other sources and there is a windfall. In other words, those providing electricity using gas, which is cheaper, charge the same price as those generating electricity using oil. If I have not confused the President, I think he has an idea of the point: Electricity prices will go up in the Northeast.

The Northeast corridor relies 33 percent, I am told, on fuel oil for its power generation. By some estimates, an oil plant that offered electricity at \$37 per megawatt hour 1 year ago may now seek a price of \$75 or more—assuming fuel is purchased on the open market. It may be more as owners of oil units are free to ask whatever price desired.

If there were an abundance of power this would not be an issue, but there is not an abundance of power. It is very likely, according to the estimates we have received from sources in the industry, that every kind of generation available will likely be utilized this year in the Northeast corridor—including fuel-oil units.

The bottom line is that as long as OPEC controls the price of oil and we allow our domestic production to continue to decline, American consumers continue to pay the price.

The alternative is clear: We have to reduce our dependence on imported oil. To do that, we have to go across the

breadth of our energy sources. We have to have the people in the Northeast corridor recognize the answer to their problem is more domestic production and less dependence on imported oil. That suggests an aggressive policy of opening up the overthrust belt in the Rocky Mountains, opening up Alaska, opening up OCS areas, and do it right, with the technology we have. Otherwise, this situation will happen again and again and again. The Northeast corridor will feel it first and foremost.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience and diligence in listening to the presentation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired. Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee is recognized to speak for up to 50 minutes.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, I yield such time as necessary for this presentation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, last week, in the middle of a 10-day trip to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, I read a story in the International Herald Tribune about a discovery made by a joint Chinese-United States paleontology team in China. The team found 45-million-year-old fossil remnants of an animal the size of a thumb they believe is a key evolutionary link between pre-simian mammals and human beings. From an analysis of the fossils, the team speculated that the animal met an unfortunate fate: He became the regurgitated meal of a hungry owl.

Misery loves company and there are times in the Middle East when one feels like that unfortunate animal trying to figure out and understand what our policy ought to be to pursue peace in that turbulent, difficult region.

In the Middle East the search for peace can seem as slow to develop and the politics can be as brutal as the rules of natural selection where survival is the most important virtue. For most of the modern era survival in the Middle East has been defined in military terms. However, because the Middle East is not immune from the competitive demands of the global economy, increasingly survival's definition has been modified with economic strategies and analysis.

That is among the most important reasons for improved chances of peace between Israel and Syria. To that end President Clinton's decision to fly to Geneva, Switzerland to meet with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad is a very hopeful sign. The President has a high degree of respect from both President Assad and Israeli Prime Minister Barak. As such, he may be able to convince Mr. Assad to make some gesture to the Israeli people which will make possible the eventual surrender of the all-important Golan Heights. The Golan Heights were captured from

Syria on June 10, 1967, at the end of the Six Day War, and have been a part of Israel for 33 years; no Israeli leader can surrender this land unless legitimate security concerns are thoroughly satisfied.

If the President's discussions with President Assad do help produce a peace agreement between Israel and Syria, it will add momentum to the successful completion of final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians. It will decrease the potential for tragedy in southern Lebanon following Israel's unilateral withdrawal by July 1. And finally, it will increase the chances that Lebanon could become more independent from Syria.

Syria's 15 million people are facing a very uncertain future. This uncertainty begins with the nature of their government—a dictatorship with President Assad in absolute control. Mr. Assad has held power since 1970 and has tried to give the impression of popular support with coerced referendums; in 1991 he received a "vote of confidence" from 99.9 percent of Syrians. However, Mr. Assad's age and health make it likely that power will be transferred in the next few years. The current leading candidate is the President's son, Bashar, a thirty year old ophthalmologist.

Peace with Israel would make it much more likely that President Assad's son would survive in power. A peace agreement would mean normalized relations with Israel and an end to Syria's support of terrorism. It would make it more likely that badly needed investment would enter the country and it would allow Syria to divert much needed resources from defense into health and education. The resulting economic growth would bring newfound opportunities to the Syrian people though not nearly as great as the opportunities they would have if they would begin a transition away from a dictatorship to democracy.

From the Israeli point of view, a peace agreement with Syria would bring benefits that could lead to solving regional economic problems as well as contributing to a more favorable agreement with the Palestinians. Peace would mean that all three nations—Jordan, Egypt and Syria—with whom Israel has fought three wars would recognize Israel's right to exist as an independent nation.

In theory it would seem like peace is possible, but the Middle East is a place where life is always standing theory on its head. Not only is a U.S. Presidential election coming to a theater near all of us in 8 months, but the political scene in both Syria—a dictatorship with transition difficulties—and Israel—a democracy divided into smaller and less effective political groups than at an time in its 50-year history—makes it most likely that defeat will once more be snatched from the jaws of victory.

I would say the chances of success are comparable to making a three-ball

pool shot on a pool table littered with debris. However, given the benefits of peace it is a shot worth taking.

The benefits for the United States of an agreement between Israel and Syria are considerable. They include:

Improved security for Israel, our closest ally in the region;

Increased openness and opportunity for regional cooperation since Israel would then have peace agreements with Syria, Jordan, and Egypt;

Decreased threat of terrorism directed at Israel or the United States;

Increased chances that Lebanon can become a fully independent and democratic nation; and,

Greatly decreased threat of catastrophic use of weapons of mass destruction in this fragile region.

