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AGENCY	INDIVIDUAL'S NAME	OFFICE	PHONE NR.
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"RUSH"



(Transcript from an imperfect tape of a portion of an interview with George S. Brown, and Ranan Lurie on April 12, 1976, transcribed October 18, 1976)

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Q: To Kenya?

A: ...To start delivery in thirty days, we couldn't do that. The only way we could supply Israel was to take it out of our own forces. So we don't have that. Our rate of modernization is far slower than theirs and some of ours, armored vehicles primarily; aircraft is not quite as big in disparity. So I say that if Congress doesn't start by acting favorably on this budget request, and I must say that the signs are reasonably encouraging at this point, but that's got to continue and this is the thing that the country has got to realize that it isn't going to be done this year, it's got to continue over the years. The Soviet Union -- and it's too bad that we can't somehow find a way to divulge to the people of the world at large that evidence we have in support of these things, but there's always the worry that you'll compromise a source or the means by which you acquire that knowledge and therefore we stamp everything in some way that doesn't permit us to share it with the people that have got to know, it doesn't do any good for us to sit there and talk to each other. If we could find it possible to more adequately inform the people so that they in turn could press on the Congress to do what must be done seems to me that it would be far more useful. There's some interest in doing this. There's no small conversation about it, so I think they will loosen upon what I (inaudible).

Q: Didn't the 1973 Middle East War bring to the attention of the world the fact that you just brought up that the Russians can supply their several Allies with whatever they want and I have been on the 11th of October I happened to be on the Israeli-Syrian front and I simply couldn't believe my eyes, I held my hand on Soviet made tanks which had, and half trucks, which had twenty kilometers on their armament. Even (break in tape) brand new, and they're producing, I believe, that while we are producing about how many--300 tanks, 400 tanks, a month, they are producing, can produce ten times as much per month.

A: I wish we were producing 400 a month, we're producing, we're going to get a little over a thousand a year in another year or two -- 1200.

Q: This is almost numerically, it's a joke in comparison to what the Russians are doing?

A: Exactly.

Q: And I wonder what, the only thing that the Russians really have to do is to out maneuver us, shall we say politically, to a situation where no side can use atomic weapons and just remain in the conventional field, that's it.

A: Well, I think, we've reached that point today in the strategic nuclear field where we've said we have a rough equivalency, but that would mean we've got, you know, all these things -- they've got more and larger missiles; we've got more warheads; we're more accurate. It's kind of a standoff, I don't think in my own judgment that either side has the ability to launch a disabling first strike. That could change over a time. Again, I say could, because if they continue with the momentum even under the SALT Limitations set up by Vladivostok, they continue with the momentum they have, and we don't do anything, then conceivably it could give the Russians the point where you mentioned where they rule out the strategic nuclear thing and you're left with the non-nuclear general purpose force and there is an imbalance there in just the straight U.S. vs Soviet. It comes more nearly into balance when you take all of NATO into account with all of the Warsaw Pact, particularly if you add the French. You can't rule out the French, at least the Russian planner can't, because while they have said they will not relinquish command of their forces in peacetime; they will not join the military thing; they have not broken; they are still a member of NATO; they are still pledged to the basic premise of NATO. Therefore, I think the Russian planner has to assume that France will be in the force in time of war.

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It's more important that the Russian planner be concerned with that than the Americans.

I think there's an acceptance of these trends today as I go around the country and talk to people. It's sort of a frightening story but people are listening and taking it seriously where two years ago they could have cared less.

Q: It's all fascinating how parallel we are now from quite a few aspects politically and militarily to the thirties where we had a quite a parallel situation and the advantage was Germany, Nazi Germany, and building all the arsenals and so on, and I wonder why no one brings up the fact that Mussolini invaded Ethiopia only after he learned that the students of Cambridge and Oxford signed petitions saying that they are not going to join the military and that encouraged him to invade Ethiopia assuming that the British would not fight. And Hitler made his moves in the latter part of the 30's when he learned that 11 million British signed again this kind of petition. To him, it was an obvious fact that the British do not want to fight. They will not fight and he could afford anything, and his gamble was not that bad. He pushed quite a lot before the British moved in.

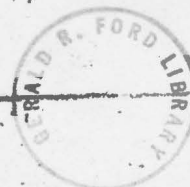
A: Of course, that's the one thing we haven't talked about and that is that it's the thing that we don't spend much time -- we don't spend as much time agonizing over that question as we do over programs for hardware and budgets, readiness of forces and the normal things we do and that is the will of our good people. And, of course, we came out of a very long and traumatic experience in Vietnam. We're starting to come out of it; people will talk about these things, as I say two or three years ago they wouldn't. And I am still enough of an optimist to think that once the American people are informed, they will make the right decisions on things that are really important. I think the Congress will, too. I think they will step up things that are most important. But we certainly didn't act that way in Angola and no one involved in Congress is prohibiting us from spending money to provide some balance to the Soviet initiative which we conceivably could have -- that it would have done locally wasn't as important, I think, as what we would have done in the long range in terms of Soviet assessment of the United States. And not only Soviet but everybody else.

