

CD-1025 Transcription

AJC Steering Committee, International Relations Department [1].

2 November 1984.

M1: -- chance to talk to us perhaps. But what I thought I would deal with first -- and I'm not going to do anything by way of just a general report because there will be one later at the commission meeting. Some of you have heard some -- yesterday at the meeting, yesterday lunchtime some report. And there's no sense in repeating this on every occasion. But I thought I would start with some of the resolutions. The ones that are perhaps not controversial. Or the statements. And get your reactions to those. And any suggestions. These will be presented at the full commission meeting later this morning. But I thought I would give you an opportunity to let us have your suggestions. I'll start with the resolution on Soviet Jewry. [01:00] I don't know anything in this that's new except the portion which calls on us to -- calls on the United States and the other Western delegations to participate fully in the review conferences both in Ottawa and Budapest. And frankly we have been raising that issue all along the line with everybody we can, as far as foreign governments, to urge

them to participate fully in those meetings. For those of you who just arrived, I suggested that we would give --

M2: Started on time.

M1: What's that?

M2: Started on time.

M1: Not quite but almost. That we'd start with the resolutions and statements you'll find in your kit that are not that controversial. And I started with the one on Soviet Jewry. I hope [02:00] everyone's had a chance to read that. And if there are comments or suggestions, we'd like to have them, like to incorporate them in the resolution as we present it to the full commission later this morning. Anyone have any suggestions or comments? Well, for those who haven't had a chance to look at it fully, well, we can come back to that again. On the one on Andrei Sakharov, merely urging our government again. Keep up their pressure and keep up their inquiries. Express our concern. And again I don't think that's -- maybe some suggestion perhaps for enlarging upon it or making it stronger. If anyone has them we'd like to have them [03:00] at this time, so we can present them to the commission fully. We also have the one on Syrian Jewry and on Israel and the Middle East. So anyone has any comments on any of those four resolutions or statements, we welcome them. Little unfair to some of you that really

haven't had a chance to look at these except in the last few minutes, to ask you to make suggestions as to the text or the content of this. Yeah. [04:00] Yes, go ahead.

TANENBAUM: This is two very brief comments. While the language is in a certain sense conventional, on the resolution on Soviet Jewry, I think it's useful for us to understand that we intend that this resolution will provide additional mandate for a major effort we are engaged in with regard to Soviet Jewry. Namely that in a whole series of meetings with embassies of foreign governments [05:00] we have been placing in the hands of ambassadors of governments of Western Europe, Central and South America texts of resolutions on Soviet Jewry and documents which this department has prepared. Allan Kagedan has done several major studies under Sidney Liskofsky's direction on anti-Semitic discrimination in the Soviet Union higher education and other aspects of harassment of Jews in the Soviet Union, so that at the point at which we will introduce this resolution to the plenary session with whatever suggestions you have for modifying it or strengthening, whatever, I think we ought to understand that in the sense it's a mandate, the programmatic work on the part of this department to intensify activity on behalf of Soviet Jews in areas that we have not touched before

systematically in the past. [06:00] And just one other item. With regard to the Syrian Jewry resolution, the intention of that is to express solidarity with the leadership of an international conference on Syrian Jewry that will be held in Paris on November 18th. AJC is a cosponsor of that conference. You see an outline of that program here in this kit. And we would welcome any suggestions on the part of members of the commission, representatives of AJC, who might attend that conference and represent our interests at that Syrian Jewry meeting. We did not think of sending a special delegation. But if any of our leadership is preparing to be in Europe or certainly Paris at that time, it would be a real contribution if you'd let us know and would accept to represent [07:00] AJC at that conference. We could help prepare with background material. I've been talking with one or two of you who may be attending and who would be ideal representatives for us. But we would welcome having a larger delegation in support of the leadership that'll be leading that group through the conference in Paris. And we hope that you'll let us know that.

RICHIE: When is that conference, Marc?

TANENBAUM: It's on a Sunday. November 18th in Paris.

M1: November 18th.

