

under <u>United States v. Powell</u>, 379 U.S. 48 (1964). (Ord., ECF Doc. 4). Accordingly, respondent bears the heavy burden of demonstrating that enforcement of summons would be an abuse of the Court's process. <u>United States v. Stuart</u>, 489 U.S. 353, 360 (1989).

On October 25, \_\_\_\_\_, respondent filed, then amended without substantive change, his response to the petition. (ECF Docs. 8 and 10). The response does not contest that the IRS made out a *prima facie* case. Instead, it raises two affirmative defenses to enforcement of the summons. Respondent contends that he (1) has complied (or at least substantially complied) with the summons by producing certain documents and testimony requested in the summons and (2) does not possess or control the remaining documents. (Resp., ECF Doc. 10 at 4-5). Both contentions, however, lack merit. Respondent has thus far produced only a fraction of the documents requested in the summons, and he has not averred specific facts demonstrating that he conducted a diligent good faith search for the summonsed documents.

### II. Analysis

### A. Respondent has not complied with the summons

Respondent's first contention, that he has complied with the summons, can be dispensed of summarily. The IRS has identified two undisclosed Israeli bank accounts that respondent held. (Declaration of Decl) ¶ 4). One account is at the First International Bank of Israel (FIBI); the other is at Bank Leumi le-Israel B.M. (BLI). (Id.). According to respondent, he has complied with the summons by subjecting himself to an interview, providing account statements, and demonstrating that the balances in the accounts were eventually repatriated to accounts based in the United States. (Resp., ECF No. 10 at 4-5). It is true that respondent was interviewed, produced

Although the opposition mentions the four <u>Powell</u> factors, it does not contend that the summons was issued for an improper purpose, that the information and documents sought could not be relevant to the IRS's investigation, that the IRS is already in possession of the summonsed documents, or that the IRS did not comply with all procedural steps under the Internal Revenue Code. <u>See Powell</u>, 379 U.S. at 57-58.

conducted by the IRS wa

, before the summons was issued.

The summons also requested that respondent produce various documents relating to any foreign entities that he controlled, including articles of incorporation, assignment agreements, and documents identifying the beneficial owners of the entities. (Id.). However, respondent has not yet produced any of these documents to the IRS. (Decl. ¶ 21). Nor has he provided for any documents alleged to be "destroyed. . . or otherwise unavailable . . . a description of the document and identify the last known custodian of the document by name, address and telephone number," as indicated in the summons. (Pet., ECF Doc. 1 at 15).

### B. Respondent has not substantially complied with the summons

Relatedly, respondent asserts that the summons should not be enforced because he has "substantially complied" with the summons. (Resp., ECF Doc. 10, p. 4). As described above, respondent has not substantially complied with the summons because there are numerous documents requested by the IRS that have not been produced. In any event, no "substantial compliance" defense is available to respondent. The IRS is authorized by 26 U.S.C. § 7602 to summon any person for the purpose of "examin[ing] any books, papers records or other data which may be relevant" to the IRS's inquiry (emphases supplied). This authority is "quite broad," Holifield v. United States, 909 F.2d 201, 205 (7th Cir. 1990), and "reflects Congress' express intention to allow the IRS to obtain items of even potential relevance to an ongoing investigation." United States v. Arthur Young & Co., 465 U.S. 805, 814 (1984). As such, restrictions on this power are to be avoided, absent unambiguous Congressional direction. Id. at 816; Tiffany Fine Arts, Inc. v. United States, 469 U.S. 310, 318 (1985).

The unproduced documents are of obvious relevance to the IRS's investigation. The IRS investigation concerns, among other things, how respondent initially funded his Israeli accounts and accordingly requested documents such as opening deposit slips and signature cards. Decl. ¶ 19.d). However, respondent has not provided account statements or documents demonstrating when and how he funded his Israeli accounts. (Id. ¶¶ 17 and 19.d)

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The IRS is also determining whether to assert penalties against respondent. (Id. ¶ 3). Many of the documents requested in the summons are relevant to that issue, particularly with respect to the BLI account. In BLI entered into a deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) with the United States. It admitted "recommend[ing] that U.S. taxpayers utilize certain account features that would reduce the risk of U.S. tax authorities learning the identities of U.S. taxpayers who maintained undeclared accounts." (Id., Ex. 1 at 51). Such features included "hold mail" service, pursuant to which BLI would retain account statements, notices, and other documents addressed to U.S. taxpayers, rather than sending them to the customer's address in the United States, and the use of "assumed name" or "numbered" accounts, where the name of the account holder would not appear on any correspondence, account statements, communications, or notices. (Id.) Respondent may have utilized both of these services: his BLI account statement for includes a "hold mail" notation with a corresponding \$85.00 debit, and none of the statements he has thus far provided includes his name. (Id. ¶ 4.a. and c; Ex. 5).

