

# The Jewish Veteran<sup>®</sup>



## National Commander Visits Europe and NATO

by Ira Brett Greenspan

National Commander Edward D. Blatt and a group of JWV leaders departed on November 13 for an overseas fact finding trip. National Commander Blatt and his wife, Kay, and Past National Commander Samuel Greenberg, and his wife, Barbara, visited Belgium, Germany, and England, meeting with various government and community leaders. Past National Commander Robert M. Zweiman and his wife, Geraldine, accompanied Commander Blatt on the London, England leg of the trip. Each year, the JWV National Commander travels overseas presenting JWV's interests in America's national security and international concerns.

Commander Blatt was briefed in each country by American embassy and military officials. The briefings consisted of updates on current U.S. military roles in the countries, security issues in the individual regions, threats to troops, troop morale and the relationships between American troops and the local population. Commander Blatt was also briefed on the countries' current political situations and their relationship with other European governments.

Since the end of the Cold War, and the outbreak of war in various parts of Europe, America's relationship with

its European allies has entered a new phase. National Commander Blatt witnessed the political climate first hand and concluded that we still support the Clinton Administration policy of not sending U.S. troops to the emerging nations. "America can not be the free world's army," Commander Blatt stated. "However, it is JWV's position that America's military posture must remain strong and prepared".

National Commander Blatt believes that the U.S. military would be substantially weakened if administration and congressional budget cutters successfully push for massive and premature reductions while the world is still unstable and dangerous. Military officials pointed out that there are *already warning signs that U.S. troops are being hurt by cuts in the budget.* These officials explained that the environment in which these troops operate can change overnight and, as a result, U.S. troops must be ready at a moment's notice. Blatt agreed with these experts, stating "America should not repeat the errors of previous cut-backs. Such actions could lead to an unnecessary loss of American lives."

National Commander Edward D. Blatt also met with Jewish community leaders during his trip, such as Mr. Kalmanowicz, a representative of the Jewish community in Munich,

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## The VA and the New National Health Plan

### The Clinton Administration View

*What follows is an outline of the Clinton Administration perspective as to how the VA will fit into National Health Reform.*

#### VA Today

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today operates the nation's largest centrally managed health-care delivery system. Its capabilities encompass the full continuum of medical care from primary treatment and sophisticated tertiary services to rehabilitation and long-term care.

The primary VA mission is to provide high-quality medical and ancillary services to eligible military veterans. The magnitude of VA in the current national health-care environment is demonstrated in many ways:

- Operates 171 medical centers and over 300 clinics nationwide
- Employs over 240,000 professional, technical and support personnel
- Delivers hospital and nursing home care annually to over 1 million patients

- Provides 24 million outpatient treatment visits a year
- Conducts an internationally renowned research program
- Is affiliated with over 100 American medical schools
- Educates and trains over 100,000 health professionals in the U.S. annually
- Has unique expertise in areas including spinal cord injury, PTSD, prosthetics, substance abuse, blind rehabilitation
- VA's hospital-based dental care system is the nation's largest
- Operates special programs for women veterans, the homeless, chronically mentally ill, and brain-injured persons
- Maintains Federal-State partnerships for veterans' nursing homes that each year care for more than 16,000 patients.
- Contracts with private sector community hospitals and nursing homes

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*The Vietnam Women's Memorial, Washington, D.C., by sculptor Glenna Goodacre, is the culmination of over 10 years of effort by Diane Carlson Evans, a former army nurse, and thousands of volunteers. Installed at the Vietnam Memorial, the sculpture honors over 265,000 women who served during the 12 years of the Vietnam war.*

**JWV Year in Review**  
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**FORUM**

**Letters To The Editor**

Jonathan Pollard

Dear Editor,

I am writing to applaud the positions PNC Albert Schlossberg and the Jewish War Veterans have taken on Jonathan Pollard, *The Jewish Veteran*, Fall 1993.

I, too, have heard Carol Pollard speak about her brother and his "sacrifice" for Israel. Her argument can be summarized in three sentences. Jonathan Pollard discovered that a United States agency withheld critical military information from Israel. He found this intolerable and decided to commit espionage. Recognizing Israel's vulnerability, American Jews should applaud and not condemn his actions.

An emotional basis for the argument - Israel's vulnerability - is a very powerful one. It greatly affected me. The problem is, who gets to decide where good intentions end and treason begins? Jonathan Pollard? Carol Pollard? Any State or Defense Department employee who comes to believe that an injustice has been done?

Ms. Pollard's view that other spies have done worse and received lighter sentences doesn't exonerate her brother. Such statements only indicate that our courts don't always work properly, which will not come as news to most people.

The JWV Resolutions Committee behaved honorably by relying on judicial review to determine its policy in this matter. If Jonathan Pollard did not receive a fair trial or if he can produce new evidence, he should receive all possible assistance. And, if results warrant, he should receive a commutation or a reduction of sentence.

But, as American Jews, let's not call for two sets of laws, one for us and the other for everybody else. That's a ghetto mentality working in reverse.

Sincerely,

Milton Goldin  
 White Plains Post 191  
 White Plains, NY

Dear Editor,

I must take issue with the current policy of the JWV in opposing a commutation or reduction of Jonathan Pollard's prison sentence, *The Jewish Veteran*, Fall 1993. Let me emphasize that I am not defending or condoning his crime. But, I detest the way the government and the Jewish community, including JWV, has treated this case.

