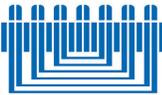


ADVOCATING FOR ISRAEL:

HISTORY, TOOLS AND TIPS

BALTIMORE
JEWISH
COUNCIL 


THE ASSOCIATED

A MESSAGE FROM THE BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL:

The publication of this guide, *Advocating for Israel: History, Tools and Tips*, provides an opportunity for those who support Israel to become more involved in advocating on its behalf. It is designed for those who are becoming politically active for the first time, as well as seasoned Israel supporters.

While many people have traveled to Israel, attended lectures, and/or read about the country, there are many who are not aware or comfortable with the process of advocacy. The purpose of this guide is to help bridge that gap.

This guide was not created for a “one-time” event; it is a resource that can sit in your home, office, classroom, or backpack and may be referred to at any time.

Information in this guide was developed from a variety of publications and web-based sources. We have made every effort to confirm the veracity of the facts presented.

To become more involved in Israel advocacy, please contact the Baltimore Jewish Council at 410-542-4850 or visit www.baltjc.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Event Timeline.....	2
Israel: Background.....	7
Key Words and Common Terms About Israel.....	9
Understanding Israel’s Government.....	11
Israel: Some Facts.....	13
Advocating for Israel.....	14
Writing a Letter to Your Representative.....	15
Meeting With Officials.....	17
Communicating Your Message.....	18
Representing Yourself, Your Organization and Israel.....	19
Talking to Reporters.....	19
Writing a <i>Letter to the Editor</i>	20
National Partner Organizations: Some Recommendations.....	21
Suggested Reading List.....	22
Resources on the Web.....	23
Things You Can Do to Support Israel.....	24
Israel: THE ASSOCIATED and its Agencies	25

Notes

EVENT TIMELINE

February 14, 1896

Publication of Theodor Herzl's treatise "The Jewish State"

August 29, 1897

Opening of the First Zionist Congress at Basel, Switzerland

November 2, 1917

Issuing of Balfour Declaration: British support for a "Jewish Homeland"

April 24, 1920

Britain assigned mandatory power over Palestine at the San Remo Conference

August 23, 1929

Arab attack on Jewish community of Hebron

April 15, 1936

Arab revolt begins

May 17, 1939

British White Paper limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine

December 1945

Initiation of Arab League Boycott (on the Jewish community of Palestine)

July 22, 1946

Irgun bombs King David Hotel

February 14, 1947

Britain gives U.N. responsibility for Palestine

November 29, 1947

U.N. Partition Plan approved (Resolution 181)

May 14, 1948

Declaration of the State of Israel

May 15, 1948-January 1949

War of Independence

January 25, 1949

Israel's first national election takes place; David Ben-Gurion elected Prime Minister

May 1950

Operation Ali Baba; brings 113,000 Iraqi Jews to Israel

September 1950

Operation Magic Carpet; 47,000 Yemeni Jews to Israel

Oct. 29-Nov. 6, 1950

Suez Campaign

October 10, 1959

Creation of Fatah

January 1964

Creation of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

January 1, 1965

Fatah attack on Israeli water system

May 15-22, 1967

Egyptian Mobilization in the Sinai/Closure of the Tiran Straits

June 5-10, 1967

Six Day War

November 22, 1967

Adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 242

April 4, 1968

Establishment of Jewish settlement in Hebron

July 18, 1968

Hijacking of El Al airliner by PLO

February 1-4, 1969

Arafat becomes PLO Chairman

March 8, 1969

War of Attrition begins, lasts to August 1970

September 5, 1973

Massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at Munich Olympics

October 6-24, 1973

Yom Kippur War

October 17, 1973

Arab Oil Embargo

October 22, 1973

Adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 338

November 5, 1973

Kissinger begins shuttle diplomacy

May 15, 1974

Terrorist attack on school in northern Israeli town of Ma'alot

November 10, 1975

"Zionism is Racism" resolution passed by the UN

November 19, 1977

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visits Jerusalem

September 17, 1978

Camp David Accords signed

March 26, 1979

Egypt-Israel peace treaty signed

June 7, 1981

Israel attacks Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor

June 6, 1982

Operation "Peace for the Galilee" launched; start of Lebanon War

November 1984

Operation Moses airlifts 7,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel

October 7, 1986

Hijacking of Achille Lauro

December 8, 1987

Start of the first Intifada

January 16-February 27, 1991

Gulf War; Iraq launches SCUD missiles at Israel

May 24, 1991

Operation Solomon brings 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel

October 30, 1991

Madrid Peace Conference

December 16, 1991

UN repeals "Zionism is Racism" resolution

September 13, 1993

Israel-Palestinian Declaration of Principles announced

December 30, 1993

Israel and Vatican sign "Fundamental Agreement"

February 25, 1994

Jewish gunman kills 29 Palestinian worshippers in Hebron

April 6, 1994

Afula suicide bombing; kills eight

May 4, 1994

Agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho reached

May 13, 1994

Israel withdraws from Jericho, followed by Gaza on May 18

July 1, 1994

Arafat enters Gaza

October 9, 1994

Hamas kidnaps and kills an Israeli soldier

October 14, 1994

Rabin, Peres, and Arafat awarded Nobel Peace Prize

October 19, 1994

Tel Aviv bus bombing; kills 13

October 26, 1994

Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty

December 1, 1994

Transfer of West Bank administrative control to Palestinians

January 22, 1995

Beit Lid suicide bombing; kills 21

April 9, 1995

Gaza suicide bombings; kills eight

September 28, 1995

Signing of Oslo II agreement

November 4, 1995

Assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin

November 13, 1995

Israel redeploys from Palestinian population centers

January 20, 1996

First Palestinian elections

February 25, 1996

Jerusalem/Ashkelon suicide bombings; kills 27

March 3, 1996

Bombing of bus in downtown Jerusalem; kills 19

March 4, 1996

Bombing outside main Tel Aviv mall; kills 13

September 24, 1996

Palestinian “Tunnel Riots” erupt

January 17, 1997

Israel withdraws from Hebron

March 13, 1997

Jordanian soldier kills seven Israeli schoolgirls

July 30, 1997

Hamas suicide bomber explodes in a Jerusalem market, killing 16

September 4, 1997

Three bombs on Jerusalem pedestrian mall; kills five, injure 181

October 23, 1998

Israel-Palestinian “Wye Memorandum” signed

December 10, 1998

Palestinians vote to change PLO charter in presence of President Clinton

May 24, 2000

Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon

July 11-25, 2000

Camp David Summit

September 29, 2000

Outbreak of widespread Palestinian violence, “Second Intifada” begins

October 12, 2000

Two Israeli soldiers lynched by Palestinian mob in Ramallah

June 1, 2001

Suicide bombing of Tel Aviv night club; kills 21 youths

August 9, 2001

Suicide bombing at pizzeria in Jerusalem; kills 15

December 1, 2001

Suicide bombing in pedestrian mall in central Jerusalem; kills 11 youths

December 2, 2001

A suicide bomber of a bus in Haifa; kills 15

January 4, 2002

Israel intercepts massive Palestinian arms shipment

March 2, 2002

Suicide bombing outside a bar mitzvah party in Jerusalem; kills 11

March 9, 2002

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem café; kills 11

March 12, 2002

Hezbollah operatives open fire on Israeli vehicles in Kibbutz Metzuba; kills six

March 27, 2002

Suicide bomber kills 30 at Passover seder at Netanya hotel

March 29, 2002

IDF begins Operation Defensive Shield to uproot terrorist infrastructure in West Bank

March 31, 2002

Suicide bombing in Haifa restaurant; kills 15

April 10, 2002

Suicide bombing of bus traveling from Haifa to Jerusalem; kills eight

April 12, 2002

Female suicide bomber attacks Jerusalem market; kills six

May 7, 2002

Suicide bombing at Rishon Le-Zion billiards hall; kills 15

June 5, 2002

Suicide bombing of bus in Meggiddo Junction; kills 17

June 18, 2002

Suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem; kills 18

July 31, 2002

Suicide bombing of cafeteria at Hebrew University; kills nine

August 4, 2002

Suicide bombing of bus in Meron Junction; kills nine

September 19, 2002

Suicide bus bombing in Tel Aviv; kills six

October 21, 2002

Car bomb kills 14 people on a bus at Karkur Junction

November 21, 2002

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem bus; kills 11

November 28, 2002

Gunman attacks Likud Party headquarters in Beit Shean; kills six

January 5, 2003

Two simultaneous suicide bombings in Tel Aviv; kills 23

March 5, 2003

Suicide bombing of Haifa bus; kills 17

April 20, 2003

Suicide bombing at Mike’s Place, a Tel Aviv blues club; kills three

April 30, 2003

The “Road Map for Peace” is presented by the Quartet to the Israelis and Palestinians