TANENBAUM: It's headed by Alain Poher, who's the president of the French Senate, and involves a number of Jewish organizations, various parts of the world.

RICHIE: If we're really serious about the failures of other Western governments to take up the issue, and we know they have failed, you're not going to attract their attention with this resolution. You will attract their attention if you have a second one. And I think we should have one that specifically addresses itself to the Western governments.

M1: [08:00] Are you talking about on Soviet Jewry?

RICHIE: Yes, going back to Soviet Jewry.

M1: Yeah, well, what has occurred apparently in the meetings -- the various ones that various officers have had abroad with Germany and France and elsewhere -- the issue has been raised on all occasions. On these occasions we have furnished them as well as incidentally in our meetings in Washington with the various embassies. And on these occasions we have given them some of the detailed information. Some of the papers that have been prepared that have been referred to by Marc. As well as other materials. Some out of the national conference. On Soviet Jewry.

RICHIE: But nothing addressed specifically to them.

M1: To the Western governments you're talking about.

TANENBAUM: No, the aide-memoire we leave are prepared directly for them. These are addressed to the governments. This resolution is really an internal resolution for AJC itself to go on record in relation to other Jewish agencies. [09:00] That is not a bad idea.

M1: I was just going to say if you have either in a separate resolution or something specific that we might add to this one.

RICHIE: I'd leave this alone. This is internal. It's fine. But I think we should have a separate one that addresses itself to Western governments.

M1: All right. Any further thoughts or suggestions? Let's talk about the resolution on Soviet Jewry at the moment since that's been the one we're addressing. Does anyone else have any other suggestions about this resolution or the suggestion made by [Richie]? All right. We're not going to -- well, nitpicking if you think it's appropriate. Is there -- if it's just a question -- let me suggest this. If it's just a question of language, would you talk with [David]? [10:00] Yeah. And so that we can make the corrections or changes of that nature. If it's substantive then I think we ought to discuss it. All right. If there's nothing further on that subject I want to skip at this moment the one on UNESCO and the one on South Africa. Because those would

require further discussion. There'll be a full discussion on South Africa at the commission meeting. But I do want to get any other suggestions or ideas from you folks later. I'm passing that one right now because I expect Helen Suzman may be joining us shortly. So I'd like her to be here during that discussion to give her some notion of some of the thinking. On UNESCO David is going to give us an update up to date as of this morning as a matter of fact on that one. And we'll wait a few minutes for that. If I may I would like to discuss with you something that [11:00] isn't on the agenda here. And give folks, those of you who haven't finished eating, a chance to do so. We have been having a series of luncheons from time to time when foreign visitors are in this country, whether from Israel or elsewhere, at AJC under the auspices of this commission. And we've tried to have a couple of some other functions from time to time. We had the one for Dick Schifter. And the thing that bothers me about it is that we have a large commission. We have a large corps of officers in and around the New York area. And our attendance at these functions is very very meager. It's my own feeling that if that is the level of the interest of the members of the commission in these functions, then maybe we shouldn't bother having them. Because about 90% of those attending are members of

the staff. And they really don't need a [12:00] formal kind of a meeting of that nature in order to meet with some of these people. They could do so on a more informal basis from time to time as the opportunity presents itself. We also have been talking about bringing to the AJC for either a dinner meeting or a luncheon meeting some of the diplomats in and around New York associated with the UN from time to time, so that we can have an opportunity to discuss with them our concerns and likewise hear from them. But we hesitate to do it if we're going to have sparsely attended meetings. And it takes time of the staff. And it certainly doesn't reflect well on us. I don't expect [Bruce?] to come in from California for one of these luncheons or Ed Elson from Atlanta. But since most of us are from the New York area, I would like to get some reaction [13:00] from those who are here as to whether or not they feel that they're worth attending and whether there's a desire to make some kind of commitment and put themselves out a bit to participate in such meetings. Otherwise I think we ought to not pursue that. And not seek to bring these people to AJC and then have a poorly attended session. Does anyone have any comments? Yes, Bruce.

