

He Asserts Pressure Will Hurt Effort for Mideast Accord

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WASHINGTON, March 15—President Nixon, urging Arab nations not to attach conditions to their expected lifting of the oil embargo, said today that the United States was "not going to be pressured" in its efforts to bring about a pullback of Israeli and Syrian troops.

Any implications of pressure, Mr. Nixon said, "would simply slow down, in my opinion, our

Transcript of Nixon Talk and Q. and A., Pages 12, 13.

very real and earnest effort to get the disengagement on the Syrian front and also to move toward a permanent settlement."

The President used this uncommonly direct language in referring to news reports from Tripoli, Libya, that the Arabs had decided to suspend the embargo, rather than lift it, and would review their action in two months in light of the American role in inducing Israeli troop pullbacks.

Speaks to Chicago Group

While saying he had "no official report" from Tripoli, the President said that "we will be getting some more oil from the Mideast." He spoke at a question-and-answer session before the 1,900-member Executive Club of Chicago, an organization of business and professional leaders. The meeting, at the Conrad Hilton Hotel, was televised nationally.

Mr. Nixon's public warning to the Arabs contrasted with the tight-lipped "don't rock the boat" attitude on the embargo that prevailed at the State Department up to the time that Mr. Nixon spoke.

Evidently choosing his words to avoid appearing to predict a formal announcement by the Arabs, Mr. Nixon said of more oil supply: "We'll be getting it, probably, because some action may be taken on the embargo. It eventually will come because it's in their interest to do so." [Question 6, Page 12.]

Mr. Nixon then implied that the United States was managing its fuel shortage successfully and could continue to do so if the embargo was not lifted. He said that lines at gasoline stations had shortened and that the country had come

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through the winter without unemployment rising to 8 or 10 per cent, as some had predicted it would. The February rate was 5.2 per cent of the labor force.

In response to another question, Mr. Nixon said that he believed the oil shortage was real and not contrived by the oil companies, as George Meany, the labor leader, has suggested.

"I would like to be in Mr. Meany's position and be able to blame the oil companies," Mr. Nixon said. "What politician wouldn't like to put it off on somebody else. But I have to tell the truth.

"The truth is that there is an energy shortage. The way to deal with the shortage is not to demagogue about it but do something about it." [Question 5.]

Urges Congressional Action

At this point, Mr. Nixon reiterated a theme he has been sounding for a year regarding the energy crisis: "It's time for the Congress to get off its something"—that was the word he used—"and do something about it right now."

The President said 17 energy-related bills were awaiting Congressional passage. He cited specifically those that would end Federal regulation of natural-gas prices and would authorize production from the Elk Hills naval petroleum reserve in California. He also stressed bills on development of shale oil and nuclear power.

Democratic Congressional leaders and the White House were reported to have agreed on a revised bill to authorize fuel-conservation measures and rationing but without a provision for a price rollback. Such a provision caused Mr. Nixon to veto an earlier bill. The new measure is expected to be introduced next week.

News-agency dispatches from the Middle East reported two indications that the oil embargo would end.

Saudi Predicts Suspension

The Egyptian newspaper Al-Akhbar quoted Sheik Ahmed Zaki al-Yamani, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Petroleum Affairs as having said that the embargo would be lifted temporarily, or suspended. Sheik Yamani reportedly said that the

Arabs reserved the right to resume the embargo if there was no separation of military forces on the Syrian front. In Beirut, the authoritative Middle East Economic Survey, said that the embargo would be suspended, production will be increased and Italy and West Germany would be added to the Arab list of friendly countries. That would make them eligible for more oil.

The journal, a private publication, said that Libya would probably not agree to resume shipments to the United States but that Algeria would go along with the other Arab nations. Libyan and Algerian crude oil are prized by North American refiners because they yield more gasoline than do the heavier crudes from the Persian Gulf region.

In a Tripoli dispatch, the news agency Reuters quoted Arab diplomatic sources as having said that Arab oil ministers would defer any announcement about the embargo to a meeting on March 25 of Arab foreign ministers in Tunis.

Mr. Nixon in discussing the embargo, returned to the blunt

language he used in his state of the Union message in January, when he explicitly predicted an early end of the embargo.

There is a widespread feeling in Washington that this declaration and another by secretary of state Kissinger may have caused the Arabs to delay ending the embargo. In recent weeks, the Administration has avoided firm predictions so as not to embarrass Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which have led the campaign among the Arabs for an end to the embargo.

"I want it understood," Mr. Nixon declared, "that we want the embargo lifted. I also want it understood that as far as the United States is concerned, we want a permanent peace in the Mideast.

"We will work toward that end," Mr. Nixon pledged, whether the embargo is lifted or not."

He went on to say that resolving the Middle East situation would avoid "that flash point of world conflict that might come where the two major powers—the United States and the Soviet Union—happen

to be involved."

"But," the President added, "the United States as far as the embargo is concerned is not going to be pressured by our friends in the Mideast, or others who might be our opponents to doing something before we are able to do it."