May 18, 2003

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem bus; kills seven

June 11, 2003

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem bus; kills 17

August 19, 2003

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem bus; kills 24

September 8, 2003

Suicide bombing on Jerusalem bus; kills nine

September 8, 2003

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem café; kills eight

October 4, 2003

Suicide bombing at Haifa café; kills 21

January 29, 2004

Suicide bombing on Jerusalem bus; kills 11

January 29, 2004

Israel swaps prisoners with the terrorist group Hezbollah; releases 435 Arab prisoners in return for the remains of murdered soldiers and a kidnapped Israeli businessman

February 22, 2004

Suicide bombing of Jerusalem bus; kills eight

March 14, 2004

Double suicide bombing at an Ashdod port; kills eight

August 31, 2004

Two simultaneous suicide bombings in Beersheba; kills 16

November 11, 2004

Yasser Arafat dies in a Paris hospital

December 23, 2004

The first phase of PA municipal elections are held; Hamas secures nearly half the seats

February 25, 2005

Suicide bombing at Tel Aviv nightclub; kills five

February 26, 2005

The Knesset gives final approval to the Disengagement Plan, rejects calls for a national referendum

July 12, 2005

Suicide bombing of Netanya mall; kills five

August 17-22, 2005

Evacuation of settlers from the Gaza Strip

August 23, 2005

Evacuation of four settlements in the northern West Bank completed

September 12, 2005

Israeli military completes withdrawal from the Gaza

December 5, 2005

Suicide bombing of a shopping mall in Netanya; kills five

January 4, 2006

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon incapacitated by massive stroke; Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert appointed Acting Prime Minister

January 26, 2006

Palestinian parliamentary elections; Hamas wins 74 seats in the 132-seat legislature

April 17, 2006

Suicide bombing near the old central bus station in Tel Aviv; kills 11

June 25, 2006

IDF Corporal Gilad Shalit is kidnapped by Hamas from IDF army post; Israel responds with military operation

July 12, 2006

Hezbollah sparks the second Lebanon War when they cross the border into Israel and attack an Israeli military patrol, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two others

August 11, 2006

The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopts Resolution 1701 for cease fire in the Lebanon War

June 15, 2007

Hamas takeover of Gaza

November 27, 2007

Forty-six nations gather at Annapolis, Maryland for a U.S.-hosted conference intended to renew Israeli Palestinian peace talks

March 6, 2008

A Palestinian gunman attacked a Jerusalem yeshiva, killing eight

July 16, 2008

Hezbollah releases the bodies of captive Israeli soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, whose kidnapping sparked the Second Lebanon War

December 27, 2008

In response to increasing rocket barrages, Israel launches Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza

January 18, 2009

Israel signs a unilateral cease-fire. Twelve hours later, Hamas agrees to a week-long cease-fire

March 31, 2009

Benjamin Netanyahu is sworn in as Israel's Prime Minister

May 31, 2010

Israel intercepts a flotilla of six ships enroute to Gaza

September 2, 2010

U.S. launches direct negotiations between Israel and The Palestinian Authority in Washington D.C.

September 14, 2010

A second round of Middle East peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority concludes in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

September 2011

Palestine Authority moves a resolution in U.N. for recognition of Palestine statehood; Quartet Releases plan for Peace

October 18, 2011

Gilad Shalit released in exchange for over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners

Source: Advocating for Israel: Facts and Talking Points, Anti-Defamation League

ISRAEL: BACKGROUND**Flag:**

The colors blue and white were chosen according to the colors of the *tallit*, the Jewish prayer shawl. The Star of David appearing in the center of the flag has been a Jewish symbol for hundreds of years.

State Emblem:

The official emblem of the State of Israel is the menorah – a candelabrum, whose shape is derived from the sage plant (*moria*). In certain species of the plant, the leaves branch out in a way that resembles the candelabrum that stood in the Holy Temple in ancient Jerusalem. The menorah appearing in the state emblem is similar to the one carved on the Arch of Titus in Rome. It is flanked by two olive branches that symbolize Israel's longing for peace.

Official languages:

Hebrew, Arabic.

Currency:

The Israeli currency is the New Israeli **Shekel** (NIS), which is divided into 100 agorot. In 2011, one dollar is equal to approximately 3.7 shekels.

Capital:

Jerusalem. Israel proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital in 1950. The United States, like nearly all other countries, maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv.

