

THE AMERICAN BAR AND THE SOVIET BEAR—AN EXCHANGE

Let's start by reviewing the recent controversy at the American Bar Association convention. As I understand it, the issue was whether or not the ABA should enter into an ongoing relationship with the Soviet Bar Association. You, Mr. Abram, were the champion of that relationship, and you, Mr. Dershowitz, its principal opponent.

Alan Dershowitz: I was a major opponent. The principal opposition in fact came from a woman in Arizona, and it included other people who were not Jewish, and, of course, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry. The Union asked me to be a spokesperson for a point of view that we shared, and I agreed. But there was a fairly widespread group of opponents and a fairly widespread and very distinguished group of proponents.

There was no disagreement within the Jewish community about the evils of the Association of Soviet Lawyers, about the repressive nature of the Soviet Union. What we had here was a classic debate over tactics. I took the view that it is not a good tactic to give the Soviet Union everything it wants without getting something substantial in return. The Soviet goal was to have the ABA grant full recognition to the major association of Soviet lawyers, an organization that in my view excludes real lawyers, excludes anybody who would stand up and defend the rights of dissidents and refuseniks. I don't think Morris would disagree with me about that characterization of the Association of Soviet Lawyers.

Morris Abram: They are nothing but an agency of the state. They are not lawyers. They do not defend people; they defend state interests.

Dershowitz: We had a reasonable argument about how the Jewish community should approach the ABA in regard to this matter. My big complaint—and it's a complaint that I've voiced many, many times before—is that there should have been wider consultation in advance among the Jewish organizations. We should have come to the ABA with a much more consistent policy, reflecting both grass-roots and leadership attitudes



Morris Abram
Photo by Lintia Haas

within the Jewish community. We would have been much more effective if we had had our fights earlier and in private and if we had come to the ABA with a united front.

On the other hand, we are fully endowed with citizenship, so we are also entitled to have our fights in public. It's a very useful function to hear Morris Abram and Alan Dershowitz agreeing on 80 percent and disagreeing on 20 percent.

At least no one can any longer accuse the American Jewish community of being monolithic— as if it ever was.

Abram: I want to say at the outset that you are going to find that my position is somewhat different from what you may have expected. I am becoming very disenchanted with the way that the Americans are handling not only this particular association and exchange but others as well. Let me give you an illustration. This weekend I had the occasion to spend some time in a social setting with a group of distinguished Jews together with Mr. Constantine Kharchev, who is the chairman of the Council of Religion of the Soviet Union. I agreed to come and see him on a social occasion because I thought it might be a good opportunity to have a frank discussion. And I thought the others there—all Jews—would be similarly disposed.

Of course the first question that occurs is what in the devil a state that is so hostile to religion, that still maintains its dreadful antireligious museum in Leningrad, that pronounces

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religion to be inconsistent with Communist party membership is doing with a Council of Religious Affairs.

Dershowitz: Do you know the old joke? The Czechs came to the Soviets and asked them to help set up a Czech navy. The Soviet Commissar said, "A Czech navy? You're landlocked, why do you need a navy?" And the Czech said, "Well, you have a Department of Justice!" A Department of Religion would be about the same.

Abram: Anyway, this amiable gentleman, this amiable functionary, very fluent in English, extremely genteel in his approach, soft in his voice, was charming everybody. "Gorbachev is different. Gorbachev wants to relax. Sure, Gorbachev would like to get rid of religious observance, but it won't work; 20 percent of the people are addicted to it, so we have to go with it, we have to flow with the tide. And we are going to have more books, schools, liberal attitudes about it."

I sat there and waited for my host and for the other knowledgeable people, including a very distinguished Russian expert from a great newspaper, to respond. And they didn't say a word.

Now my view of these exchanges is that Reagan and the Administration and the American people want them. They want them, they crave them, so we are going to have them. Agreements about 35 exchanges were signed in Geneva. So there will be Russians coming over. The question is, on what terms? And I felt that the Bar Association furnished an opportunity for people who had a rigorous thought process and discipline to do two things. We can't do but two things. We can show the Soviet delegates that we are serious about some of these things that we talk about. Now our Soviet counterpart can't do anything about changing the system; all he can do is be a messenger and go back and say that these damn Americans really take this seriously. The second thing I hoped to have demonstrated by this process was for the President and the Board of Governors and the ruling powers in the ABA to see what Alan has just said. These are not lawyers. These are not

free people. These are extensions and agents of the state, just as fully controlled by the state as my finger is by my will. And I hoped that the ABA would come to see and understand that.