BRUCE: I do have a question. Is it possible that the timing of the meetings has any impact? For example if the meeting were a breakfast meeting would that perhaps free up more people to attend the meeting, at the end of the day as distinct from the middle of the day?

M1: One of our problems is that we're limited by the availability of these people. Their own schedule. In many instances these people are in the United States for a few days for example. And the other day we had a meeting [14:00] scheduled with Ivor Richard who used to be the -- who was the former ambassador for Great Britain to the UN and is now representative of the EEC. Well, that meeting -- although this was a small meeting -- we met at his place -- the timing of that meeting was changed three times within 24 hours because of his other commitments. He was making a speech at the UN. And this is unusual. So but what I'm trying to say is that the timing of it is largely governed by the availability of these people. However we could try to time them as best we can within the desires of the members of the commission. Now if there's some better -- if there's some time that some of you feel is better than others, let us know that. And we'll see if we can't accommodate it. Anyone else? All right.

M3: I think the timing is very -- for those of us who are from out of town [15:00] two days sometimes of notice, you might have something on your calendar and that may be -- notice two days earlier might have preempted that time. I'm just wondering. Maybe a phone call that we're going to have a meeting might allow some of us to schedule it. I know I couldn't come to the others because I had already committed myself to other things. I'm just wondering. If it's important maybe a phone call to a couple people saying we're going to have a meeting next Thursday.

M1: Is there a time of the day that's better? Early in the morning wouldn't be any good for you.

M3: Any time during the day but it's a matter of the day I think. That is the thing that sometimes governs our ability.

M1: [Leon?]?

LEON: Perhaps you might articulate the reason, purpose for these meetings.

M1: Well, I think it differs. With the people, whoever it happens to be that we're talking with. I think it's first to better inform us on some of the conditions and some of the situations that are presented by them. [16:00] For example, maybe someone from Israel who represents one of the party groups there. We've had them come across from

time to time. It may be a Jewish representative from Argentina who's here, the head of the Jewish community there. It may be any number of people. And mainly I think it's for our benefit. In some instances it's mutually advantageous in that we can have an opportunity to convey to them our thoughts and our feelings about some of these matters. We had a meeting that was referred to by [Ted?] yesterday with the consul-general from South Africa. This was important for us to try to get on an off-the-record basis answers to some of the questions we had. No, no, no, that was not a meeting of the whole steering committee. That was just -- yeah, no, no, no, no. This was about 5:00 or 6:00. [17:00] Yeah but what I'm trying to say is that the purposes of these meetings differ. That's what I'm trying to convey. Yes, Leon.

LEON: I think we ought to pursue this just a little bit.

M1: Yes. Go ahead.

LEON: I understand the purpose (inaudible) I don't suppose that it is terribly important that (inaudible) the members of the steering committee. I've only attended one of those (inaudible) New York but it seemed to me that (inaudible) I'm not sure [18:00] that those meetings ought to be attended by too many people. It becomes much more (inaudible) trying to score points (inaudible) none of us

can resist that (inaudible) I really think that it depends on the purpose of the meeting (inaudible) the membership of that (inaudible) if it is more broadly to be an educational experience one would hope that there could be sufficient notice. Because those of us (inaudible) don't have the luxury of [19:00] hearing today that you have a meeting next Tuesday and (inaudible) the longer the notice and the less (inaudible) it seems to me that at least (inaudible) purpose of (inaudible).

M1: I think you're absolutely right. And I think that's correct. That we ought to -- that we'll have to make the distinctions on these various meetings as to what we seek to achieve.

M4: I think what [Leon Feldman?] said did a good job of answering one point I would have made. But I think it's going to divide up by themes perhaps. Certain people may be willing to say if it's on the topic of X I'll really try to make time to be there. That really interests me. The other things don't have the same salience. The other point I'd just raise. For those of us in the New York area. I go to meetings from time to time at the (inaudible) [20:00] they have some pretty good meetings. There may be a certain amount of duplication and overlap (inaudible) our thinking in terms of who we're inviting. Or if there are other

groups having speakers that would be appropriate, perhaps we could make sure that we can notify our people.