Declaration of Independence:

May 14, 1948

Governing system:

Democratic – unicameral parliamentary.

Constitution:

None; however, the Declaration of Establishment (1948), the Basic Laws of the parliament (the Knesset), and the Israeli citizenship law fill many of the functions of a constitution.

Governing Branches:

Executive, Legislative and Judicial.

Executive Branch:

Includes the President, Prime Minister and government ministries.

President:

The first President, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, was sworn into office on February 16, 1949.

The President is the titular head of state and is elected by the Knesset every seven years, and his main duties are largely symbolic. The current president, **President Shimon Peres**, was sworn into office on June 13, 2007.

The Prime Minister:

The first Prime Minister was David Ben-Gurion. The first government was established on March 8, 1949. The current Prime Minister, **Benjamin Netanyahu**, has been in office since March 31, 2009.

Legislative Branch:

The **Knesset**. The Knesset is the parliament of the State of Israel. It is located in Jerusalem, and has 120 members. The present Knesset is the 18th. Elections for this Knesset were held on February 10, 2009. The Knesset has parliamentary sovereignty, and enacts legislation on every issue.

The Judiciary:

The courts - the Supreme Court, the District Court, Magistrates Court, Court for Local Affairs, Religious Court, Traffic Court, Labor Court, Juvenile Court, etc.

Local Authorities: Municipalities, local councils and regional councils. These authorities have governmental and administrative powers in their areas of jurisdiction and are responsible for provision of services to their constituencies.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF):

The Israeli army is comprised of conscription, reserve and career service. All eligible men and women are drafted at age 18, three years for men and two years for women. Men are liable for reserve duty until age 51 and women until age 24. Individuals accepted at institutions of higher education in disciplines needed by the IDF (medicine, nursing, teaching, engineering, etc.) may defer induction and serve in the IDF in their profession for three to five years after graduation. With a small standing army, the IDF is built principally on its reserves, which are regularly called up for training and service.

Geography:

The State of Israel is located on the southwest tip of the Asian continent, on the eastern basin of the Mediterranean Sea. The State of Israel lies at a latitude between 29° and the 33° north of the Equator.

Landscape:

- Area of the country: 13,714.905 miles (as of 1967, including East Jerusalem; as of 1982 including the Golan Heights)
- Land area: 13,448.3 square miles
- Area of lakes: 266.5 square miles (Sea of Galilee – 101.9 square miles, the Dead Sea-164.6 square miles)
- Land border: 532.5 miles
- Coastline: 120.5 miles (length of Mediterranean Sea Coast); 7.456 miles (length of Red Sea Coast)

Population Figures (2008)

In May 2008, Israel's 60th Anniversary, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the population of Israel numbered about 7.4 million inhabitants.

The population of Israel is comprised of:

- Over 5.4 million Jews (75.5 percent)
- Over 1.4 million Arabs (20.1 percent)
- Over 300,000 are immigrants and their offspring who are not registered as Jews by the Interior Ministry (4.3 percent)