BLI also admitted marketing certain loan products to U.S. taxpayers holding undeclared accounts in Israel. (Id. ¶ 5, Ex 1.) These loans "assisted U.S. taxpayers with concealing their assets and evading their U.S. tax obligations." (Id., Ex. 1 at 24). The products included "Standby Letter of Credit" (SBLC) loans, which were "issued by Bank Leumi USA [BLI's U.S. affiliate] [and] secured or collateralized by funds at [BLI]". (Id. ¶ 7). These loans allowed the accountholders to enjoy the economic benefits of their offshore accounts without directly repatriating the funds that they contained. (Id., Ex. 1 at 44). "Bank Leumi USA received interest payments on the loan and [BLI] separately collected a 'guaranty fee' or 'commission' for the issuance of the SBLC which together usually amounted to 1% of the loan amounts." (Decl. ¶ 7; Ex. 1 at 44). Respondent may have had one or more of these loans. The account statements that he has produced include various notations such as "renewal," "comm. guaran," and "issue commi". (Id. ¶ 4.b). Additionally, respondent indicated in an interview with the IRS

that Bank Leumi USA extended him a line of credit that he would using funds from his BLI account. Decl. ¶ 13; Ex. 2). Respondent has not produced to the IRS any documents detailing the terms of this line of credit. (Id.  $\P$  20).

In short, respondent has not substantially complied with the summons, and the documents he has failed to produce are germane to the IRS's investigation. If he possesses or controls any documents identified in the summons, he is required to produce them.<sup>3</sup>

## C. Respondent has not demonstrated that he does not possess or control the documents in the IRS summons

Respondent's final contention is that he does not possess or control the documents requested in the summons. Respondent asserts that he made "significant efforts (directly or through his attorney) to obtain the records requested in the summons". (Resp., ECF Doc. 10 at 6). However, respondent's alleged efforts were insufficient.

1. Respondent only sought account statements, rather than each document listed in the summons

The documents attached to the response indicate that respondent only attempted to secure account statements for his Israeli accounts, as opposed to each category of document requested in the summons. Letters and faxes sent to FIBI and BLI requested only that the banks provide "Annual Bank Statements in English for any and all accounts held at [the] bank." (Id. ¶¶ 9-10, Exs. 1-5). They did not request the other documents listed in the summons, such as the account opening information, loan agreements, or documents indicating how the accounts were funded. Similarly, respondent's declaration indicates that he called FIBI and BLI for over a year. But again, it appears that respondent only sought bank statements for the accounts, rather than each category

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Respondent also argues that "[a]ny further demands for production for [sic] documents would result in a fishing expedition". (Resp., ECF Doc. 8 at 5). However, there is no such prohibition on IRS summonses: "[s]ection 7602 authorizes the Secretary or his delegate 'to fish.'" <u>United States v. Luther</u>, 481 F.2d 429, 432-33 (9th Cir. 1973).

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of document listed in the summons. (Id. ¶ 8; Ex. 5 ("[respondent]] has been calling every branch of [FIBI] to get the [bank] statements on a weekly basis.")).

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2. The affidavit does not contain sufficient factual detail with respect to the other documents listed in the summons

Respondent further contends that he traveled to Israel in order to comply with the summons. What he did there, however, is unclear. His declaration indicates only that respondent "request[ed] all documents and information relating to my accounts at Bank Leumi and FIBI" but "all [he] received were bank statements." (ECF Doc. 10-1, ¶ 12). Such a "conclusory, self-serving [declaration], lacking detailed facts and any supporting evidence" does not discharge respondent's heavy burden. Larue v. United States, 2015 WL 9809798 at \*3 (D. Or. Dec. 22, 2015). Rather, to demonstrate that he has conducted a reasonable search for responsive materials, respondent is required to support his declaration with evidence or specific factual allegations demonstrating that he engaged in an iterative process in which he (1) identified potential sources of summonsed information, (2) took all reasonable steps to obtain information from those sources (including, if necessary pursuing rights under local law), and (3) using any newly discovered information to identify additional sources of summonsed information.<sup>4</sup> See <u>Larue</u>, 2015 WL 9809798 at \*3; <u>United States v. Seetapun</u>, 750 F.2d 601, 605 (7th Cir. 1984); United States v. Hayes, 722 F.2d 723, 725 (11th Cir. 1984) ("diligent efforts" insufficient to defeat contempt motion because "other avenues for obtaining the materials were never explored").

