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*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series D. International Relations Activities. 1961-1992.

Box 64, Folder 8, Israel Office [American Jewish Committee],  
1971, 1976, 1985-1986.

JUN 26 1986

memorandum

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 17, 1986  
**to** Shula Bahat  
**from** M. Bernard Resnikoff  
**subject** AJC Officers Visit

The seven lines in your May 22 memo referring to the above subject is not enough to start a proper dialogue on the program details. Perhaps it is enough for impressions and for sharing images in the making.

1. Long before your memo was received, plans were underway to hold a reception for Shimon to introduce him to Israel's elite society. After checking with his schedule, the city calendar, vacation endings and facilities available, we picked September 10th. Certainly the event should zero in on Shimon without distraction. On the other hand, it might be a good idea to change the date to when the officers are here so that they, too, can participate in the festivities and banter. What do you think?
2. Where do you want to hold your two-day retreat? Do we still have time? Of course - especially considering the sparse tourist traffic. Still, the earlier a decision is made, the better chance we have to get our first choice. Please advise.
3. Should we not start planning now for exploring how to prepare for discussing AJC's future activities in Israel? If you agree, here are two ideas for starters:
  - a. In seeking a natural occasion to underline what should be the organic relationship between AJC and Bert Gold's institute, let us offer them an assignment. Let the Board in the U.S., and the Israel Advisory Committee here, start a conjoint inquiry into the parameters, limits and specific ideas, by priorities, that AJC should undertake in Israel. The two formulations might then be collapsed for an integrated proposal to be submitted to the officers in September.
  - b. By way of introduction, Ted and Dave asked the Prime Minister what the AJC could be doing on behalf of Israel that it is not doing now. The PM made two suggestions immediately. If these were made on the spur-of-the-moment and carry no enduring significance, then let it go. But if these were studied suggestions, then they deserve careful analysis. Was the PM sending us signals? Are American Jewish organizations to be relegated to a peripheral area of benign neglect? He had made two suggestions.

The first was that we become involved in a government-sponsored public committee working in the area of Arab-Jewish relationships. In a follow-up conference, it turned out to be, so far, a fishing expedition, with the committee chairman not being too helpful. The other suggestion was that we sponsor an international conference - an unusual and dazzling conference, to be sure, but still a conference. Off-hand, can you or I think of any conference that will change attitudes, or even behavior?

These thoughts gave me an idea. Ben-Gurion did it once and Norman Podhoretz does this from time to time. Lets pick, say, fifty prominent thinkers on both sides of the ocean and ply them with some four questions to which they will write short, pithy answers. Then, let these answers be summarized as a basis for policy-making in September. I am thinking of such questions as:

- (1.) What are the ways of making critical comments to the government without giving aid and comfort to its enemies.
- (2.) In agreeing to put matters of "national security" off-limits for American Jewish intervention, how to prevent its use (abuse?) to avoid discussing unpleasant subjects.
- (3.) What recourse is there when a government or Knesset action embarrasses the American Jewish community?
- (4.) Can the AJC continue, with impunity and without penalty, (to use current examples) to defend the Mormons, promote civil liberties, prop up Israeli Arabs and combat religious intolerance?

You can change the questions and the number of respondents, but you get the idea.



c.c. to: David Gordis  
Marc Tannenbaum

Foreign Affairs Department

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE OFFICE IN ISRAEL

ANNEX II: Statement of Objectives--1971

A. Objectives

The Office in Israel, now a regular part of the American Jewish Committee's overseas program, was established in 1961 to help meet the need for effective channels of communication between the Jews of Israel and the United States. In 1967 the office was moved from temporary lodgings in Tel Aviv to its present permanent headquarters at 9 Ethiopia Street, Jerusalem.

The Israel Office conducts an educational and human relations program, whose major objectives are:

- 1) To develop greater understanding in Israel of the pluralistic nature of American society, with special emphasis on the position and role of the Jews in American life.
- 2) To increase knowledge of American and Western traditions of civic responsibility and civil liberties in order to foster development of democratic institutions and voluntary associations in Israel.
- 3) To clarify the relationship between Israel and the Jewish communities of the United States and other countries.
- 4) To increase awareness among Israeli Jews of the cultural and spiritual heritage they share with Jews elsewhere and to strengthen the bonds linking Israelis and American Jews.
- 5) To stimulate application of the insights of the social sciences to inter-group tensions in Israel and to help encourage respect for diversity of cultural and religious expression.