But it may not be so easy to accomplish even that. Let me go back to the social evening with Mr. Kharchev to make my point. I finally got into a discussion with him. I said to Mr. Kharchev, by way of making conversation, "What do you think of the English breach of diplomatic relations with Syria?" Well, you would have thought I shot a rifle in his heart. He didn't think much of it.

Then we get into a discussion about Syria, for the Russians are friends of Syria. And I said, "But you are not friends of terrorism, are you?" And he said, "Do you want war?" So the whole conversation turned very quickly into those who love peace, namely he, and those who love war, namely me.

From there I proceeded to discuss with him, in a reasonable tone of voice, and largely for the benefit of those around me, really, and also in order to show him that we were serious—he already knew that I hold certain posts in the Jewish community—the question of human rights and Jewish emigration and similar issues. I mentioned what had happened at Reykjavik in terms of the presence and presentation of these issues. I mentioned George Shultz's statement to the Jewish community leaders at the State Department before he left, in which he said that the Russians better take these things seriously or they are going to pay a price, a very heavy price. And I mentioned the President's statement to me that this was going to be central to the agenda, and if you can't trust them on human rights then it is not likely that you can trust them on other matters that are more vital to their national interest.

And he got very testy, very angry and moral. But the point of the story is that the people around me were very upset with me because I had intruded upon the penumbra that is supposed to protect a guest. So I think they agreed with him when he attacked me for having been aggressive.

But if we are going to have these exchanges and no one is going to try to carry out what I thought is the only useful thing about them, the only thing that justifies them, what's the point?

Dershowitz: You put your finger on a very important problem. Let me say first that the agreement is not just an agreement that we will talk. It's an agreement that contains important language, in effect acknowledging the legitimacy of the Association of Soviet Lawyers. It has language that may not seem important to us but is very important to the Soviets in their attempt to legitimize their legal system throughout the world. And one of the reasons the ABA was prepared to sign it was precisely for these kinds of mixed social and power motives. It is so nice to sit down with your opposite number in the Soviet Union and have an intellectual exchange. There was one just last month at Dartmouth. It was the first following the signing of this agreement—and, by the way, it was closed to the public. Attempts to try to discuss human rights were pushed aside almost as you described your attempts to raise these issues at this very nice social gathering. After all, they were our guests, and this was not an occasion for a fight, and in the end they talked mostly about torts and about international exchanges. The two members of our delegation who tried hard to raise issues of human rights found that the chairman—not the Soviet Union's chairman, but the ABA's chairman—was saying, "This isn't the proper time; after all, it is our first meeting. Let's establish more of a friendship, a rapprochement. There will come a time."

If you are not going to raise divisive issues, what is the purpose of sitting together? To talk about your tort systems?

You are arguing, Alan, I gather, that it is inherent in the nature of these exchanges that you are going to end up not talking about the tough issues.

Dershowitz: No, that's not my point. I think you can talk about them. I would be very much in favor of an agreement between the ABA and the

Association of Soviet Lawyers. I would be very much in favor of an agreement between Harvard University Law School and the University of Moscow Law School. But it has to be hardball, it has to be tit for tat, it has to be that we get something for the something they get. We get to go to their trials, they get to come to our trials. They get to visit our prisoners, we get to visit their prisoners. We get to submit briefs on behalf of people we think are oppressed, they get to submit briefs on behalf of people they think are oppressed. We get to work with a half-dozen of their lawyers who might be helpful to us and they get no reprisals if they work for us, and they get to send lawyers if their people are arrested in this country. That's the kind of agreement I would be in favor of.

But this was a one-sided agreement, designed simply to grant mutual recognition in the hope that something might develop from there. I think all of us lawyers think of ourselves as tough negotiators. This was not a tough negotiation. This was international human rights malpractice.

Is there any reason to suppose that the Soviets would accept the kind of agreements you both have in mind?

