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The American Jewish Committee protects the rights and freedoms of Jews the world over; combats bigotry and anti-Semitism and promotes human rights for all; works for the security of Israel and deepened understanding between Americans and Israelis; advocates public policy positions rooted in American democratic values and the perspectives of the Jewish heritage; and enhances the creative vitality of the Jewish people. Founded in 1906, it is the pioneer human-relations agency in the U.S.

## **AJCOMMITTEE DELEGATION TOLD THAT JAPAN PROMOTING END TO ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL**

**TOKYO, December 3...**Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe has informed an American Jewish Committee delegation that leading Japanese companies have been advised to no longer cooperate with the Arab economic boycott of Israel. In addition, Japan has expressed its "disapproval" of the boycott and called for its "suspension" to the Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council, and separately, through its ambassadors, to a number of Arab countries including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

This meeting with the Foreign Minister marked the first ever between a Japanese Foreign Minister and an American Jewish delegation.

The Japanese government told the American Jewish Committee leaders it is calling for an end to the periodic investigation of Japanese companies that have defied the boycott, as well as an end to adding new names to a list of such companies. To this end, Japanese chambers of commerce have agreed to end their previous practice of issuing "negative certificates of origin" which attest to products being free of parts made in Israel. The certificates had been used to demonstrate compliance with the boycott.

The American Jewish Committee delegation, led by Robert Rifkind, Chairman of the agency's Board of Governors, and David Harris, Executive Vice President, also met with officials from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Japan Export Trade Organization (JETRO) and Keidanren, the leading Japanese Business Association. The American Jewish Committee group was told of plans to expand Japanese commercial contacts with Israel, including several high-level Japanese economic missions to Israel which are planned for the coming months. To date, while Japanese-Israeli bilateral trade has been growing, joint ventures and investments have lagged behind.

Other topics on the American Jewish Committee agenda in Japan included the Arab - Israeli peace process in which Japan is playing a significant role in multi-lateral talks; the challenge posed by Iran in the Middle East - a country with which Japan maintains extensive diplomatic links; continuing manifestations of anti-Semitism in some Japanese newspapers and magazines; enhancing understanding between Japanese and Jews, and negative stereotyping of Japanese in the United States.

In addition to Foreign Minister Watanabe, the American Jewish Committee group met with the Deputy Foreign Minister, Vice Foreign Minister, Directors General of the North American Bureau and the Public Information Bureau, and the Deputy Director General of the Middle Eastern and African Bureaus. The group also held meetings with the U.S. and Israeli ambassadors, representatives of the parliament, media and banking sectors, and leaders of the tiny Jewish community in Tokyo.

The American Jewish Committee leadership delegation is in Japan on its eleventh visit since the founding of its Pacific Rim Institute in 1988.

Dr. Neil Sandberg, director of the American Jewish Committee's Pacific Rim Institute, staffed the delegation visit. Other delegation members were: Richard Davimos of Boca Raton, Florida; Bert and Buff Given of Los Angeles, and Arlene Rifkind of New York City.

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