I had a discussion last week in London with the First Seaford, I guess Ashmore is his name, and we were just talking at dinner about the problems of the world, the Mid-East, and first and foremost NATO community, and he said, you know, we hadn't touched the prime problem in the world. And I said, what's that? He said the big question mark about the United States. Has the United States really got the stomach for this? Are they going to see it through?

Q: What did you answer?

A: I said, no, we hadn't. I wasn't going to discuss it with him; I would like to acknowledge it is one whale of a problem. And I could have been nasty and said, well, you all have experienced that, how do you see it, or something, because they did just what you said and then, Great Britain, it's a pathetic thing. It just makes you want to cry. They are no longer a world power. All they have got are generals and admirals and bands.

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Q: And history?

A: They do things in great style -- grand style, God, they do them big on the protocol side -- but it makes you sick to see their forces talk about what they can do...to feel like they can come back sometimes, and we're going to miss them, they are going to miss them in the Middle East, they had a way with those people out there that we just haven't, we couldn't acquire in twenty-five or thirty years.

Q: Speaking about the Middle East from a purely military point of view, would you say that from the American global strategic interest, militarily, is Israel and its forces more a burden or more a blessing from a pure military point of view, to the United States?

A: Well, I think, it's just got to be considered a burden. I had this same conversation with Javits right after I got in trouble down at Duke. We had breakfast and were talking and he said to me, can't you see the great strategic value of Israel to the United States and I said frankly no, which wasn't the point I was talking about at Duke at all, but my concern there is that they're a burden, now if the trends were reversed, then I could see in the long term where that might be a tremendous asset, where they would gain power and could bring about stability in the area.

Q: If Israel would win for instance?

A: Yeah, but you see the problem today is, today there is stability because Israel is strong. She could whip Syria and Egypt handily and there is nobody else in control in that area unless the Russians took a direct hand. By that I mean send forces in addition to equipment and advisors and that's not likely, it's just not worth the gain at this point.

But with all the money, the wealth, that the Arabs have through Saudi Arabia (inaudible) primarily, and Libya is secondary. To buy weapons, to train people, and they're breeding at a hell of a rate. Their birthrate -- their population growth is far greater than Israel, and the long term outlook is that the Arab states are going to overcome the deficiency that they've had, which is leadership, and technology, and educated people. I just don't see any -- it's going to take a complete change in outlook on Israel's part where up to this point at least she's maintained her position. And I must say if I were in their shoes, I don't know, I'd be in a terrible dilemma because she's surrounded by people who would just as soon see her pushed into the sea.

Q: You don't believe they really want to do it, to have a legitimate down-to-earth peace, the Arabs?

A: I think they do in their short term, by that I mean in 15-20 years, they have no other option. I would think that if, for instance, Saudi Arabia, which is the key to the thing as she has the bulk, could just go on a nation-building program, to keep totally occupied for a long time and then they helped Egypt to get on her feet economically at one time. They couldn't worry about Israel, but they've got a thing, they're very, very sincere about these Holy Lands, And some accommodation has got to be found where Jerusalem can be shared by the religions to whom it would be meaningful. But I can't see Israel as an asset to the United States today.

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Q: This theory that's paralleling it, for instance, to France once France detached herself from Israel, the fact is that France lost any leverage whatsoever she had with the Arabs because she put herself out of the game.

A: Yes.

Q: Right now the United States is the only power, the only force in the world that has any leverage whatsoever on the Israelis. Therefore, they have tremendous clout with the Arabs.

A: That is exactly right. We have got a little with the Saudis, I think if we use it wisely because of the Saudis concern for communism.

Q: Right.

A: You know, I think, genuinely the Saudis are more concerned with the Soviets probably than they are with the Israelis.

Q: Right.

A: I think the Saudis are genuinely concerned about the Soviet supplies. They are concerned about Israel primarily because of the Holy Land, they bought an entree into Jerusalem. I think they genuinely have a concern for the PLO and all these other general problems that are not real heartburn issues with them, at least that's what I detect from my conversations.

Q: Among your way of thinking, which I happen to agree very much about the Saudis computing the communist background and so on, I wonder if the Saudis are really that fanatically in love with the PLO, due to the fact that the PLO basically once they establish themselves, you are going to have another Albania.