Abram: I don't know. I think you are making a very important point. In 1971, the Association of Legal Associates in New York—the young lawyers who are already making \$60,000 a year even though they can't find their way to a courthouse yet—had a tour of the Soviet Union, and I was the only partner in a firm that went with them. I raised the average age by 20 years. I envisaged the kind of exchange the ABA would have as the kind of exchange that I did produce on that occasion back in 1971. Those young people will never have an experience like it, I am sure.

We went to Kiev. They assembled the entire State Bar of Kiev. There must have been 50 lawyers, judges. Their chief justice gave us a great speech about their constitution and their codex and their great respect for due process. And all those young American kids sat there wanting to

believe. They were nodding, thinking "these are people, they've got two legs, they are lawyers, they smile. And they say they are sincere." So I rise and ask, "Tell me what happens when this court doesn't obey the constitution and the codex as written."

Explosion. That is an impermissible question. It is an unfriendly question. Of course we obey the constitution. It's unthinkable. I say, now wait a minute, it's not unthinkable. It has happened. Khrushchev said it happened in Stalin's time. They broke up the meeting, they declared the meeting adjourned. No further discussion. This was an unfriendly way of treating a matter of mutual friendship.

You may remember that when the exchanges first started, during the Kennedy Administration, Isaac Stern was asked how he felt about the exchange of musicians. "Big deal," he said. "They'll send us their Jewish fiddlers from Odessa, we'll send them our Jewish fiddlers from Odessa."

In any event, the original theory of the exchanges was that once their folks saw America, they'd cave, they'd take the message back that there is another way and a better way.

But you are saying that our inhibitions, perhaps as well our lack of sophistication, subvert that aim. We don't challenge, we don't confront, we just nod politely. Are you both saying that?

Dershowitz: No, not with regard to the legal exchanges. Let me explain why.

I fully believe in exchanges that have to do with nuclear disarmament, that have to do with music, that have to do with a wide range of activities. We are equal in those spheres. I personally boycott Moiseyev when it comes here because Moiseyev won't allow my people to participate. That's a personal decision. But there are wonderful Soviet musicians. And there are wonderful Soviet nuclear scientists, and there are excellent Soviet doctors. Not so with lawyers. There are no good Soviet lawyers for the simple reason that if you are a

good Soviet lawyer you end up a denizen of the Gulag. So the exchange is a completely and totally unequal one.

You may be right. If the ABA had insisted on the kind of quid pro quo I've described, had set up six prerequisites for this agreement, the Soviets might have turned it down. But I am not so sure. In this area, where the inequality is so great, I suspect we really could have gotten something in return.

And what do we get when we get something? When we get observers in Soviet trials, that is not just a moot point. Soviets stop having trials when we send observers. We can really have an impact on reducing the number of trials of dissidents by having the right to have observers at those trials. So we can really accomplish a great deal.

Why did I go to the ABA? I went to the ABA because my clients told me to go. I went there as a lawyer. I went there because I got a personal phone call from Anatoly Sharansky in Jerusalem, pleading with me to go to the ABA on his behalf and on behalf of his fellow dissidents for whom he was speaking in Jerusalem. And he urged that the ABA not accept this because for years the refuseniks, the Helsinki monitors, have tried within the Soviet Union to explain to the world why the Soviet legal system is not a legitimate legal system. Anatoly and others were terrified that in one fell swoop all of their important work would be undone.

When I represent a client, I always act pursuant to his or her input, and I was representing those clients in speaking to the ABA. Their voice was not heard loudly enough within the established Jewish community and particularly within the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. The National Conference wasn't responsive enough, it didn't give enough of an ear and a hearing to these points.

Abram: I suspect, Alan, that if you had written me and raised the issue, would have welcomed you to come and present the matter to the Board of Governors or the Executive Committee of the National Conference, and you might have persuaded them. I'm going to say this to you: You know th:

in our formal statement to the ABA we said that if this thing does not work out as it should work out to produce the result that we want to see, then we would come back and ask for termination of the agreement on three months' notice. And the fact is that I don't think we are getting what we bargained for.

I am not pleased with what happened at the Dartmouth conference. And I'll tell you something else. At a recent meeting at which the ABA executive in this field spoke to our Board of Governors during the Daniloff affair, I said to him that I think the president of the ABA ought to immediately send a wire and make it publicly known that he is going to go to Moscow for the Daniloff trial, and take a delegation with him. That is the kind of thing that the ABA could do that would make this relationship useful to the causes that we all believe in. And it will have to be done against Soviet resistance and in the face of Soviet antagonism and in the face of the fact that most people want, as Alan says, to be accommodating, to be nice guys. You cannot be nice guys with a bunch of thugs.