M1: [Bill?] and then [Ralph?]. Did you have --

M5: No, Leon (inaudible).

M6: (inaudible) there are some meetings that are not appropriate (inaudible) [21:00] and it ought to be done by the best people available (inaudible).

M1: [Ed?].

ED: What happens if (inaudible) hardcore group who could be on call, not consider as entertainment these sessions, but rather for the purpose of pursuing the influence of the American Jewish Committee on diplomats or (inaudible) and therefore it would seem appropriate to really have a very -- not a substantial group but a select group upon whom you can rely at any particular time. If you try and broaden it it only lessens the impact on those particular people (inaudible) too many people are involved (inaudible) [22:00] as I understand what you're trying to do, I think that's the only way you're going to effect a solution that can make these sessions (inaudible).

M1: [Paul?].

PAUL: (inaudible).

M1: Little louder please.

PAUL: (inaudible) say amen to what Ed just said. I think there ought to be a permanent group (inaudible) I think it's important (inaudible).

M1: OK, [Caroline?].

CAROLINE: [23:00] I think we first need to define what each of these meetings is meant to do. Whether (inaudible) and I think that the audience (inaudible).

M1: I think this discussion is very good. I think Leon pointed up some of the directions in which we ought to be going and how we ought to deal with these. And unless someone else has some other comments, suggestions. We'll bear that in mind. Yes.

M7: Just one very brief observation (inaudible) go back to your first comment (inaudible) from these meetings a number of specific types. I think that it should not be forgotten that there are some meetings which really cannot be quite so precisely defined. There are meetings with personalities with whom we feel it'd be useful to maintain [24:00] contacts. Give them a chance to know us. Give us a chance to know them. To establish a relationship (inaudible) preparation of future events. And I think the observation that you made at the outset (inaudible) meetings are most often interesting even if they're not earthshaking. And that if it's possible for you to look somewhat more

(inaudible) participation as a general rule, that would be useful. They very rarely are perfunctory. But sometimes they defy classification in one of these categories initially. Because they're preparations for things to come.

TANENBAUM: Leon helps define the question in terms of differential meetings. Differential purposes. Which I think we need to be sensitive to. You make a point about some of the meetings primarily might involve staff. There are some situations in which the presence of our lay leadership [25:00] is in some ways even more critical than the presence of professional staff who are devoting all their time to this. I have in mind for example yesterday. I received a telephone call from our office. Israel Klabin, president of the Klabin Industries in Brazil. Rio de Janeiro. Former mayor of Rio de Janeiro. A very impressive man. Our kind of person in Latin America. One of the major personalities in Brazilian Jewry is in New York. He called up, wanted to have lunch with us. I know that Klabin, if he were able to sit with our officers -- and he's here only for a few days. So we cleared a date with him for next Friday lunch at AJC. For that meeting it is far more important that our top officers be present. Former presidents, present officers. Be present to meet with him. The impact on him and the possibility of really doing

business with him [26:00] in terms of program with Brazilian Jewry and Brazil is far more effectively carried on with peers in that situation than having the whole staff advisory committee present. I mean that simply -- I don't want to denigrate our role there. I think we're all very clear that it's a matter of function, what would work, what would be most effective. Incidentally I said that by way of sneaking in. That's on your agenda. That if you can make it next Friday for lunch at AJC, it'd be very important for us.

M8: Stop right there. If you can make it next Friday. Who can make it next Friday? Want everybody to come?

M1: Everybody can't come, I mean, but let's talk about those who are in the area who might come. There are probably 10 or 12 people. And if 10 or 12 of us could make it, it would be desirable.

M8: (inaudible).

M9: Target audience. Yeah.

M8: This is perhaps not it. And I don't know (inaudible) [27:00] officers of the AJC (inaudible) whatever nefarious purpose you want (inaudible) I'm not sure that that (inaudible).