Annual population growth: 1.8 percent

Urban population: 91.8 percent

Percent of population aged: 0-18: 34.9 percent

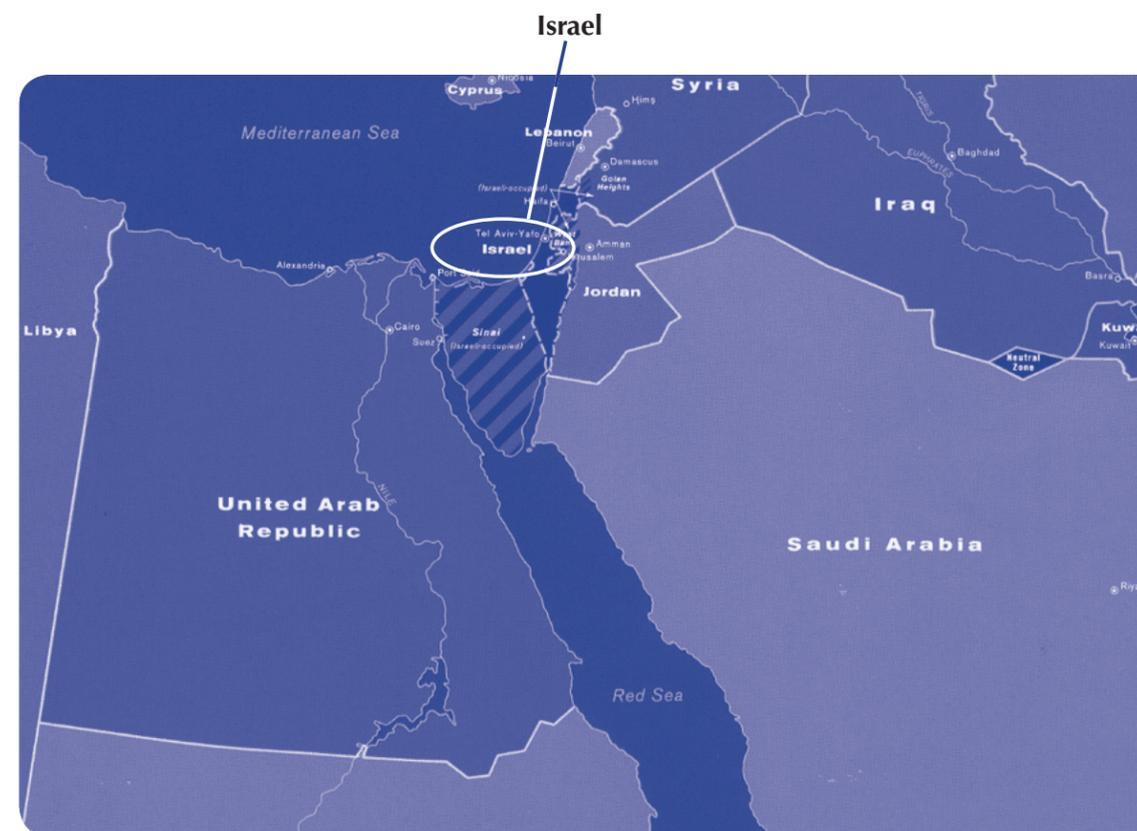
Percent of population aged: 19-64: 55.3 percent

Religious Life:

The three most practiced faiths in Israel are Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Israel contains holy sites for practitioners of each of these religions. Indeed, places such as the River Jordan and the City of Nazareth are holy to Christians and Jews; Muslims share a reverence for the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

The City of Jerusalem houses holy sites for each of these religions:

The Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque for Muslims, the Western Wall (the remnant of the Second Temple) for Jews and, for Christians, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



KEY WORDS AND COMMON TERMS ABOUT ISRAEL

Aliyah - (Hebrew, "going up") A term in Hebrew denoting immigration to the land of Israel.

Gaza Strip - The narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea that Israel acquired during the Six Day War. This region is home to approximately 1.5 million Palestinians. Israel disengaged from this area in 2005, resulting in thousands of rocket attacks from Palestinians living there against civilians in southern Israel.

Golan Heights - Is a narrow plateau on Israel's northeastern border, which Israel gained from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War. Israel annexed the territory in 1981. Before 1967, Syria used the strategic advantage of the Heights to attack low-lying Israeli towns and villages in the Galilee, as well as to divert water flowing into Israel's main water sources.

Goldstone Report - The Goldstone Report is the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) commissioned report investigating Israel's Operation in Gaza. The report was the result of the January 9, 2009 HRC 9th Special Session entitled, "The Grave Violations of Humans Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." The Council voted to send a mission of "experts" to assess Israel's alleged human rights violations in Gaza.

Green Line - *The Green Line* is the border of Israel as established by the 1949 armistice agreements, before Israel acquired the West Bank and Gaza in 1967's Six Day War.

Hamas - An Islamic extremist terrorist organization based in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that calls for the eradication of the State of Israel. Both the United States and the European Union have designated Hamas as a terrorist organization. Following internecine fighting between Hamas and Fatah in June 2007, Hamas now controls the Gaza Strip.

Hezbollah - (Arabic, "Party of G-d") is a terrorist organization, based in Lebanon, whose goal is the destruction of Israel. In that pursuit, it has attacked Israeli and Jewish targets worldwide. It is also responsible for infamous attacks against American military installations in Lebanon in the early 1980s.

Intifada - (Arabic, "shaking off" or "uprising") The first Palestinian civil uprising in Gaza and the West Bank took place between December 1987 and September 1993. The second intifada, known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, began in late September 2000.

Judea & Samaria - Judea and Samaria are biblical terms for areas of the West Bank.

Knesset - The Israeli parliament. It consists of a single chamber of 120 members, who are elected by proportional representation for a four-year term. It is the supreme authority in the state.