Dershowitz: Still, distinctions are important. I have experienced some decent Soviet lawyers. There are some non-Jewish ones who are in the Institute for Soviet and American Law who would like to see the ABA and American lawyers push what they push very quietly in the Soviet Union. There is a big debate going on right now within the Soviet legal establishment as to whether or not the law and constitution will prevail over the dictates of the Communist party. The Soviet Union is not a monolithic system. There are lawyers within the Soviet system who very cautiously and very slowly would like to see some slight movement for change. Very few of them are heroes. They are not people who go to jail for their views. There are no Martin Luther Kings. There are no Morris Abrams in the Association of Soviet Lawyers. But there are some people with marginal decency, and I have spoken to some of them privately and they would like to see the United States encourage some movement within the

Soviet Union.

But this agreement was seen by them as a slap in the face as well, and that is why I think we are undercutting everything that is decent and good that can be accomplished by real agreements. Because what does the word "agreement" mean? It means that both sides have given a little and taken a little and gotten something in return. This was not an agreement. This was a totally one-sided, successful grab for legitimacy by the Association of Soviet Lawyers.

Abram: We go into these meetings with one-and-a-half hands tied behind our backs. We go in at a tremendous disadvantage because of our naivete, our lack of knowledge.

Dershowitz: Let me make another point here. I started my connections with Soviet Jewry through the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. I think it is important to indicate what my experience has been with the National Conference and why, although I think I'm still involved in the National Conference, I feel as if I am now a persona non grata in that organization.

When Anatoly Sharansky was arrested, Irwin Cotler of Canada and I were asked by Anatoly's wife and mother to act on his behalf. We initially went to Israel and interviewed some people there who were involved in these events with Sharansky. And we were told in Israel by the people in the Prime Minister's office dealing with Soviet Jewry to stay away from the case, that Sharansky was not a Jewish Zionist refusenik but instead a human rights activist and that it would be embarrassing to the State of Israel for people working on behalf of the State of Israel to get involved in his case. So I told them, "I'm not working on behalf of the State of Israel." And they said, "But you are affiliated with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry is essentially the American affiliate of the State of Israel on these issues." And at that point there was a conference sponsored by Israel and the National Conference, and both Irwin Cotler

and I were excluded from it.

When we asked why we were excluded, we were told by Yoram Dinstein, who was in charge of the conference, that it was because of our involvement in the Sharansky case and because we were not marching lockstep with the State of Israel on their approach to Soviet Jewry.

Now, we were very clear that we were representing Sharansky both because he was a Jewish refusenik and because he was active in the Helsinki Watch. That to me makes it a more positive case for involvement, although I am just as happy to represent a "mere refusenik." I was very proud to represent Sharansky. But it was our involvement in the Sharansky case and our refusal to dissociate ourselves from dissidents as opposed to pure refuseniks that made us unwelcome in the National Conference and in the State of Israel's involvement with Soviet Jewry.

It was at that point that it occurred to me that Israel was right, that Israel has a particular responsibility to its own citizens. No nation ever puts human rights first on the agenda. No nation ever *should*. That's what gave me the insight that it is important for *Am Yisrael*, the *people* of Israel, to play a role quite different from that of *M'dinat Yisrael*, the State of Israel. The State of Israel always has considerations over and beyond human rights, whereas the people of Israel are the primary source, it seems to me, of defense of Jewish human rights around the world, whether it be Ethiopian Jewry, Syrian Jewry, Romanian Jewry or Soviet Jewry.

I think it is terribly important for Israel to establish relations, for example, with the Soviet Union, even if it means that it has to put Soviet Jewry second on its list of considerations. Strategic considerations between the Soviet Union and Israel, from Israel's point of view, are far more important. From the point of view of the people of Israel, however, human rights has to be paramount.

I would like to see this breach healed, and I accept your invitation to try to heal it, but it has to be on terms that are acceptable to those of us who see our interests as transcending Israel's concern for Soviet Jewry.