In addition to these general objectives, the Office in Israel serves as a liaison between the American Jewish Committee and Israel, interpreting the AJC's over-all policies and program to Israel and providing first-hand reports to the Committee on significant trends and developments in Israel.

B. Program

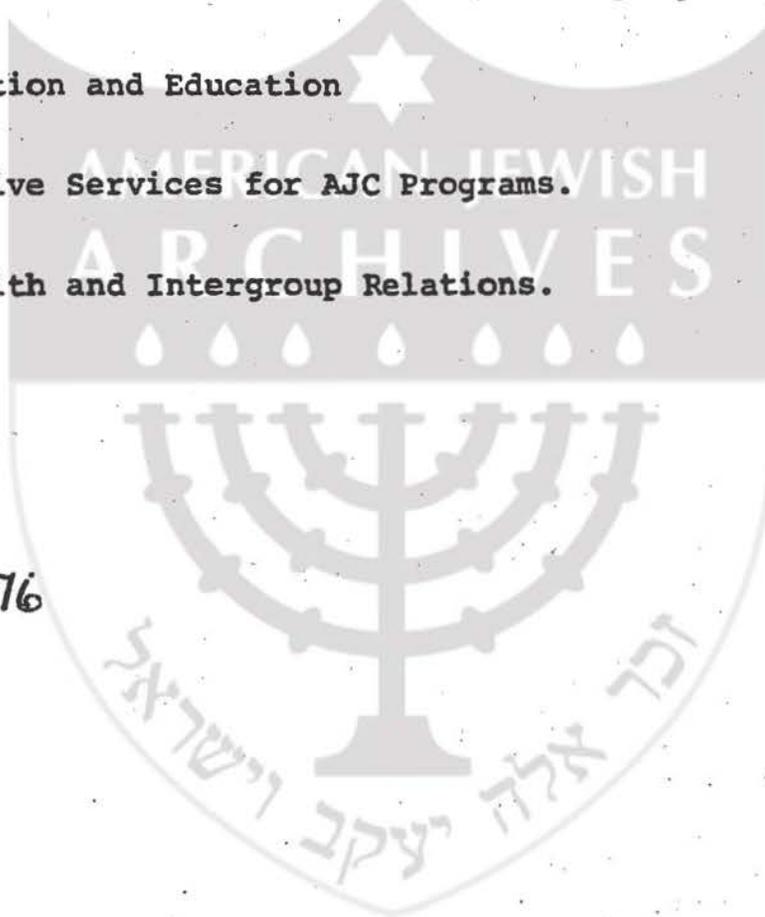
1. General

- a. The Israel Office is seen as the established presence of the AJC in that country. It is a local extension of all AJC departments and services. As such, it follows the AJC pattern of research and diagnosis, is innovative in character and emulates our institutional style. It achieves this via pump priming, pilot projects, evaluative studies and demonstration as an educational method.

- b. Based on a concern for the total community, the focus is not necessarily on the creation of an independent program as much as on the support, enrichment and extension of existing programs of demonstrated worth.
- c. Utilizing established principles of community organization, the Office in Israel attempts to take leadership in program consultation among like-minded agencies, to suggest areas of cooperation and to avoid duplication and to direct the establishment of program priorities.

- 2. Information and Education
- 3. Supportive Services for AJC Programs.
- 4. Interfaith and Intergroup Relations.

MAY 18, 1976



## DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR AN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RELATIONS IN ISRAEL

### Rationale

Over the years, the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee has played a pioneering role in initiating and supporting grassroots organizations and movements working to promote intergroup understanding and to reduce intergroup conflict in Israel. It has hosted numerous consultations, seminars and workshops involving Arabs and Jews; Jews, Christians, and Muslims; and Ashkenazim and Sephardim.