Oslo Accords (Declaration of Principles) - Agreement signed September 13, 1993, between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), affirming mutual recognition and legitimacy. The PLO agreed to end the intifada and terrorist activity and to amend its charter calling for the destruction of Israel. Israel agreed to grant the PLO civil autonomy over portions of Gaza and the West Bank. Oslo was the site of secret talks in 1993 between Israel and the PLO that led to mutual recognition and the signing of the Declaration of Principles.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) - The Palestine Liberation Organization was created by the Arab League. In 1969 Yasser Arafat became its chairman.

Road Map for Peace - In the spring of 2003, President George W. Bush introduced a new peace plan for the Middle East backed by the Quartet (United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia). By 2005, there was to be a permanent settlement between Israelis and Palestinians.

Security Fence - Following three years of terrorism starting in 2000, Israel began construction of a fence to defend against terror attacks. The anti-terrorist fence is a temporary, defensive measure; it is not intended to serve as a border.

Settlements - This broad term describes Jewish communities established in the West Bank and Gaza, areas under Israeli control since the Six Day War. Some settlements are well established with tens of thousands of inhabitants and others comprise only a few families living in remote areas.

Shekel - The Israeli unit of currency.

Temple Mount - An area of roughly 40 acres on Mount Moriah on which the Jewish Temple was built in 950 B.C.E. The Temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.E. by the Babylonians and rebuilt 70 years later. It was razed by the Romans in 70 C.E. The Muslims subsequently built the mosque known as the Dome of the Rock on a plaza above the Western Wall in 691 C.E. and added a second great mosque, El-Aqsa, 20 years later.

West Bank - Located on the western banks of the Jordan River, Israel took control of the region from Jordan after the Six Day War of 1967. The region includes the eastern portion of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jericho and Bethlehem, as well as Israeli settlements.

Sources: Anti-Defamation League, Microsoft Encarta, Myjewishlearning.com, The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Middle East Conflict by Mitchell G. Bard, Ph.D.

UNDERSTANDING ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT

Government Structure

Israel is a parliamentary democracy. The executive branch (the government) is subject to maintaining a vote of confidence of the legislative branch (the Knesset) and oversight by the judiciary.

The Israeli president is the head of the state, and his office symbolizes the unity of the state, above and beyond party politics. Presidential duties are mostly ceremonial and formal. The president is elected by a simple majority of the Knesset from candidates nominated on the basis of their personal stature and contribution to the state. The president is elected for one term of seven years.

The Knesset is the parliament of the State of Israel; its main function is to legislate. It comprises 120 members who are elected in national elections. The Knesset is elected for a tenure of four years, but may dissolve itself or be dissolved by the prime minister before the end of its term. A new Knesset begins to function after general elections, which determine its composition. An individual Knesset member, a group of Knesset members, the government as a whole or a single minister may present a bill.

The government, headed by the Prime Minister (PM), is the executive authority of the state, charged with administering internal and foreign affairs, including security matters. Its policy-making powers are very wide, and it is authorized to take action on any issue that is not delegated by law to another authority. Like the Knesset, the government usually serves for four years, but its tenure may be shortened if the prime minister is unable to continue in office due to death, resignation or impeachment, in which case the government appoints one of its members as the acting PM. In the case of a vote of no confidence, the government and the prime minister remain in their positions until a new government is formed.

Elections

Israel holds elections every four years or more frequently if the Knesset or prime minister dissolves the government. Elections are national and proportionally based. This means that the makeup of the Knesset is determined by the percentage of the vote that a party receives in the election. To receive at least one seat in the Knesset, a party must clear the threshold of 1.5 percent of the total vote.

Prior to the election, parties select their candidates to the Knesset. This is done by creating a party list; parties rank in order their preferences for members to serve. For example, if a party receives 10 percent of the vote, it is entitled to 12 seats. Thus, the first 12 names on a party slate (the list) become members of the Knesset, but number 13 on the list is left out.

In Israel, if no party is able to obtain 61 seats (as has always been the case), a coalition must be formed. Parties join together to form a majority in the Knesset to select a prime minister and a working majority. At times, coalitions bring together ideological allies, but at other times they have consisted of parties with different political views.