Abram: Now the conversation is becoming a little skewed, and I want to unskew it. To begin with, I don't know what happened in the '70s. I wasn't involved, I was ill. But I do know what the conditions are now. The National Conference does not represent the Israeli point of view. We are part of an international network that includes the Public Council for Soviet Jewry in Israel, which is headed by Avram Harman. Similar councils exist in England, Australia, France, the Scandinavian countries, Latin America, and we meet periodically to try to work out strategy.

I want to say this as strongly as I can: If Soviet Jewry is freed in any substantial numbers, it is going to be as a result of the work of this body. Alan knows, all of us know, that Soviet Jewry is not going to be freed by some internal Masada uprising among Soviet Jews to break their chains. It's not going to be freed by a sudden change of heart and change of direction of the Soviet state, a kind of disruption or coup. If they are going to be freed, it is going to be by virtue of pressure by some great power. And the only great power that will operate on their behalf or has the power to be influential on their behalf is the United States.

On September 9, 1985, I took a delegation to see the President. The Council was meeting in Washington. I guess four or five of us went to see the President. And what we said to him was this: You are going to Geneva to see Gorbachev. We are not asking for any direct linkage between arms and Jewish rights or human rights. But you have said that you have an agenda that is four-pronged: arms control, human rights, including Jewish rights and immigration, regional and bilateral issues. We urge and stand behind you in support of negotiation on all four principles.

Now, how do you deal with these things at the same time? You say to Mr. Gorbachev, Mr. President—and there is a document that I can give you if you want—“Look, I am the leader of a free people. I can negotiate, but this people has to ratify. Whatever I do has to resonate in their hearts, and it requires ratification. The Senate has to resonate with it. And, Mr.

Gorbachev, the American people don't believe you. In 1975, your country signed the Helsinki Accords. Whether or not your stations up in Siberia are in violation of the arms treaties that have already been arranged is a matter, perhaps, of debate. But we know you are in flagrant violation, proved violation of Basket III of the Helsinki Accords. Now until you comply with Basket III, there is no way there is going to be that link to credibility that makes for good relations.”

I can tell you that the President did say that. I do not know whether he got anywhere. He told us at the time, he said, “Look, I agree. You may not know what I do, but I can tell you that in 1972 a former occupant of this office went to Moscow and saw a former Chairman of the Party, and he told him that it was very important for international understanding how Soviets treated Jews. And he said to him that he was not going to beat on him in public about it. But if you want to have improved relations, these things have to be changed. And the next year, 35,000 Jews left the Soviet Union.” And Reagan said there will be this quiet diplomacy that will go on and there should be this public clamor as well. Now, before he went to Reykjavik, there was great consternation because, first of all, we'd been expecting a summit in Washington and were planning an enormous mobilization so that the President could look out from the Oval Office and say, “I told you so. You see those people? They are black, they are white, they're Jews, they're Christians, thousands of people, and they don't believe you. And I don't believe you either. And even if I did it wouldn't do any good.”

But instead, there was this sudden summit, in a very distant place, away from the crowds. We had about 10 days' notice. We assembled the entire Jewish community, and we made a plan. The first element was that I should see the President, which I did. Incidentally, I saw him with Orlov, because Orlov represents the dissidents. And I said what I wanted to say to him. [Former national security adviser John] Poindexter was in the room; I hadn't expected that. And im-

mediately after it was over, Poindexter said, “Come see me.” So I went, and what he said was, “You said there were 11,000 names of refuseniks. I want those names.” I got the names to him, and the President had them with him in Iceland. Then Shultz agreed to speak to all the Jewish leaders, and there were 400 or so who came together in the State Department auditorium. And the things he said to that group were unbelievable. He said, “We will tell the Soviets that they will never have a proper relationship with the United States until they change this attitude.” His words were that, they were just astounding. He did an actual speech that had in it linkage in arms in a way that I would never have had the chutzpah to suggest. There were three ovations from the Jewish community.

And then Shultz asked me to prepare a graph of Jewish immigration. Gorbachev doesn't understand English, but he understands a graph and he can read figures. Shultz said, “I want you to give me proof to substantiate your assertion that there are close to 370,000 Jews who have made the first steps to leave but who have not had their applications processed.” I did that. And later Shultz wrote an op-ed piece in which he said, “Due to the work of the National Conference, no delegation had ever been so thoroughly briefed and no such complete proposals or arguments had ever been advanced to the Soviet authorities.”