In recent years we have seen an even greater need for AJC's efforts in Israel in this regard. There is disturbing evidence of Meir Kahane's growing appeal, especially among Israeli youth, as well as within the general Israeli electorate. We have also seen manifestations of growing religious intolerance, fierce nationalism, and the emergence of Jewish "terrorism."

In view of our long history of involvement in promoting tolerance within Israeli society, and in view of recent negative developments within that society the need to place AJC's efforts to foster improved intergroup relations in Israel under one rubric has become more pronounced. An Institute of Human Relations in Israel would enable us to address this vital area of concern in a systematic, coordinated fashion, rather than the ad hoc basis which the Israel Office has been forced to adopt because of the multiplicity of its functions.

### Scope of Activity

✓ The proposed Institute would have as its objective helping to cultivate, stimulate and strengthen a pro-democratic, pluralistic culture in Israel. It would sponsor ~~both basic and action~~ research to shed light on the factors that determine the quality of interaction between the diverse religious and ethnic groups in Israeli society. Together with appropriate Israeli organizations, it would sponsor seminars, consultations and training programs to make known the insights and information derived from its studies and determine ways of applying relevant aspects of the American intergroup experience to the Israeli scene. It would publish and disseminate, through the print and electronic media, major research findings, new strategies and techniques for promoting positive intergroup attitudes and behavior. *oriented*

### Structure

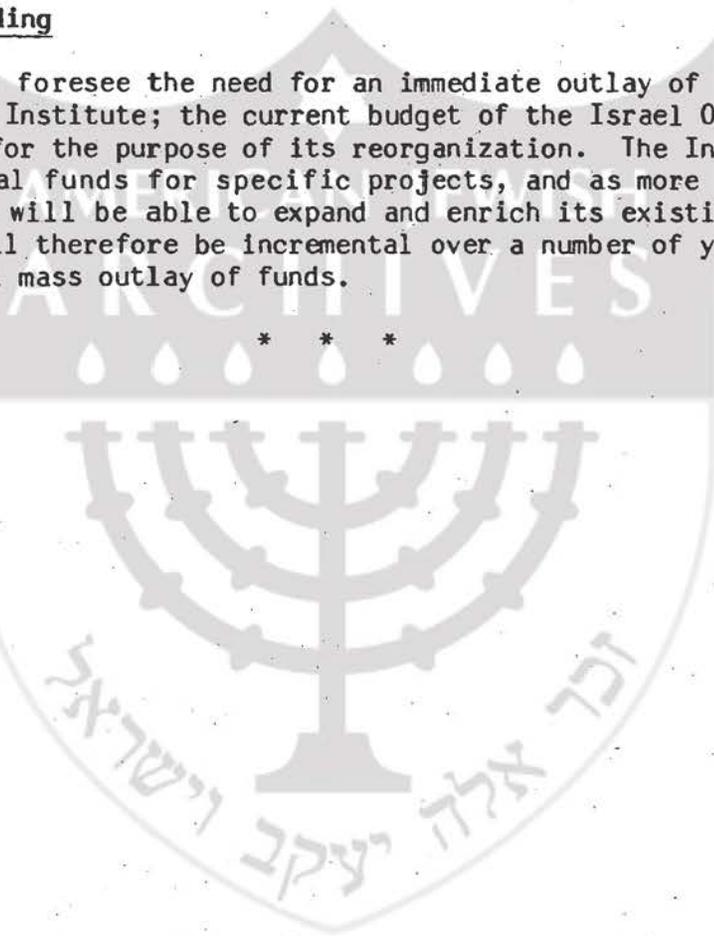
-- The Director of the Israel Office will simultaneously serve as the Director of the Institute of Human Relations in Israel.

-- In addition to professional staffing, and guidance from AJC's headquarters in New York, the Institute would be advised by a significant group of prominent Israelis from a variety of fields, who would help the Institute by identifying important problems to be addressed and by recommending specific projects.

✓ -- Furthermore, the establishment of the Institute will create an opportunity to make appropriate use of the cumulative experience and expertise of AJC's lay leadership and professional staff in the various areas of intergroup relations such as interreligious affairs, ethnic group relations, and Jewish communal affairs.

