

Chronological: Loan Guarantees to Israel

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers
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**STATEMENT OF
DANIEL K. INOUE
SEPTEMBER 25, 1991**

Mr. President, on September 10th, my colleague, Senator Kasten, and I, announced our intention to introduce an amendment providing for ~~\$10 billion in loan~~ guarantees for Soviet and Ethiopian immigrant absorption in Israel.

*\$10 billion
in loans for*

At that time, we informed our fellow Senators that a dialogue was underway with the Administration on certain technical aspects of our proposal and that once these issues were resolved, we would move swiftly to bring the legislation up for formal debate. This, we intend to do. This we will do at the earliest possible moment.

In the meantime, however, the President has asked that we delay consideration of the guarantee amendment for 120 days. Although Senator Kasten and I would like to proceed expeditiously on this urgent issue, we have agreed to the President's request, confident that ultimately this issue will be brought to a successful conclusion.

Our decision, today, to formally introduce our absorption guarantee amendment, begins the process of deliberation on this important issue. In doing so, we believe we are remaining true to our colleagues and our commitment to resolve this issue in comity with the Administration. We believe strongly that this proposal supports American national interests and that it will be treated with the importance it deserves.

In our many discussions, the President has assured us that he remains committed to the cause of Soviet Jewry and is cognizant of the significant impact that the influx of nearly one million new citizens will have on the Israeli economy -- a 25 percent increase in the country's population in just five years!

We believe that the President recognizes the urgency of resettlement. We remain convinced of his sincerity on the matter of Soviet absorption and his willingness to meet this great humanitarian challenge as he has met others in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Kurdistan and the Philippines -- with compassion, with understanding and with characteristic American generosity.

Similarly, Senator Kasten and I believe that the President recognizes the danger of resurgent Russian nationalism and anti-Semitism and the hardship which any slowdown in absorption could mean to many hundreds-of-thousands of Jews awaiting emigration.

The coming winter months will be difficult for the Soviet people. A counter-revolution, sparked by mass starvation and suffering, could bring totalitarianism back to the Soviet Union and lead, once again, to the captivity of the remaining Jewish population.

We hope and pray that this frightening prospect does not come true. We trust, that in requesting a 120 day delay of our guarantee proposal, the President and his advisors have seriously considered this possibility and have drawn up plans accordingly.

Mr. President, over the past several weeks, Senator Kasten and I have sought the bipartisan counsel of our colleagues on the matter of absorption guarantees. We have been most gratified by the overwhelming support which our proposal has received, as evidenced by the number of Democrats and Republicans who have asked to co-sponsor our amendment. As my colleague, Senator Kasten, already has stated, the vast majority of our colleagues join us today as co-sponsors of this amendment.

There should be no doubt that the commitment of the American People to Israel remains strong. There should be no doubt that Congress will support loan guarantees to Israel -- not because it is convenient or expedient, but because it is right!

For nearly a quarter of a century, the liberation of Soviet Jewry has been a cornerstone of American foreign policy. As Americans, as free men, we have yearned for the day when all of the captive peoples of the Soviet Union would be set free. Today, that time has come.

Let us not squander this great opportunity to make good our vows. History will judge us not by our proclamations, but by our deeds. The Soviet immigrants to Israel need our help. Let us be the first to answer the call.