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Authority NND 969049

By CM NARA Date 6-12-03

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1972-9-23, Assad, Jews, US

SEP 23 1972

Mr. Abraham Dwek  
President, Committee for  
Rescue of Syrian Jews  
1750 East Fourth Street  
Brooklyn, New York 11223

Dear Mr. Dwek:

Thank you for your letter of September 6 and the opportunity to comment further on several of the points you raised in that letter.

You will remember I wrote you that we feel a direct approach to the Syrian Government in the present circumstances would be counterproductive to our efforts to ease the plight of the Syrian Jewish community. Since I wrote you on September 1, perhaps as a consequence of the Munich tragedy and subsequent Israeli retaliation, the Syrian Government has manifested an increased degree of hostility toward the United States. I have carefully reexamined this problem in light of your renewed request for an official U. S. approach to the Syrian Government and have regretfully concluded that recent developments only further strengthen our previous judgment that such an effort would be unwise and harmful to the best interests of the unfortunate Jewish community in Syria.

With regard to your query about parole authority, the authority to parole individuals into the United States under Section 212(d) (5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act rests with the Attorney General. Thus it is his prerogative to determine what authority he possesses under the parole provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act. There has been a great deal of discussion within the Government on the subject of the parole authority, principally in connection with the use of the parole for Soviet Jews. For the reasons outlined in my letter of September 1, we have not pursued the route of parole authority for Syrian Jews. Further, Mr. Gaynor Jacobson of HIAS has told us that most of the Jewish organizations here in the United States that we consult with regularly do not want blanket invocation of the parole authority, but prefer a quiet administrative approach, such as the parole in behalf of relatives.

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Our direct approach to the Syrian Government with a proposal to make immigrant visas available for Syrian Jews having relatives in the United States is a serious attempt to be responsive to the suggestions about the use of the parole and ease the plight of Syrian Jews. This approach avoids the public negotiations with the Syrian authorities which have been so deleterious in the past.

Ambassador Bush is well aware of the plight of Syrian Jews. On May 11 he personally replied to Mr. Hoffman's letter. Ambassador Bush feels as I do that at least for the time being the best way to cope with this problem is through quiet diplomacy.

Finally, I want to assure you that I, my colleagues at the United States Mission to the UN and all levels of the United States Government are seized with the plight of Syrian Jews. Even in the absence of diplomatic relations we attempt to keep informed about the condition of the Jewish community in Syria, and I am pleased to tell you that we have been moderately successful in this effort. You should know that there is no humanitarian issue which has a higher priority for us all.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Sisco  
Assistant Secretary  
Near East and South  
Asian Affairs

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NEA/ARN - Mr. Scotese  
IO/UNP - Mr. Greene  
NEA - Mr. Atherton