The benefits to the United States must be quickly understood by Congress because when an agreement is reached, there is no doubt that the United States will be asked to spend money in order to give both sides the confidence that peace will make them more secure. The figure of \$17 billion over a 10-year period has been raised in the press, specifically directed at funding means to give Israel the security which it currently enjoys from being present on the Golan Heights. The dollar costs are important, but I would like to focus less on the amounts than on what will be needed to make an agreement successful.

First, Israel needs the assurance of early warning. It needs to be warned about potential missile attacks—or other use of weapons of mass destruction—so it can deter or intercept such attacks. It needs to be warned of potential ground attacks so it has time to mobilize its ground defenses. Without the assurance of early warning, the Israeli people will not feel secure. To emphasize, Israel is a real democracy. They do not have a dictator making the decision. The people have to feel secure in order for a peace agreement to work. Without real security, the Israeli people, quite rightly, will not support any peace agreement.

In my view, monitoring from the high ground overlooking the Golan Heights is essential to achieving any agreement and to maintaining Israel's security. A largely automated equipment set should suffice, but if personnel are required on site, I think American contractors, not soldiers, can and should do the job. Operating on an isolated mountainside, they would be in more danger than are our peacekeepers in the Sinai Multilateral Force of Observers. This is an appropriate task for us.

Another potential cost, and one that is rarely mentioned, is economic assistance to Syria. The poverty and lack of economic dynamism in Syria is the fault of the Syrian regime, whose mania for control has largely smothered the entrepreneurial instinct of Syria's talented people. And, unsurprisingly in a regime which has ruled unchallenged for 30 years, there

is corruption. But if Syria will agree to a timetable of economic opening and a transition to democracy, U.S. economic aid for Syria would be appropriate. Syrians need to see a peace dividend. Given the business skills and ambition of Syrians, I expect a free-market, democratic Syria to move up quickly in global economic standings and to be a partner with Israel in trade as well as in security arrangements.

Lebanon poses perhaps the biggest challenge to a comprehensive peace. If Lebanon is to play a positive role in the peace process, and if Lebanon is to become independent of Syrian domination, many Lebanese are going to have to act with both courage and generosity. As Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon, Lebanese leaders should send their own rebuilt and united army to the south to disarm Hezbollah and the South Lebanese Army and to prevent future attacks on Israel. Lebanon should do this even if Syria objects. It is Lebanon's duty to be sovereign in all its territory, and to prevent attacks on other countries that emanate from Lebanese territory. I am sympathetic to all Lebanon has undergone over the past 25 years, but I am describing only the minimal duties of an independent state.

Occupying the south will take courage. Two other big problems—the future of the South Army and the future of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon—will require generosity. The Lebanese Army should integrate the SLA fighters into its own ranks and make them welcome. It should similarly integrate those Hezbollah combatants who request it. Regarding the Palestinians, some of whom have resided in camps in Lebanon since 1948, Lebanon should likewise be generous. Those Palestinians who request it should be accorded citizenship and Lebanon should make a special effort to integrate them fully into its national life. It seems presumptuous of me to advise a country which fought a long civil war over just such issues to now take bold action to integrate its marginalized groups. But if Lebanon fails to do so it will be neither peaceful nor independent, and its weakness will lessen the chances of peace in the region.

Let us suppose that this extraordinary long shot works, that all three balls go in their respective holes, and that Israel, Syria, and Lebanon, with American help, make a real peace. There will still be dangers emanating from the Middle East. The weapons of mass destruction now in the arsenals of Iran and Iraq, and the weapons those two states are still developing, present a lethal danger. The Iranian regime seems more rational and more amenable to democratic change than does Saddam's regime in Baghdad, but there won't be true security in the region until Iran and Iraq are free-market democracies and are fully integrated into the family of nations.

Furthermore, looming overall these security challenges is the biggest prob-

lem of the Middle East: The lack of water. Water is not a respecter of political boundaries; water shortages can only be solved on a regional basis, and if they are not solved diplomatically these shortages will be a longstanding source of military conflict.

Despite all of these challenges, it is still worthwhile for us to maintain our patience for peace. The peace we are helping build today will have enormous benefits. Perhaps the greatest benefit is that the burden of fear which overhangs the whole region will be lifted. I am thinking of the fear of a mother whose son has been drafted, the fear of a child in a bomb shelter, the fear that large crowds at a market or sports event might attract a terrorist bomb, the fear with which a family fits and adjust their gas masks, the fear of war that keeps investors away, the fear of the unknown alien race that lives in very similar circumstances just 30 miles away.

As many of my colleagues know, the people who deal with these fears are wonderful people. They are our friends, our actual relatives in many cases. For many of us they are our spiritual cousins as well, they are at home in a region many of us call holy, and they have lived with fear for too long. That is why one of our Government's noblest efforts right now is the effort to help the pragmatism, good sense, and good will of the region's leaders bring peace to the Middle East.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Is it my understanding, under the order, we are to be in morning business until 12:30; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to address an issue which is paramount now at this moment in time in this congressional session. Each year, we have certain things we have to do before we can go home. The first of those things is to pass a budget resolution.

The President comes to Capitol Hill in January. He gives his State of the Union Address and suggests a legislative agenda, as Presidents have done, I believe, since President Woodrow Wilson. Then, shortly after that speech, the President's wishes are translated into a budget proposal submitted by the President to Congress.