

It is possible that they will attempt to use the oil weapon selectively and in particular against the United States. Saudi Arabia recently threatened to restrict oil production if this country purchases more oil from the strategic petroleum reserve, an essential program of national insurance, and we see the effects also in the increasingly large and frequent increases of oil prices which we observe with helpless bafflement, realizing that by the end of 1980 each and every one of us will be paying in excess of two dollars per gallon of gasoline. In the face of this danger which became plain six years ago, the United States has done very little to protect itself. We finally created a Department of Energy, but with no demonstrated improvement in our capability to deal with energy problems. We spent another year and a half considering the fine points in the President's first national energy policy and produced a six-hundred page national energy act which managed to deal with most of our central energy questions. In the meantime, the only measurable progress we have made has been through the marked forces and have made and have responded to their higher prices by curtailing demands. There has been virtually no conversion of oil fired and nuclear generating plants to coal or any other substantial substitution of coal for oil. Instead numerous coal fired and nuclear generating plants have been canceled or postponed...

PRESIDENT: One minute, Senator Venditte.

SENATOR VENDITTE: ...and there has been no movement to develop...in the development of other synthetics. There is great danger in a year or two that we shall pass the same verdict that neither the administration nor the Congress was able to push by involving present sacrifices and that little was accomplished to reduce our current dependence on oil imports. We are beginning to see, however, in the debates and on the responsibilities of the proposed energy mobilization board forces at work which may ultimately produce a consensus of the actions necessary to relieve this country of its burden of dread and to renew its confidence in its ability to solve its problems. It was kind of interesting what President Lopez Porthillo (sic - Porthillo Lopez) of Mexico said just recently. Last fall he said that if the United States exercised its political will it could straighten out the world energy problem. All the pressures are in favor of shielding the public from what it needs to know but which it is loathe to acknowledge. The battle for energy security cannot be won with simplistic programs. It cannot be won without hard decisions. Many of our leaders in the Congress know what we need to do, but they do not know how