A: (Inaudible)

Q: Sure. Therefore, maybe it is just some kind of lip service because basically I don't know if they are so happy to have this kind of threat because...

A: Not only that, they get some land and establish the Palestinian state; it's not going to be a viable thing, somebody's going to have to support them. They're going to look at other Arabs and the fellow with the money is Saudi Arabia.

Q: Rich uncle.

A: That's right. Now the other concern over there is Iran and there wasn't any question of why she's building such a tremendous military force. She couldn't with her population, do anything that would provide protection from the Soviet Union, there's a real threat. She's got adequate power now to handle Afghanistan and Pakistan, so that's -- so if they were a threat you can discount that. Iraq, she's a little better match for Iraq now. Gosh, the programs the Shah has coming, it just makes you wonder about whether he doesn't some day have visions of the Persian Empire.

Q: Certainly.

A: They don't call that the Persian Gulf for nothing. But, of course, our concern with the Middle East is her tremendous oil. Our dependence runs about 17-18 percent now, I guess, of our national consumption and you have all of Europe Japan, it's just got to continue to flow or the world is going to change, it's not going to be the world we know.



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Q: As to the person involved (inaudible) as to us, there were so many and there are so many of the rumors right now about us being behind the Russians, becoming the second most powerful nation-- do you agree with that?

A: I do on one assumption. It's a very big "if" and the "if" is if it is permitted to happen but certainly we haven't reached that point today, and if the United States people decide to let Congress to, that it's not worth spending the money to invest resources we need to do the Defense job, then obviously we are going to fall behind. Trends over the past five years and in some cases ten years are misleading in their appearances. Therefore, these trends have got to be reversed; we've got to change them. And that's what this President starts to do; it does, in fact, have some, some real investment about two percent, which isn't a lot, but it does break that curve.

See, the thing that, there's an erroneous opinion held by too many people that this military establishment in this country kind of feeds on itself; that the need for new weapons systems, investment in hardware, wouldn't be there if the Pentagon wasn't always pushing to have it there. Well, that's not true. The military establishment, you know really has no life of its own, it's based on what we see as the threat, on the task to be performed, and what risks there are. Now, the task to be performed is set down in effect in basic national security policy and they're the general sort of things that you would expect such as sharing the continued safety of the country, of deterring war; now if the deterrence fails, being able to fight on reasonable terms, these kinds of things.

Now the threat; there's only one threat and that comes from the Soviet Union and the estimate of that threat within this government is agreed if there is only a difference of view when you get into the outyears and there're the views expressed in the band of an estimate high and low. The Congress then, hearing the Defense posture statement of the Secretary and my statement in support of it, I made on the intelligence side, can do two things, since it can't change the threat, it can change the tasks we have but just don't have the other resources to do that or it can ask the country to accept a bigger risk than the Chiefs feel is prudent. Having expressed that risk to the Secretary and the National Security Council and the President, and having that agreed in the Executive Branch, then the budget is structured, presented to the Congress, and as I say since they can't change the threat, they've not seen fit to change the task to be performed, can only ask the country to assume a greater risk.

Now that's what they've done in the past. For the past X-years, I guess five or six, since I've looked at the figures, it's between \$30 and \$40 billion in gross terms that they've taken from the President's budget from year to year. In the meantime, the Russians have spent, the Soviet Union has been building a very, very powerful military machine and I don't get carried away with the net assessment in dollar-ruble terms; others are totally absorbed in that business. The thing I notice is that they are able to equip their forces -- they are modernizing constantly and they have equipment ready to export. When they go, like last week to Kenya (sic) and made a commitment...

*Libya

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Q: What about Lebanon, right now, changing into what we can call in pragmatic terms, a new very extreme left regime in a very vital spot?

A: It could, but I'm not prepared to be quite that optimistic. If this ceasefire...

Q: I'm sorry, I'm pessimistic, because I said it's becoming a left regime.

A: I say, you're pessimistic, I'm a little more optimistic. I think that if this ceasefire holds through the end of the month, which it must, which they have that extension until today...the Syrians have been very constrained in their military outlook and have provided the stabilizing balance there if you could get a regime, something comes out of this election that is not as radical as you suspect it might be, it will have Syrian support and maybe, just maybe, they can carry it out. If it comes out too radical, I think we're going to have plenty of trouble over there.

Q: Interior?

A: Continued trouble within Lebanon. It's amazing. It's been amazing to me that they've been able to fight this long on a scale that they have and the tremendous destruction and disruption of the country and have the rest of the Middle East kind of keep hands off. Syrians have sort of boxed it in order to maintain some degree of control without actually giving in and forcing them to take this place over. The Israelis have been very restrained. Both have watched it; both have made statements the other understands.