M1: Ted.

TED: (inaudible) want to do business with (inaudible) we had spent a morning and lunch with him in Rio. He took us around to his favorite (inaudible) very much interested in civil rights. We had a discussion about (inaudible) I reminded him (inaudible).

M8: (inaudible) about what are we going to do business (inaudible).

TANENBAUM: [28:00] We have a very clear agenda, Ted, we have a very clear agenda with him as a result of the last visit. He agreed to participate in a conference next year with the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Brazil, twentieth anniversary of Vatican Council II. He sees that as very important for the modest size Brazilian Jewish community. That's one of the things he wants to talk about. Wants to talk about the impact of the election that is coming up in Brazil on democratization there. Its impact on the Jewish community. Problems with Arab population. Brazil's relationship with Arab countries. Brazil's isolation with Israel. There are some real things to talk about. So that -- but I think I mean the question of the terms of it is exactly the kind of discussion that has to take place before every meeting. Some of that we do on staff in terms of more operational kinds of things [29:00] with certain kinds of people in

foreign governments. But we usually discuss this with [Leo?] in terms of what is appropriate.

M1: The question I think -- I think this has been a good discussion because I think it helps us focus on what we ought to be looking for in each one of these instances. And what we ought to be targeting so to speak in each instance. The question though is whether or not -- assuming we think it's a meeting at which there ought to be more than just the officers present, to what extent can we count on the members of this steering committee or other members who aren't here today to attempt to participate. I'm saying that in the sense that we recognize they have other commitments. But the question is what level do they put this. Do they put it something well, I go there and have lunch with a few people? Or do they feel it's some kind of an obligation to participate if they can and to join in whatever discussion takes place? It seems to me that at least the members of the steering committee [30:00] ought to be in that category of making the attempt to participate in these gatherings if the gathering is felt worthwhile from -- and desirable to have the participation of the members of the steering committee. And I would like -- I don't expect anybody to make any binding commitments. But I think that there ought to be an understood commitment that

a real attempt would be made to participate. Not necessarily in all of them. But in some of these from time to time. Yes.

F1: (inaudible) very hard to sort out what is just another interesting meeting (inaudible) [31:00] that are priority items and also indicate to whom they are priority, it might be more (inaudible).

M1: That's not a bad suggestion. All right. Any more?

M10: (inaudible) our problem is identifying the ones that are lower priority.

M1: [Maynard?].

MAYNARD: I just find myself wondering about the typical invitation list. If your invitation list goes just to the steering committee, you will get a relatively small percentage except on something that thrusts itself upon (inaudible) attention. But we have a board of governors with substantial representation (inaudible) people are not that parochial in their interests I think in international affairs, domestic affairs. So that a broadening among the leadership. The opportunity to participate. Not confining it to the commission structure. Could very well give you a much better representation of leadership that is part of what you want to have around the table [32:00] for those

educational events and to show -- and to present the face of the lay leadership (inaudible).

M1: Yeah I'm going to go on to other subjects. But I just want to make one comment. This was a gathering of a different nature than we've been discussing here. But we had a reception for Dick Schifter. Yeah we had a reception for Dick Schifter who had just become ambassador to the UN, and who holds a very important position there in the American delegation. He's our representative to the Security Council. He's a member of our board of governors, he's a member of the steering committee. And a broad list of people were invited to that of the membership, of the officers and the membership of the steering committee. Many had indicated they were going to attend. I personally felt very embarrassed at the attendance that we had at that gathering. [33:00] At the last minute, day before I guess and even the day of it, we started making calls and inviting others. Even people who are not either members of the board or others within AJC to try to have a decent attendance. Now that's something that I feel that at least members of the steering committee who are available in the area ought to have made a real effort to participate in. And I felt very disappointed. And I know many of us did at the response that we had. Those of you who were there for

that occasion. We had a fair attendance after all this effort. But it wasn't the attendance from this commission, from the steering committee. This is of a different nature. But it's nevertheless one of the things that I'm concerned about. Yes, [Bea?]. Move on after you.