Budget and Funding

We do not foresee the need for an immediate outlay of new funds to establish the Institute; the current budget of the Israel Office can be redistributed for the purpose of its reorganization. The Institute will seek additional funds for specific projects, and as more funds become available, it will be able to expand and enrich its existing programs. Its budget will therefore be incremental over a number of years, rather than an initial mass outlay of funds.



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*requiring*

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**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** June 5, 1986  
**to** David Gordis  
**from** George Gruen  
**subject** Quo Vadis the Israel Office?

At our informal meeting on June 2 Ted Ellenoff asked me to jot down some ideas as to what the AJC's Israel Office might do in the next twelve to twenty-four month period. In addition to furthering such obvious programmatic objectives as improving intergroup relations within Israel and strengthening Israeli-American mutual understanding, Ted asked me to consider how the Israel Office might be more effectively used to enhance AJC's political standing within Israel as a significant Jewish organization with power and influence in American life and in dealing with crucial issues on the international Jewish agenda.

I am assuming that the Israel Office will continue to perform the basic functions outlined in the 1971 statement of objectives and that specific programs will be worked out by Shimon Samuels based on his assessment of the situation and in ongoing consultation with us.

Need For an Evaluation Process

What I believe is necessary first of all is to develop criteria and mechanisms for judging the effectiveness of all existing programs and for weighing proposed programs in terms of cost versus benefit.

Strengthening Personal Ties to AJC

The current pervasive fear of persons to travel to the Middle East has crippled -- hopefully only temporarily -- both our Christian and other VIP Visitors to Israel program as well as some of the travel programs intended for AJC members. We should examine how difficult it will be to overcome these obstacles and how much staff time in Israel and in the New York office should be devoted to servicing such missions. In view of the effort involved, these missions should not be seen as one shot affairs. A strategy needs to be developed to follow up with the participants to strengthen their involvement with AJC and with our Israel and general concerns.

Similarly, the Jewish Communal Affairs annual Jewish academicians' seminar in Israel and the groups of younger Israelis brought to the United States under the auspices of the Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations (IAJIR) appear to me to be potentially very useful ventures. Yet I think much more can be done without too much additional input of time and money to maintain ongoing AJC contact with the "alumni" of these missions to develop them into an informal network for AJC on the American campuses and within Israeli society, respectively. Over the long run, cultivation of the potential Israeli leaders can prove to be an effective means for increasing popular understanding of AJC as an organization and for disseminating our philosophy and ideas within the younger generation.

Consideration should be given to creation of a "Friends of the American Jewish Committee" or some similar body of Israelis from across the political spectrum who share some of our basic concerns and interests. While it probably can't be a formal chapter, it should be broader than the informal panel of individuals, e.g. Zalman Abramov, who have been regularly consulted by AJC Israel Office directors in the past. The Advisory Board of the IAJIR is a nucleus, but the scope of the group I have in mind is broader. I believe there are quite a number of Israelis who would be interested in supporting our work not only with their ideas but even with some financial contributions. (We should check what ADL, the AJCongress and other American groups have managed to do in this regard.)

#### Assessment of Intergroup Relations Needs in Israel

Disturbing signs of polarization, intolerance and other anti-democratic tendencies within segments of Israeli society are well known to you. Specific examples of the issues as well as the programs which AJC has in the past undertaken in Israel and others which have been proposed to us by various Israeli groups are outlined in the attached Draft Proposal on Center for Intergroup Relations in Israel, which I prepared last October.

The good news is that there is a growing number of voluntary Israeli citizens groups concerned with one or more of these issues. Some of them are embryonic and operating on a shoestring. Others are more substantial and have a track record of accomplishment. The New Israel Fund has commissioned an "Inventory of Organizations in Israel with Programs that Promote Pluralism, Tolerance and Democratic Attitudes and Behavior." I am enclosing the "initial, uncorrected translation of the draft inventory" which has no page 7 and omits the American Jewish Committee! I spoke with Gila Brand of their Israel office, who apologized profusely for the oversight and expressed the hope that AJC would help them both programmatically in Israel and in the evaluation process that they are undertaking. (Leo Nevas was invited to participate in one of the sessions they held in the U.S. and I was at another.)