Q: Are these Israelis restrained also because of the American pressure?

A: As far as I know it hasn't been necessary to apply it. I think they're restrained primarily because this isn't a provocation over which they are prepared to go to war, and the lesson of the last war to them was that the casualties were a heck of a lot heavier than they were prepared to take. A few years ago in some of the earlier wars, they were quickly decisive, the casualties were reasonable (and/or) didn't want to take any. This last time, they took very heavy casualties the first four or five weeks. I don't think that small country wants to see that again or can afford to see politically can't do it. I don't think, they have had tremendous internal problems as you know, better than I, you've been over there (inaudible). They are overextended because of the tremendous military burden they have, and I guess that if we were in their straights, we would be too.

Q: What about this peculiar situation that NATO is facing right now with, I can envision being a cartoonist myself, NATO war room with some Communist generals, or of course, I am talking extremes here but generals who represent a government that may have a communist Minister of Defense or at least a communist Minister of Transportation.

A: Well, of course, Kissinger has said we can't permit it.

Q: What can we do in order to execute this non-permission?

A: Well, we can do several things. The Council of Ministers, and under that, the Secretary General and Defense Ministers can actually take steps to restrict the distribution of any classified material. They can have restricted sessions of any council, particularly on the military side, as we have done from time to time with Portugal. We have done continuously with France when she opted out of the military side and we have done to a degree with ...

(END OF TAPE)

Office of the White House Press Secretary

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

The President has reviewed the material made public today by the Defense Department concerning General Brown's interview. The President also has discussed the matter with Secretary Rumsfeld. The President made it clear to Secretary Rumsfeld that he does not agree with the General's poor choice of words in portions of the interview.

Based on General Brown's statement issued today and Secretary Rumsfeld's news conference, the President considers the matter closed.

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NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

PLEASE HOLD DATE

Statement By General George S. Brown
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
October 18, 1976

I am advised that King Features Syndicate has, or will soon release an article, based on an interview with me last April, some six months ago, and that the article contains some quotes attributed to me.

I wish to have my thoughts understood and placed in proper context.

I was asked whether from a purely military point of view Israel and its armed forces were "more of a burden or more of a blessing" to global strategic interests. It is correct that from that narrow point of view, I answered that I thought it had to be considered a burden, but I added that I could see in the long term where they might be a tremendous asset -- where they would bring stability to the area.

Further, my point was that assisting Israel as we did, and, in my view, as we should have, did in fact require that we draw down some U.S. equipment. That is a fact of which everyone is aware, but it should not be seen as meaning that I in any way, disagreed with U.S. policy then or now. I did not and I do not.

Israel shares with the United States basic democratic values long cherished in our country. The defense of these values is crucial to the survival of a way of life on this planet which is compatible with our ideals. Because of these overriding considerations, U.S. policy toward Israel over the years has been clear: we are fully committed to its security and survival. I believe in that policy wholeheartedly. My personal actions in support of Israel, and in the furtherance of its military needs and its military security give proof to my full personal commitment to the security and survival of the free state of Israel.

The article also leaves the impression that I said the United States does not have the "stomach" to face up to challenges. As our recording of the interview indicates, I did not say that. I had referred to a recent

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conversation, which ranged over many problems of the world, in which I said that the individual I had been talking with observed that we had not yet discussed the "prime problem of the world," the question about the United States and whether the U.S. had "really got the stomach for this." I answered -- "No, we hadn't" -- which meant, no we hadn't discussed that issue. My answer did not mean that the U.S. didn't have the stomach. I believe this interpretation is clear from our recording. Certainly, it is what I meant. For example, in that interview, I emphasized that the American people and the Congress make "the right decisions on things that are really important."

Remarks concerning the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom were spoken out of compassion and understanding. I said we would miss them in the Middle East, where they were withdrawing their forces, because of their long experience. Americans understand and sympathize with the current economic difficulties the British people are going through. We also know their gallantry. There are no braver people. I have the greatest admiration and respect for Her Majesty's highly professional Armed Forces.

Finally, I want to say that, in my view, the Shah of Iran has done and is doing an immense amount for this country. He has done so in a way that has demonstrated his common interests with the United States and its allies. He correctly sees a need for Iran to be militarily strong, and thus, is strengthening his Armed Forces -- under conditions that serve not only Iran's security interests, but also those of the Free World. I have no reason to believe that he has any aspirations beyond continuing to ably lead his nation and contribute to stability in that part of the world.

I trust this statement will place my comments in the proper perspective.

END