BEA: I just want to thank you for making that statement because [34:00] I've been to a half a dozen of these things. And I've always felt that it was a special privilege to be invited to one. I come when I can. I didn't quite recognize that it was felt by (inaudible) an obligation that those of us who are on this committee should attend. I think you'll probably get a better attendance now that people feel that it is an obligation (inaudible) committee and (inaudible) come to these things.

M1: OK, thanks. We're running out of time. So unless it's something --

CAROLINE: I think (inaudible) somehow we missed out by not (inaudible).

BEA: I think that was (inaudible).

M1: No, it was in between. It was in between. [35:00] All right. May I pass? I think we've gotten some very good suggestions out of this discussion. And perhaps we ought to make it clear to the members of the steering committee and the commission and others why we think a given event is of

some importance or some value that they should make an effort to attend. And we'll try to follow up on the suggestions that are made.

TANENBAUM: (inaudible).

M1: Yes.

M3: Similarly meetings of laypeople with some of the government officials (inaudible) meetings with government officials in Washington in which laypeople participate is also terribly terribly important. Good impression is made there (inaudible) I think we ought to also plan on letting the members of the steering commission know that it's an obligation also to be available every now and then for that kind of consultation.

M1: Thanks. That's something I should have mentioned, but I think it's absolutely true. Yes, Richie.

RICHIE: If you're going to do that, then I think you have to [36:00] limit the number of certain types of guests for whom you have meetings. Seems to me that all we need is an Israeli to come over here. Deputy commissioner of tourism. And if he wants to have a meeting with the American Jewish Committee, you arrange a reception for him. And that's ridiculous.

M1: I agree.

RICHIE: Not entitled to it. We don't learn anything from him.

And he gets a free lunch, and that's about it. So I think you've got to limit that kind of --

M1: I absolutely agree, Richie, I've already made the observation that there are several that I've come into New York for that I think were total wastes. And didn't justify a luncheon meeting. But I agree with you. All right. May we go on to the second item of this, on the agenda? The reorganization of the [37:00] commission's task forces or subcommittees. I'm going to let Marc introduce that subject.

TANENBAUM: There's an inherent connection I think between our present --

M1: May I just interrupt you? There is a memorandum in your file. I hope you -- it's the yellow one. Go ahead.

TANENBAUM: I think there's an inherent connection between our discussion about these meetings and becoming involved in them with this next proposal. The proposal which you'll find in your kit -- I put my hands on it here. That which deals with the yellow report. Revised proposal for creation of special committees for regional areas. [38:00] Was drafted in response to our chairman's request, who had been giving some serious thought about reconstituting the method of our operation in terms of both our professional

functioning as well as in terms of lay involvement. I think as many of you know that have been paying attention to our work, we have sought during the course of the past year to redefine some of the objectives of the work of our international relations activity. It's become clear to us that for us to be effective in more than the routine and conventional ways in which many Jewish organizations operate in terms of the Jewish agenda, in terms of the interests of Israel, interpreting Israel's concerns, defending Israel's interests, Soviet Jewry, problems of anti-Semitism, disadvantaged Jewish communities, Falashas, [39:00] Syrian Jews and others, that over and above the classic way in which we've been operating, that there's a whole new dynamic on the international scene. And that if we want to be effective, it's essential for us to understand the nature of the whole geopolitical dynamic that we're dealing with in Western Europe, in Central and South America, as well as in other areas. And so during the course of the past year we've started with a series of probes to ascertain for ourselves whether there's something real for us to do in terms of widening our horizons, and taking the agendas that we're dealing with, Israel, Soviet Jewry, etc., and seeing if we can use our relationships with other governments in Western Europe, Central and South

