

# WASHINGTON DATELINE

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN

## ISRAELITE'S WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

President Gerald Ford opened his press conference last week with a statement about the latest reports of attempts in the international banking community to discriminate against certain institutions or individuals on religious or ethnic grounds.

"There should be no doubt about the position of this Administration and the United States," he asserted. "Such discrimination is totally contrary to the American tradition and repugnant to American principles. It has no place in the free practice of commerce as it has flourished in this country.

"Foreign businessmen and investors are most welcome in the United States when they are willing to conform to the principles of our society. However, any allegations of discrimination will be fully investigated and appropriate action taken under the laws of the United States."

The President was asked if the United States is planning some sort of action against the Arab nations that have embargoed Jewish-owned banks.

"All we have so far are some allegations," he replied. "I have asked the Departments of Justice, Commerce, and State to investigate any allegations. The actual action that would be taken will be forthcoming from recommendations by those departments. They have not been placed on my desk at the present time."

President Ford spoke up in the wake of

accusations by Seymour Graubard, National Chairman, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, who accused the Army Corps of Engineers and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation of violating the Civil Rights laws in their discriminatory practice against Jews.

Other companies charged with violating the Civil Rights Act of 1964 include: Bendix-Siyanco Co; Ashland Chemical Co; Chase Manhattan Bank; Guaranteed Mortgage Services; Dresser Corp; Wizard Mortgage Banking Corp; and International Service of Princeton, New Jersey.

Gerald Parksy, an Assistant Secretary of Treasury, said that the U.S. has had no evidence that Saudi Arabia or American companies doing business with the country discriminated against American firms on the assumption they had business ties with -- or had investments in -- Israel. He indicated, however, that U.S. officials would express "Congressional and other public concern about the boycott."

Meanwhile, Cong. Henry A. Waxman (D. Calif.), a freshman representative of the Jewish faith, almost didn't make an official visit to the Mideast -- until the State Department intervened on his behalf. Just prior to a scheduled trip with other members of the House Armed Services Committee -- on a military and political survey of the Middle East -- Waxman was notified by the Saudi Arabian Embassy that his visa application would be turned down. The incident was revealed, and caused much embarrassment to the State Department, after Waxman wrote a protest letter to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

Waxman, 36, sent the letter upon his return last week from the ten-day trip which took the

group to Israel, Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

"I consider it an outrage that a U.S. congressman, or any other American citizen should be denied entrance into a nation with which we have full diplomatic relations because of his religion," Waxman wrote. "It is my unfortunate conclusion that had I not been a congressman, my request to visit Saudi Arabia would have been denied and that the State Department would not have intervened on my behalf.

"During my meeting with King Faisal, I asked about his country's anti-Jewish position. He told us openly and publicly that there is no room for a Jewish homeland in the Middle East and that there is no room for Jews, even as visitors in Saudi Arabia. His answer greatly disturbed all of us there. The vehemence of his remarks left no doubt that the distinction he sometimes makes between Jews and Zionists is an academic one as far as Saudi Arabia is concerned."

Waxman further stated: "As an American citizen, I am ashamed of what appears to be our Government conduct in this matter. It is an insult to talk of strengthening and improving our relations with Saudi Arabia by adopting this vicious discriminatory practice against our own citizens. If we accept this kind of anti-Jewish discriminatory practice against our own citizens, If we accept this kind of anti-Jewish discrimination, it is a clear sign that we will tolerate an escalated anti-Jewish campaign from the Arab world."

Rep. Waxman said he expects that Dr. Kissinger (the first Secretary of State of the Jewish faith) will look into the situation.

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