Respondent's declaration does not contain sufficient detail to demonstrate that he conducted a reasonably diligent search. He does not indicate, for instance, which bank branches he visited, the dates of those visits, who he talked to, what those individuals

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> As recognized in <u>Larue</u>, there is a relative dearth of authority regarding what a taxpayer must show to meet his burden of demonstrating a lack of possession, custody, or control of documents requested by the IRS. 2015 WL 9809798 at \*3. Nevertheless, the "iterative process" standard that the government suggests is fair, flexible, and commonsensical.

told him, or whether those individuals suggested additional leads respondent could pursue to obtain the documents in the summons. Without these basic details, his explanation strains credulity. Further, it is improbable that the banks at which he held the accounts would have only his account statements—how, for instance, were they able to confirm that the accounts belonged to respondent? BLI admitted setting up "numbered" accounts intended to shield the accountholder from U.S. taxing authorities and that it "kept records of the true identity of the client pursuant to [its] Know Your Customer obligations" with respect to such accounts. ( Decl. ¶ 9; Ex. 1). Respondent's assertions to the contrary, without additional factual detail regarding his efforts, are insufficient.

Other parts of respondent's affidavit are dubious. For instance:

- If, as respondent contends, the only purpose for visiting Israel was to retrieve bank records, why did respondent schedule a 10-day trip?
- Why did respondent not attempt to secure copies of documents through Bank Leumi USA?
- Why even take the trip in the first place? Respondent could have simply hired someone familiar with Israeli banks, such as an Israeli attorney, to retrieve the documents on his behalf.

In any event, the summons anticipated that respondent might not be able to secure copies of each document it requested. If respondent was unable to provide any of the documents, the summons requested that he "provide a description of the document and identify the last known custodian of the document by name, address and telephone number." (Petn., ECF Doc. 1, p. 15). Respondent has identified no such documents. Nor did he apparently request that representatives from the banks affirm, in writing, that there were no responsive documents. Indeed, it does not appear that respondent attempted to comply in earnest with the IRS summons until <u>after</u> the United States filed the petition and <u>after</u> the Court issued the show cause order. According to respondent's October 24, declaration, he sent, on October 24, BLI a letter requesting

"complete copies . . . of all documents and records in [its] possession, custody, control," relating to respondent's account, including account opening documents, correspondence, and other documents. (ECF Doc. 10-1 at 1). The letter, however, constitutes the only documentary evidence filed by respondent suggesting he has made a good faith effort to retrieve the summonsed documents.

In sum, respondent's affidavit contains little more than vague, unsupported, and conclusory allegations, which do not entitle him to an evidentiary hearing. Given the age and balances of respondent's Israeli accounts, it is not reasonable to infer that a diligent good-faith search would uncover only a few dozen pages of account statements. The Court should enforce the summons without an evidentiary hearing.<sup>5</sup>

# D. Even if the Court finds respondent has adequately pleaded and factually supported an affirmative defense, he is not entitled to dismiss the petition

The response concludes by suggesting that the Court dismiss the petition pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6). This request, however, is not well-taken. For one thing, it is procedurally improper. No notice of the motion was filed, as required by Local Rule 6-1, and there was no statement that the parties had conferred about the motion, as required by Local Rule 7-3. But even if respondent complied with the rules, the purported motion would fail. A motion filed under Fed. R. Civ. Pro. 12(b)(6) tests the sufficiency of the factual matters alleged in the complaint, which are taken as true and construed in the light most favorable to non-moving party. Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007); Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). Dismissal is appropriate only if the Court determines that the non-moving party has failed to allege sufficient facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face. Iqbal, 556 U.S. at 678 (quoting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> As noted above, respondent does not challenge the IRS's *prima facie* case. But even if he did, he would not be entitled to an evidentiary hearing. Such hearings are available only where the taxpayer "can point to specific facts or circumstances plausibly raising an inference of bad faith. Naked allegations of improper purpose are not enough: The taxpayer must offer some credible evidence supporting his charge." <u>United States v. Clarke</u>, 134 S.Ct. 2361, 2365 (2014). Here, respondent has not alleged institutional bad faith or offered credible evidence of an improper motive.

Twombly, 550 U.S. at 570). Since the government has pled a *prima facie* case for enforcement of the summons, dismissal under Rule 12(b)(6) is inappropriate. If the Court concludes that respondent's declaration has adequately supported an affirmative defense, the appropriate course—rather than dismissing the petition—is to hold an evidentiary hearing. Such a hearing would be limited to the issues of (1) whether respondent made a diligent good faith search for the records and (2) whether, despite that search, respondent actually lacked possession or control over summonsed records or information at the time of the summons or thereafter. Respondent would bear the burden of proof on these issues. Stuart, 489 U.S. at 360.