Court System

The judiciary system consists of both secular and religious courts. As the highest court, the Supreme Court hears appeals from the lower courts in civil and criminal cases. It also serves as the primary guardian of fundamental rights of Israeli citizens and protects individuals from arbitrary action by public officials. The Supreme Court cannot invalidate Knesset legislation, but it may nullify administrative actions and ordinances it regards as contrary to Knesset legislation. Military courts hear matters involving military establishment and personnel; the highest of these courts is the Military Court of Appeal, which is responsible to the Supreme Court. Religious courts have jurisdiction over personal status matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, alimony, guardianship and inheritance. The High Rabbinical Court of Appeal is the highest Jewish religious court and is overseen by the Ashkenazi and Sephardic chief rabbis. Various Christian denominations as well as Druze and Muslim sects operate separate religious courts that handle similar matters.

Political Parties

There are generally more than a dozen parties in the Knesset at any one time, representing a variety of ethnic and religious groups with different political ideologies. The following is a list of parties that have had representation in the Knesset in recent history. (For a more comprehensive list of political parties in Israel, go to <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Politics/partytoc.html>)

Kadima – A party formed in 2005 by then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as a centrist bloc. Its primary mission was to unilaterally disengage from the Gaza Strip. The Kadima party platform calls for “maximum security and assuring that Israel be a Jewish national home and that another state that shall arise be demilitarized, with terrorists disarmed.” It is currently the largest party.

Likud – The leading center-right party of Israel. Its conservative roots support privatizing the economy. It generally remains nationalist and assertive in foreign and security matters.

Yisrael Beiteinu – A right-wing party established in 1999 by Avigdor Lieberman, an immigrant from the former Soviet Union. The party became the third-largest parliamentary faction following the 2009 general elections, with more than half of Israel’s Russian immigrants voting for it. The party’s two core principles include encouraging socio-economic opportunities for new immigrants and taking a hard line in negotiations with the Palestinians and with Arab states.

Shas – Shas seeks support for Sephardic Orthodox causes and generous state funding for needy Israelis. A member of past coalitions led by Labor and Likud, Shas had been flexible on the peace process but adopted a more hawkish stance after the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000.

Labor – The leading center-left party of Israel. The party has socialist roots and supports separation of religion and state, equality for minorities and a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Arab states concerning the land won in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Independence – A new party established in January 2011 by Ehud Barak. The party calls to be “centrist, Zionist, and democratic.”

United Torah Judaism – A party of Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews, the party opposes drafting the yeshiva students and strongly objects to any changes in Shabbat laws. It had been flexible on the Palestinian issue, but in recent years has adopted a more hawkish stance.

United Arab List – Ta’al – A political party to represent Israeli Arabs. It focuses on improvements in infrastructure, education and employment. It supports an unconditional return to the negotiation table with the Palestinians and a commitment to previously signed agreements.

National Union – The National Union was formed in 1999 through a merger of several smaller right-wing parties. Although the National Union’s constituents are mostly observant Israelis, the National Union also has secular support. The National Union continues to support such traditional religious issues as increased religious education and public observance of the Sabbath. Most of National Union’s social concerns focus on welfare, employment, transportation and environmental reforms.

Hadash – Israel’s Communist party is a mixed Jewish-Arab party; it supports evacuation of the settlements and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Balad – An Arab party that seeks to transform Israel from a “state of the Jews” to a “democratic state with equality for all of its citizens” and to end all discrimination against Arabs in Israel. The party supports the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and the return of all Palestinian refugees.

Sources: Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Microsoft Encarta, Myjewishlearning.com, “Understanding the Dynamics of the Israeli Political System” by Dr. Robert O. Freedman, *The Israel Project: Political Parties in Israel*

ISRAEL: SOME FACTS

Here are a few facts and details you can share with others to promote Israel’s accomplishments.

- Israel ranks third worldwide in the rate of population holding a university degree (24 percent in 2010)
- Israel ranks first globally in the number of scientists and engineers per capita
- The country proportionally has the largest number of start-up companies in the world
- Israel is ranked second in the world for venture and capital funds-right behind the U.S.
- Outside the United States and Canada, Israel has the largest number of companies listed in NASDAQ
- Israel’s \$100 billion economy is larger than all of its immediate neighbors combined
- Israel is the largest immigrant-absorbing nation in the world
- U.S. officials look to Israel for advice on how to handle airborne security threats
- EL AL, Israel’s airline, is the safest airline in the world
- Motorola developed the cell phone in Israel and has its largest development center there
- The Pentium MMX chip technology was designed in Israel
- Voice mail was developed in Israel
- Both Microsoft and Cisco built their only research and development facilities outside the U.S. in Israel
- Israel leads the world in the numbers of scientists and technicians in the workforce, with 145 per 10,000
- Israel is leading the world in developing new medical treatments for kidney dialysis and cancer
- Israel has more museums per capita than any other country in the world
- Over forty percent of the world’s Jews live in Israel
- Israel has more in-vitro fertilization per capita than anywhere in the world, and it’s free
- One tenth of the Israeli population is 65 or older
- There are 250,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel
- Relative to its population, Israel is the largest immigrant-absorbing nation on earth
- The Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth at about 1,300 feet (400 meters) below sea level, lies at the southern end of the Jordan Valley
- The Mount of Olives in Israel is the oldest, continually used cemetery in the world
- Unlike the United States Military, the IDF’s policy ensures that no soldiers are discriminated against based on their sexual orientation
- Israeli bank notes have Braille lettering on them so the blind can identify them
- The most popular product in Israel is the soup nut
- The Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth at about 1,300 feet (400 meters) below sea level, lies at the southern end of the Jordan Valley