I quite agree that there has got to be this careful balancing of what Alan talks about, the interests of the Jewish state and the interests of the Jewish people, as well as the issue of human rights in general and the particular issue of Jewish rights. When I saw the President with Orlov—Orlov, of course, is representative of the best of the dissidents—I knew what his views were. His views were that you have got to respect human rights across the board, the rights of Jews and of non-Jews. And I agree. But it was important for the President to understand that while the National Conference advocates Jewish immigration and Jewish rights and concentrates on this without denigrating the importance of the others, we do so not because of any disregard of the general



Photo by Linda Hans

Alan Dershowitz

principle but because we know one is possible before the other is even thinkable. You can get Jews out. That has been demonstrated. And I don't think we have to be defensive about that.

Dershowitz: We are a Jewish organization. We do not have to be apologetically defensive about the fact that as Jewish people around the world we have as our primary concern and our primary interest helping Jews leave the Soviet Union. I agree with you completely. It is also possible; it doesn't require a restructuring of the Soviet policy on emigration. Family reunification is both consistent with the Helsinki Accords and with general human rights principles. And it is feasible.

I also completely agree that your role, as a confidante of the President, as a person who has been close with this Administration, as a person who has access, as a person who can get things done, is absolutely critically important. But it is also important, and you don't disagree with this, to maintain grass-roots pressure. There are, after all, two reasons why your access to the President is important. The first is that you are brilliant and persuasive and articulate. But the second reason is that you come into that room with the support of the Jews; you command some troops. And I think that in general—I am not talking about you now, I am talking about the Jewish leadership organizations—

our leaders, our elites, have to be more sensitive about the feelings, the interests and the passions of their troops out there. I don't like the "Fiddler on the Roof" mentality that operates in many Jewish organizations—if you're rich, they think you really know. You have enormous resources out there to help you with your important work. I think it is important that those resources be taken full advantage of.

Abram: I agree with that.

Before we end, there is one subject that was alluded to earlier that ought to be tied down first. That is the role of Israel in all of this. In the early years of the movement, Israel resisted some of the upstart efforts in this country to engage in public mobilization on Soviet Jewry. Its view of how to proceed was different from the view that was coming to prevail here. From time to time, it pleaded *raisons d'etat* or it pleaded superior insight, knowledge, contacts, whatever. So the question today is, first, what is the nature of the relationship between the Israeli government and the National Conference, and, second, do you accept Alan's view that it is important for the Jewish people to have an independent voice on such matters that is respectful to the State of Israel but is not controlled by the State of Israel?

Abram: Of course I agree with Alan on that. To answer your first question, much of the research and much of the data and much of the input with respect to Soviet policy is derived from Israeli sources. It is necessary that it be so; they have an extremely good fix on Soviet intentions. They have excellent contacts within the Jewish community in the Soviet Union, and they have a great many Soviet Jews, though not yet as many as they would like, in Israel. And they have a tremendous interest.

Now, maybe world Jewry had an interest in it before Israel did, but even if that was once the case, it isn't any longer. Labor and Likud, Shamir and Peres, are totally committed on this issue today. Their purpose is the same as the Jews in the Diaspora.

At the same time, there is a real problem, and here is one where you will find a split between American Jewry and what the government of Israel would like to see. And that is on the question of whether or not the immigration should be an immigration that first goes to Israel, and only then makes its choice, if it wants to, to come to the United States or some other country, and follows the rules of all other people that have a state that does not persecute. And I can make the argument either way. I can make it on the basis of broad humanitarian principles, the right to leave one's country and the right to go to whatever country that is prepared to receive you. Why should Soviet Jews be different from other people?

And I can also make the argument that asks by what right people who file an affidavit that they want to go to Israel and are able to get out through that apparatus practice a deception, and in fact end up going elsewhere. That deception may make it harder for other people to leave.

These are circumstances that at least call for careful policy. But we don't have to get into that controversy today, because the numbers are so small. I predict that when we do come back to a sizable emigration, that controversy will erupt. And there will be a very interesting debate for the American Jewish community.

Dershowitz: Let's all look forward to the day when we can have that debate, based on real numbers.

That's an appropriate place to bring this discussion to a close. Thank you both. ★