I also spoke with Professor Gabriel Sheffer, director of the Leonard Davis Institute of the Hebrew University, who is advising the New Israel Fund on this, and he also emphasized an eagerness to continue working with us. If you have a chance, speak to him on your current trip. He has also offered to set up a panel discussion of Israeli political scientists with our officers delegation in September.

Once we have gone through the list of organizations and projects in the area of intergroup relations, we can make a better judgment as to where we can best make a specific contribution without duplicating existing work.

### AJC as Catalyst and Coordinator

I believe that we might be most useful in the role of catalyst and facilitator. We might wish to sponsor or cosponsor a conference on the state of intergroup relations. How to deal with the dangers of fundamentalism, fanaticism and extremism might be the title of a major conference, or a series of conferences. There are the interreligious, Jewish intra-religious, Arab-Jewish, and Jewish ethnic components of the problem. We will have to examine how best to organize this.

You might inquire whether Avram Burg's proposal to us to have a conference focus on the distinction between attitudes of Jews when they are themselves minorities and when they act as the ruling majority in a sovereign state is an idea that will still obtain official support when and if Shamir replaces Peres as Prime Minister. (Quaere: would the ultra-religious zealots be less militant against the Mormons, against archaeological digs, against "indecent" ads if they were living in a non-Jewish state or if these problems did not arise in the Holy City of Jerusalem?)

Together with the International Sephardi Education Foundation, we have commissioned Professor Sammy Smooha of Haifa University to prepare an annotated bibliography of articles and books dealing with intergroup tensions (primarily Ashkenazi-Sephardi) in Israel. This inventory is to be prefaced by an essay by Smooha evaluating the state of the research and his assessment of the unmet needs and potential areas of tension in Israeli society today. The manuscript is already overdue. When we have it in hand it could serve as the basis for a conference or consultation convened by the Israel Office.

### Enhancing the Effectiveness of Tefutsot Israel

As you will see from the attached list of topics covered by Tefutsot Israel in recent years, this quarterly has provided indispensable information for the Hebrew reader on major issues of concern to American Jewry and other Jewish communities around the world, ranging from Black-Jewish relations in the U.S., to the varieties of Jewish religious expression. To enhance the effectiveness of Tefutsot I would recommend

that in planning future issues arrangements should be made for a symposium in Israel on the subject of the issue, including possibly bringing over some of the key authors whose articles are included so that they can have a face to face interchange with their Israeli counterparts. The discussion should be held in a public forum and videotaped for possible use on educational television. The edited proceedings could then become part of a subsequent issue of Tefutsot.

#### Involvement of AJC Lay Leaders and Professional Staff

Whether in planning future issues of Tefutsot or of specific conferences in Israel, we should give strong consideration to incorporating the idea of Robert Goodkind that the expertise of the AJC's national commissions be utilized in areas that have an Israeli application. Thus, for example, we should build into the program of the Israel Office on a semi-annual or annual basis an opportunity for members of the Jewish Communal Affairs Commission to participate in a conference in Israel on Jewish education or changing Jewish family patterns, and the next year the National Affairs Commission or the Institute for Pluralism and Group Identity to participate in discussions of ethnicity, etc. There are obviously also topics of mutual concern in Israel for the International and Interreligious Commissions.

In addition to such formally structured conferences we should do more to promote and to utilize the visits to Israel of individual AJC lay leaders and staff with particular expertise, e.g. a Hyman Bookbinder, by arranging lectures, informal meetings and other settings for getting greater visibility for them, and through them, for the AJC as a major factor on key American and international issues.

#### Upgrading Communication

The medium may not be the message, but without the proper medium, namely Hebrew, much of our message is lost in Israel. I know that you have already asked that major AJC press releases relating to Israel be issued in Hebrew as well as English. I would recommend doing this on a selective basis for other key national and international issues in which AJC is involved and which we wish the Israelis to know about. Relying on the American correspondents for Israeli papers in the U.S. is too chancy. I have also spoken to you previously on the need to upgrade the electronic communication facilities we have not only with Israel but with all our overseas and area offices. I know that Shimon Samuels is also convinced of the importance of this. If we had an on-line computer capacity and not simply a FAX connection, we could greatly enhance the speed and efficiency of communication, eliminating unnecessary duplicate keyboard inputting of information by word processing in New York of the Israeli Press Highlights and other special reports we receive from the Israel Office for editing here. The same holds true for our national backgrounders and statements that could be printed out directly off a computer terminal in Israel. FAXed material is not of camera-ready quality.