America [40:00] to advance these interests. And I think it became clear to those of us who were on the French mission that we had moved into something which is an important augmentation of our whole area of foreign policy work. I think the kinds of things we were able to do with the French government with regard to Soviet Jewry, raising issues about the United Nations and finding ways to try to curb the hostility toward Israel and Jews, broad areas of concern on human rights, questions of Israel, France's relationship to Israel and African countries where France is a major factor. Became clear to us that this was not simply public relations work. That we were involved in some increasingly serious diplomatic work that was having impact. I don't think any of us want to play games with claiming credit, but I have no question [41:00] from everything we've picked up from the French Jewish community that our meeting with Mitterrand and Cheysson and the members of the French cabinet was a decisive factor in leading Mitterrand to bring President Theo Klein, the president of the Jewish committee of France, for the first time as an official member of the delegation of the French government to the Soviet Union. And that Mitterrand went publicly on Sakharov and French Jews and Soviet Jewry, etc. Now that's a rather circuitous way of getting at the point

I want to make, namely that in that work, in the work that has been done in Germany, the work that Bill Trosten had pioneered many years ago in terms of exchanged delegations and other programs we have going in Germany, that AJC in particular, because of the perception of the quality of our leadership, their influence, people of standing of their communities, political activism, that we have [42:00] increasingly found for ourselves a role to play in relationship to governments and major agencies in governments in Western Europe. We found now the same thing in Central America and in South America. The point of this proposal is to try to give some structure, some definition. And develop a program plan that will enable us to work systematically and comprehensively with a series of priorities, clearly defined objectives, in Western Europe, Central and South America. Now much of this has been developing by way of our probing around in staff. And for me this has been my first year's work in it. But it is now clear that we have to create some mechanism that enables our lay leadership to become personally involved in using their own resources, their own abilities, to enable us to work cooperatively with the professional staff in rendering our impact more [43:00] effective in each of these areas. And therefore in our discussions with Leo and with other of

our officers, we have proposed in this plan the setting up of at least four major -- I prefer calling them task forces or special committees if one wants to be less dramatic about it -- of small groups of AJC leadership. Particular AJC lay leadership that may have special competence in regions of the world. We found when we set up the meeting for Madame Cresson, the French minister of commerce and tourism, that a number of members of AJC, our lay leaders, were heavily involved in business with France. Norman Alexander of the Sun Chemical Company was heavily involved in business with France. Walter Gips, electronics work in France. And these are people. And it was a two-way usefulness in the relationship with Madame Cresson. They got something out of it [44:00] in terms of having access to her they were not able to have in the same way before. She in turn developed a whole new attitude toward our role as a bridge with the Jewish leadership in this country. My own sense is that among our lay leadership there are people who may be involved in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, other countries in Europe, who would be an enormous access augmenting our work in that field if they were to become a lay advisory body, policy-making body, in the area of our work in Western Europe. And similarly that is true in Central America where particularly in our Miami chapter now

we've found a number of our laypeople are actively involved in business. There are lawyers involved, bankers involved, people involved in trade and commerce in Central America and South America. But we deal with them now on a kind of informal casual basis. You need somebody, you look around to pull a name out of the hat. That's not the way to run this operation. And so our need is to [45:00] create a structure where we bring people in who consult together, who think through the issues together, who help us provide policy guidelines on what we ought to be doing during the course of the next three months, six months, the next year and perhaps beyond that. So this proposal is put before you at Leo's suggestion for the sake of trying to give some definition to these areas of work. Now there have been committees in the past that have dealt with this. Our intention is to try to give this some concrete form. Not only lay leadership but where necessary to bring in academics, technical experts. And incidentally there is an extraordinary number of Jewish academics around the country who are expert in each of these areas with whom we have very limited, very minimal contact, who could become involved with us in thinking through our approaches in these areas. One area that I have referred to is that which is one of Leo's special contributions to our thinking

through. Namely our relationship to foreign diplomats at the United Nations. [46:00] Especially third world diplomats. People from Africa, from Asia, as well as from South America. And there, by way of background, we had a meeting this Thursday night with Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations. And the Israelis are moving now with a number of Jewish organizations to want to give some high priority to that. Netanyahu has asked me to come over to see him next week. He wants to make a special approach to AJC.

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