

CHRIS CHAMBERLAIN

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I talked to Chris re AWACS.

A few days earlier he said to me "We weren't involved, but we could follow it because of all the pressure we got.

When I talked to him, he reached for two big file folders and said "It was a heavily papered issue--and I've thrown out twice as much as this."

He said they had signed a letter which Javits wrote in the summer of 1980 asking admin not to reverse positions on the arms sales.

"Basically, we were going along with the Israeli position from the beginning."

He pulled out several letters - one from Packwood of 6/24/81 and then the Packwood Resolution of 9/17/81. Plus PT's floor speech of April 2nd.

"We signed everything that came along on the grounds that Saudis had not lived up to their 1978 assurances, on Saudi unreliability, etc. Whatever the argument was, we signed on. It wasn't something we were focussed on. We weren't working on it; but we were being lobbied on it. We were trying to get a handle on it, get the pros and cons, but we never took an active part in it. The most active we got was Paul's statement in the Foreign Relations Committee, ~~When~~ when the vote came up."

"He took the view that there were no winners on it. That Israel stood to lose whichever way it went. If the Saudis got AWAC, they will be drawn into a war and if they don't get it, people will blame Israel for making American foreign policy... He criticized Begin for his action on the settlement and for the bombing of Iraq and Beirut. His basic position was that the administration had no middle east policy--nothing on the palestinians, or on the Israeli security. He felt we had to accelerate the peace process or things

would get worse. He didn't settle on Saudi insecurity or the lack of effectiveness of AWACs or the Nimrod problem. He focused on his disagreement with the idea of strategic consensus and the lack of a Middle East policy. He also wanted the administration to call Begin on the carpet. He was pissed off at Begin for Beirut and Iraq. And he felt the admin. had made no effort to control Begin."

<sup>Reentry</sup>  
~~Resuming~~ the resolution. "We were undecided for a while--till summer. Packwood was looking for sponsors and he had gotten into the 40s somewhere, looking for the magic 50. He was looking for co-sponsors even before the hearings were held in the Foreign Relations Committee. Percy wanted people to hold off until they heard the arguments in committee. And we did, till Packwood got into the 40s. We didn't want to get in late, since we had no doubt we'd go eventually. I remember we discussed it riding in the car. The thing was moving ahead, though we weren't being lobbied by AIPAC. Paul said he didn't want to be a johnny come lately. So we jumped in."

"Paul is anti Begin. They thought they could appeal to us on the grounds that the Saudis were insecure. We had visits from a lot of people. They never let us alone. We had to be down on the list. They had to go after the freshmen Republicans first. But it didn't stop them. They sent Democrats to see us. The corporations--Boeing for example--came to see us. We had the team of Buckely and General Schweitzer. We had Richard Burt from the State Department."

"We had interminable committee briefings. It went on and on and on."

"Because we had such a minor role, I wouldn't rank it as one of the biggies we have handled. But because it went on so long--for months--and because of all the hours I spent on it, I would put it in the top half of the things I did. I had to keep Paul up-to-date on it. But I never went into deep research on it. I didn't try to get an original point of view,

something new. I just wanted to get the basic array of facts."

"They didn't hit us the last few days. We told them again and again, 'Forget it.' We turned down briefings at the end. We told them we just weren't going to change."

"It was one of those crazy issues. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when it failed. It will not change the face of the Middle East."

"Once it became a presidential virility measurement, that changed the dimensions of it completely."

Later we talked about how Paul called around to see if he would get anyone to swap Energy for Armed Services. Then they learned he couldn't hold both AS and FR and he stopped. But it's a far cry from my five issues or my 3 issues with which he began his term in the Senate. He's interested in defense now - needs credibility with the hawks if he's going to participate in debates on defense. He's going to visit bases, ride in submarines, and airplanes, etc.