#### III. Conclusion

Respondent has neither rebutted the United States' *prima facie* case nor factually supported an affirmative defense. Accordingly, the Court should enforce the summons without an evidentiary hearing. It should also deny respondent's procedurally improper request to dismiss the petition. Alternatively, the Court should hold a limited evidentiary hearing to determine whether respondent made a diligent good faith search for the summonsed records and whether, despite that search, respondent actually lacks possession or control over summonsed records.

Dated: November 26, Respectfully submitted,

Chief, Tax Division s Attorney

States Attorney

Attorneys for Petitioner UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**DECLARATION OF** 

- , pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746(2), declare as follows:
- 1. This declaration supplements my declaration that was filed with the Petition. All of my previous statements are incorporated by reference.
- 2. I am currently investigating the federal tax liabilities of respondent Farajolla Kashani for the taxable periods ended December 31, 1997, through December 31, 1997.
- My investigation concerns, among other things, whether respondent received, but failed to report, income relating to foreign financial accounts that he held.
   I am also determining whether respondent is liable for penalties.
- 4. I have thus far identified two foreign financial account that respondent held. Both were in Israel. One account was at the First International Bank of Israel (FIBI).
- 5. Respondent's Bank Leumi-Israel account is of particular interest to the IRS. In Bank Leumi-Israel and affiliated entities, including Bank Leumi USA, its U.S. affiliate, entered into a deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) with the United States. A copy of the DPA, filed in United States District Court for the Central District of California case number is 2:14-CR-0731-UA, is attached as **Exhibit 1**.
  - 6. In the DPA, Bank Leumi-Israel and related entities admitted that they:

    offered an array of services and products that aided and assisted []

    U.S. taxpayers in opening and maintaining undisclosed accounts.

    These products and services included: (1) the issuance of guarantees and Standby Letters of Credit to collateralize loans issued by Bank Leumi, USA; (2) the use of offshore entities and the Bank Leumi Trust to serve as nominee accountholders; (3) the use of "Hold Mail" service that prevented any mail from [foreign Bank Leumi entities] from coming to the U.S. client in the United States; [and] (4) the use of 'assumed name' and 'numbered' accounts that

concealed the name of the U.S. account holder on all external correspondence. (Ex. 1 at 3,  $\P$  2)

- 7. According to the DPA, Bank Leumi-Israel marketed two types of loans, participation loans and loans guaranteed by Standby Letters of Credit (SBLCs), to U.S. account holder through Bank Leumi USA. (Id. at 43-44, ¶¶ 20-22). These loans allowed "U.S. taxpayers to enjoy the economic benefits of undeclared funds held offshore without repatriating the funds or creating a paper trail that could disclose the existence of the undisclosed foreign accounts to U.S. authorities." (Id. at 5, ¶ 2(C)). During the years under investigation, SBLC loans were more common than participation loans. These loans were issued by Bank Leumi USA and secured or collateralized by funds at a foreign Bank Leumi office, such as Bank Leumi-Israel. (Id. at 44, ¶ 22). Bank Leumi USA collected interest payments on the loan, and the foreign entity collected a "guaranty fee" or "commission," that was usually 1% of the loan amount. (Id.) The SBLC loans were oftentimes renewed on an annual basis. (Id.)
- 8. Bank Leumi-Israel also "recommended U.S. taxpayers utilize certain account features that would reduce the risk of U.S. taxing authorities learning the identities of U.S. taxpayers who maintained undeclared accounts." (Id. at 51, ¶¶ 48-49). One such feature was "Hold Mail" service, in which "every statement of account, notice or other document associated with the account would not be sent to the customer's address in the United States." (Id.) Instead, those documents would remain at the foreign branch. (Id.)
- 9. Another feature was the use of "assumed name" and "numbered" accounts. (Id. at 51-52, ¶ 51). For such accounts, Bank Leumi-Israel would "ke[ep] records of the true identity of the client pursuant to Know Your Customer obligations". (Id.) However, "the name of the account holder would not appear on any correspondence, account statements, communications, or notices". (Id.)
- 10. Bank Leumi-Israel also "actively assisted or facilitated a number of U.S. taxpayers in maintaining undeclared accounts by [among other things] . . . referring U.S.

beneficial owners of accounts to outside advisors to set up offshore corporations to act as nominee account holders, thereby concealing the U.S. taxpayers' beneficial ownership in the accounts." ( $\underline{Id}$ . at 4,  $\P$  2(A)). With respect to such accounts, Bank Leumi-Israel accepted and included certain false or misleading IRS forms representing that the offshore companies were the beneficial owners, for tax purposes, of the assets in the accounts. ( $\underline{Id}$ . at 50,  $\P$  44).