Jonathan Pollard had pleaded guilty and cooperated with the government. In its plea bargain agreement, the government promised to advise the judge that since the information provided by Pollard was of considerable

... AND IF OUR HEALTH PLAN IS PASSED, AMERICA ILLWAY OTNAY EEDNAY ETERANSVAY OSPITALSHAY: WE'LL SAVE A BUNDLE!!!



value to the government's damage assessment analysis, a sentence of "a substantial period of incarceration" would be recommended. As you know, the plea bargain was disregarded and a life imprisonment sentence was imposed.

The sentence Pollard received far exceeded any prison term ever given for spying for an ally, and was even greater than the average term given for the crime of spying for the Soviet Union. Yet, the Jewish community remained silent.

It seems to me that the JWV is bending over backwards to show the non-Jewish community how impartial we are. In reality, the JWV is overreacting to Pollard's crime by failing to acknowledge the injustice of the sentence imposed. To paraphrase a quote from Alan Dershowitz in his book, "Chutzpah": "As an American and as a Jewish war veteran, I hereby express my outrage at Jonathan Pollard's sentence of life imprisonment for the crime to which he pleaded guilty." I hoped that JWV would have done the same.

Sincerely,

Edwin A. Morgenstern  
 Lt. Howard E. Greenberg Post 692  
 Silver Spring, MD

**Jews Should Support Palestinian Elections**

Dear Editor,

As Jews, we look especially at Israel's relationship with the Palestinians. True, there has been blood lost on both sides. But with a handshake on the White House lawn, the world has changed. Our horizons are open to new opportunities and we can begin anew.

In June, if not before, the Palestinians will have local elections in Jericho and Gaza. We must offer concrete support to these historic elections. It is the only way to support stability in the region. It is also the best way to insure Israel's survival.

Israel cannot afford for its newest neighbors to be unstable. It cannot allow Palestinian frustration to grow. The long term viability of Middle East

peace mandates commitment to democratization and to the economic success of the Palestinian community.

Success will be measured by the ability of the newly elected Palestinian officials to deliver public services - jobs, water, schools, clinics, roads, housing and peace. Israel's neighbors will look closely at each step. Each stumbling block will be magnified by extremists looking to promote instability in the region and an end to the Jewish state.

As ironic as it may seem, the Palestinians may form the first true Arab Democracy. And the Palestinians success at the ballot box will echo loudly in the surrounding Arab states.

As the elections in Jericho and Gaza near, political parties will form and candidates will take positions. Candidates need to have the freedom of expression, advanced communication skills, and ways of reaching voters. Campaign and governance training should be made readily available so that opinions and goals can be disseminated and evaluated in an open marketplace of ideas.

Voters must have ample information about their range of choices and the freedom to vote for whom they choose. They must be free of intimidation or coercion by any of the parties involved.

The importance of success cannot be underestimated. In a world filled with extremist, we cannot afford to let anger grow. Israel needs stable neighbors. The Arab world's first real experiments with democracy need to be met with success.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Laszlo, President  
 Laszlo and Associates  
 Washington, D.C.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: The author is organizing non-partisan campaign and governance training in Jericho. She**

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PNC Irvin Steinberg wishes to express his appreciation and thanks to all those who sent get well messages, cards and certificates from the Museum to him during his recent illness. He cannot thank all of you enough.

**Where We Stand**

by Albert Schlossberg, National Editor

In the vernacular, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" should apply to the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and hospital system.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA has consistently supported and worked with the Veterans Administration - now the Department of Veterans Affairs - to maintain and improve the broad range of medical services provided to our country's war veterans by a grateful nation.

Since becoming privy to Hillary Rodham Clinton's new outline of the "VA's Role in National Health Care Reform" (October 1993), we are concerned.

Unlike the "Doughboys" of WWI, when the GI's of WWII returned to civilian life, our country provided benefits to them which had been beyond the dreams of war veterans of previous American conflicts. Foremost amongst the enhanced benefits was the expansion and upgrading of the Veterans Administration and the VA hospital and medical system. That medical system has continued to grow and improve and is consistently highly rated, particularly in many specialized areas of medicine, as one of the world's best.

When, during the Bush administration, a trial balloon was floated which would have opened up admission to V.A. hospitals to non-veterans, the Jewish War Veterans, allied with all other veterans' organizations succeeded in shooting down that first assault. We were convinced that it would have diluted the raison d'etre of the VA's medical and hospital programs.

Now, a careful reading of Mrs. Clinton's outline of her vision of the VA medical system of the future demonstrates that JWV must unalterably oppose inclusion of a revision to the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and hospital system which could ultimately replace it with a national health plan created primarily for America's non-veteran population.

In her presentation Mrs. Clinton first praised current VA medical facilities, personnel, expertise in highly specialized medical fields and "...global budget experience (which) is well suited to efficient resource allocation and cost-containment principles."

But careful examination of her delineation of "Problems Confronting Today's VA", caused us to recognize many danger signals for those of us who labor to protect the existing VA medical system. Example: Mrs. Clinton, after stipulating that service connected disabilities and minimal income are, today, prerequisites for admission to VA medical care, goes on to say that the "VA's complex eligibility rules are seen as urgently needing simplification."

Currently, America's war veterans know and accept the fact that priority admission to VA facilities and care are given to veterans who have service

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