Improving Coordination of AJC's Israel-Related Programs

As should be obvious from the above, virtually every AJC program department, the IAJIR and many chapters are involved in programs in Israel itself or that have a potential relevance for our work in Israel. To avoid duplication and confusion and to maximize the synergistic effect of our joint efforts, I believe it is essential to re-establish a coordinating mechanism such as the committee that used to meet about once a month. The committee -- on which all the relevant departments and institutes were represented -- reviewed progress of current programs, evaluated new projects and exchanged ideas about ways in which an interdisciplinary approach could strengthen a specific project, as well as to assign responsibility for followup. The committee also served the useful function of shielding the director of the Israel Office from numerous, uncoordinated and excessive demands. For example, all field office requests for services to visiting AJC members were to be relayed through the Foreign Affairs Department and were to be accompanied by a confidential questionnaire filled out by the area director indicating the person's importance in the community and significance for AJC.

I am not going into other important areas of the work of the Israel Office which are self-evident, such as the reporting and analysis of developments in Israel and the presentation of AJC views to the Israeli political leadership. We obviously want the best intelligence we can get and to be alerted to potential issues when they are beginning to brew and not only when they make headlines in the New York Times or the television newscasts. If we know in advance we just might in a modest way contribute to defusing potentially explosive issues in Israeli-U.S., Israel-Diaspora, interreligious or intergroup relations.

Have a safe and productive trip.

cc: Ted Ellenoff  
Marc Tanenbaum

Encls.  
9023 (IRD-8)-smm

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
165 E. 56 St., New York, NY 10022

DATE: 5/13/86

FROM: GEORGE E. GRUEN

TO:  KENNETH BANDLER  
 DAVID GELLER  
 DAVID HARRIS  
 ALLAN KAGEDAN  
 JACOB KOVADLOFF  
 SIDNEY LISKOFSKY  
 MARC TANENBAUM

For approval  
 For your information  
 Please handle  
 Read and return  
 Returned as requested  
 Please telephone me  
 Your comments, please

REMARKS:



The American Jewish  
Committee

Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56 Street  
New York, New York 10022  
212 751-4000

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President

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May 12, 1986

David H. Peirez, Esq.  
Reisman, Peirez & Reisman  
1301 Franklin Avenue  
Garden City, New York 11530

Dear David:

As per our telephone discussion, I am sending you by Express Mail some recent background material on the Middle East and also some points for you to include in your opening remarks to set the agenda for the Middle East discussion and to introduce Assistant Secretary Richard W. Murphy.

You are free to use them as is or to modify them as you would like.

On the matter of the Saudi missile sale, I am enclosing my memo of March 17, 1986, summarizing the position adopted by the Board of Governors. Our current position continues to be that, while we have misgivings about the sale, we will not mount a campaign of opposition. This view is also adopted by other groups in the NJCRAC. As you know, the Israel Government has decided not to take issue with the Reagan Administration over this sale. This was confirmed at a meeting with Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin last Friday. I would, therefore, not make any specific reference to the arms sale in your introductory remarks.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at the office on Tuesday or else we can discuss them in Washington on Thursday.

Sincerely,

George E. Gruen, Ph.D.