- 11. On March 28, I and several other Revenue Agents interviewed respondent in Encino, California. A memorandum I prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as **Exhibit 2**. Respondent attended the interview with prepared summarizing the interview is attached as attached as
- 12. During the interview, respondent indicated that around USA, Bank Leumi USA, Bank Leumi-Israel's U.S. affiliate, extended him a line of credit. Respondent would use the line of credit to pay his living expenses and repay the line of credit using funds from his Bank Leumi-Israel account. According to respondent, he stopped using the line of credit in ...
- 13. Respondent also indicated during the interview that between and , he would withdraw money from his Bank Leumi-Israel account by visiting Bank Leumi USA, which had a branch on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, California.
- 14. On February 8, I issued respondent the summons that is the subject of this case.
- 15. In April of in accordance with IRS procedures, see Internal Revenue Manual 4.60.1.2.1, I prepared a memorandum to the IRS's Large Business & International (LB&I) division's Exchange of Information (EOI) office. The EOI office is responsible for facilitating the exchange of documents with other countries. The memorandum requested that FIBI and Bank Leumi-Israel produce documents relating to

respondent's accounts. The documents I requested in the memorandum were substantially the same as those I requested in the summons. To date, neither FIBI nor Bank Leumi-Israel has produced any documents in response to my request.

- 16. My experience is that IRS requests for foreign financial records can take months or years to process. Further, the records are eventually produced are frequently sparse. In contrast, banks and other financial institutions process records requests made by account holders relatively quickly. That is why I issued respondent the summons underlying this case in addition to requesting the documents through the LB&I EOI office.
- 17. On July 17, respondent faxed me 15 pages of account statements, in Hebrew, relating to his FIBI account. Copies of these statements are attached as **Exhibit 3**. The statements cover to Respondent has not, to date, provided any documentation demonstrating how this account was funded or when it was closed. Nor has he provided English language translations of the account statements, as requested in the summons.
- 18. On October 11, respondent faxed me an annual statement for for his Bank Leumi-Israel account, along with various wire transfer confirmations and U.S. bank records demonstrating that he had repatriated the money in the Bank Leumi-Israel account in Copies of these documents are attached **Exhibit 4**.
- 19. On October 15, respondent emailed me respondent's annual Bank Leumi-Israel statements for through Copies of these documents are attached as **Exhibit 5**. After reviewing the statements, I noted the following:
  - a. The account statements do not include respondent's name, address, or any other identifying information. They contain only the account number. This suggests that the account was one of the "numbered" accounts referenced in the DPA.
  - b. The account statements include notations such as "renewal" "comm guaran" and "issue commi". These notations suggest that respondent received a

	loan product—possibly an SBLC loanfrom Bank Leumi-Israel or Bank Leumi		
	USA.		
		C.	Additionally, it appears that respondent requested "Hold Mail"
	servic	e with i	respect to this account. This is indicated by a "Hold Mail" notation
	dated 1/26 on respondent's statement. The notation has a corresponding		
	debit in the amount of \$85.00.		
		d.	The documents do not demonstrate when or how respondent
	funded the Israeli accounts.		
	20.	To da	te, respondent has not provided the following documents requested
in the summons:			
		a.	account applications
		b.	monthly or periodic statements (pre-
			and pre- for the FIBI account)
		C.	wire transfer authorizations and confirmations
		d.	deposit slips and deposited items
		e.	credit and debit memos and advices
		f.	cancelled checks
		g.	check registers
		h.	passbooks
		i.	loan applications
		j.	promissory notes
		k.	certificates of deposit
		I.	letters of credit
		m.	cashiers checks
		n.	money orders
		Ο.	safe deposit box rental agreements
		p.	safe deposit box visitation ledgers

all correspondence

q.

- memorandum files maintained by the bank or other financial institution or any of their officers or employees
- s. documents verifying the origin of all funds used to open the accounts or deposited into these accounts
- t. a certified translation into English for requested documents that are in any language other than English.
- any "Know Your Customer" information given to the financial institution by the taxpayer, including all account set up documents (e.g., signature cards, opening deposit slips, passport copies, certificates of beneficial ownership, letters of reference, certificates of clean funds, other source of funds documentation)
- v. Statements of certificate of deposit
- 21. Further, respondent has not produced any of the documents relating to foreign entities that he owned or controlled (if any).

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 14, at Laguna Niguel, California.