Director

Israel & Middle East Affairs

GEG:mr

- Encs. -

TALKING POINTS FOR DAVID PEIREZ  
FOR HIS INTRODUCTION OF RICHARD MURPHY

1. The topic that is on all of our minds is, of course, terrorism and how to combat it. The U.S. has confronted Libya twice recently in the hope of driving home to the Libyans that their continued support for international terrorism has a very high price. Now, however, evidence has surfaced that Syria and Iran have also been actively fomenting recent acts of terrorism as has Qaddafi, although the Syrians have sought to conceal their involvement. Is there any indication that the U.S. military encounters with Libya have produced their desired deterrent effect on Syria, Iran, or Libya for that matter? What other strategies should the U.S. adopt to convince Syrian President Hafez Assad that he will not be able to achieve his regional objectives through terrorism.
2. When Prime Minister Shimon Peres visited the U.S. in April, he proposed a "Middle East Marshall Plan," under which the democratic industrial nations would offer additional economic assistance to those Arab states, such as Egypt and Jordan, whose economies have suffered as a result of the end of the oil boom. The Peres proposal is based on the premise that economic development, rather than more armaments, provides the best defense against internal social unrest and political instability. When the Administration raised the "Marshall Plan" idea at the Tokyo summit, how was it received?

3. The February 11, 1985 accord between Jordan's King Hussein and PLO chief Yasser Arafat was officially laid to rest on February 19, 1986, when King Hussein publicly declared that the PLO had failed to live up to its commitments, specifically in regard to its acceptance on UN Security Council Resolution 242. Both Israel and Jordan have worked to create an alternative Palestinian leadership based on the West Bank. However, the first attempt to do so -- the Israeli appointment of pragmatist Zafer al-Masri as the mayor of Nablus, with the tacit approval of Jordan -- ended tragically in al-Masri's assassination by Syrian-backed Palestinian radicals. Other potential moderate West Bank leaders quickly withdrew their applications for mayoral appointments.

What can the U.S. do to counteract these negative developments and encourage the emergence of moderate and representative Palestinians who are prepared to enter into negotiations with Israel and Jordan concerning the final status of the West Bank -- a role envisaged for them by the U.S.-brokered Camp David Accords?

Furthermore, is there any sign that the necessary coalescence of forces conducive to peace negotiations presently exists in the region? Syrian President Assad, long considered to be a "spoiler" of any potential peace talks, has recently met twice with his former adversary, Jordan's King Hussein. Egypt and Israel are attempting to "warm up" their "cold peace." President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev reportedly discussed regional

conflicts, including the Middle East at their summit meeting. What are the implications of these developments on the prospects for comprehensive peace negotiations getting underway?

4. Finally, while continuing to strive for peace, we cannot overlook the very real possibilities for major conflagrations erupting in the region.

The Arab states located along the Persian Gulf are becoming increasingly alarmed at Iran's apparent ability to break through Iraqi defenses and hold on to Iraqi territory. How valid are their fears that Khomeini's forces may thrust beyond Iraq, threatening Kuwait, and possibly even Saudi Arabia?

In addition, rumors have spread in recent weeks that tensions between Syria and Israel may lead to war, either by design or by miscalculation. Does the Administration believe that American diplomatic efforts to diffuse the tension will succeed in preventing a renewal of Syrian-Israeli hostilities?

There is perhaps no one better qualified to answer these complicated questions than our speaker today. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy has devoted more than thirty years of his life to the diplomatic service of our country. While he has been stationed in such far-flung places as Zimbabwe and the Phillipines, for most of his career he has been grappling with the problems of the Middle East, and in his current assignment as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, his bailiwick runs all the way from Marrakesh to Bangladesh.

He brings impressive credentials to his work: a B.A. from Harvard and an M.A. from Cambridge University, and fluency in Arabic and French. Over the years he has spent much time in Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. But Dick Murphy is far from the typical stereotype of the professional "Arabist." Those of you who had the pleasure of hearing him at our National Executive Council Meeting in Miami can testify that he knows his subject well. But even more impressive has been his dedication to the basic American principles of freedom and human rights, which Richard Murphy has carried in his heart from his native Boston to his various posts abroad. Some of us at AJC, such as Dr. George Gruen, our director of Middle East Affairs, recall personally how, while he was Ambassador in Damascus, Dick Murphy devoted countless hours to the plight of the Jewish community in Syria and worked tirelessly to bring about an easing of the restrictions upon them and to begin to lift the ban on emigration. We know that we can count on Richard Murphy's quiet diplomatic efforts in the continuing struggle to achieve human rights, and peace with justice for all in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy.

9115 (Annual Mtg.)/el

May 12, 1986