Source: *Israel21c.com*

ADVOCATING FOR ISRAEL

The Role of Government

The United States is a puzzle made up of national, state and local authorities, each with particular interests and powers. As you develop a political agenda, or even just want to talk with a government official, it is important to know what each official can do and what may be of particular interest to him or her.

This category includes the White House and members of Congress. At the federal level, government is responsible for setting foreign policy, maintaining diplomatic relationships, budgeting foreign appropriations, developing trade policies and speaking for the country in different forums. There are many avenues to interact with the federal government depending on your interests and needs.

How to contact your Federal officials:

The most powerful way to contact elected officials is either by phone or a personal letter. To learn who your congressional representatives are, you can visit <http://mdelect.net>. This site will give you the names and links to members' websites, which contain full contact information for Capitol Hill and local offices. Most legislative staff is in the Washington, D.C., so if you want to have a policy meeting, that is the office to call. If you want to invite your Member of Congress to speak with you or an organization in your neighborhood, you may call either office. To contact other members of the federal government, such as those who work in the various executive departments, visit their websites for contact information.

State Level

Each state government differs slightly in its size and scope. The governor is the chief executive, the top official in state government. In Maryland, the Senate and House of Delegates comprise the legislature, which makes the laws that direct the executive branch. Each state has a different balance of power between executive and legislative branches, but in Maryland the governor has a stronger position because of his unusual budget-making authority. The state can develop specific trade partnerships with another country, bring new jobs to the state and foster information sharing.

How to contact your State officials:

In Maryland, state government is centered in Annapolis. The governor and executive branch staff work from there year round, although various government agencies are located throughout the state. The General Assembly meets annually from mid-January through mid-April. To learn who your state officials are, you can visit <http://mdelect.net>. Similar to federal officials, your most effective means of communication are personal visits, phone calls and letters. Since the legislative session is so short, you should first try contacting the Annapolis office, but do not be surprised if you need to work through a local branch. For information on the current legislative session, visit the Assembly website at <http://mlis.state.md.us>.

Local Government

All politics are not necessarily local, but you can still work with local politicians on issues related to Israel. A local government may either be a town, city or county administration, and the top official will vary in title and power because of this. In general, local governments can take a number of symbolic actions, such as establishing a sister-city relationship and promoting local cultural exchanges. Also, local officials can be enlisted to contact their state and federal counterparts on an issue of concern.

How to contact your local officials:

With so many local governments, there is no uniform means of contacting elected or appointed officials. The most effective means to learn whom you may need to contact and how to work with them is through the internet. Most cities and counties have their own websites that list all officials and government offices, along with their contact information. At this level of government, a phone call or e-mail is the most effective means of opening a line of communication.

WRITING A LETTER TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Why does letter writing matter?

- Political offices keep track of the letters, phone calls and e-mails they receive.
- It is likely you will get a response, and this is a great way to start building a relationship with your legislator.
- Writing letters and e-mails opens the door for communication and building a relationship with members of Congress and their staffs. These communications may turn into meetings and legislative action.

Sample:

Dear [Senator, Congressman, Congresswoman, Speaker, Chairman] name:

Thank you for your continued support of the State of Israel. Jews worldwide deeply appreciate the interest and concern you've shown for America's great friend and ally in the Middle East.

The fight against terror represents the will for freedom-loving people everywhere to live in a world of peace and tolerance. Like America, Israel is also engaged in a critical fight against terrorism. Israel has had to commit significant human and financial resources to protect the lives of innocent civilians in its hotels, buses, malls, neighborhood cages and pizza shops. These efforts have severely strained an already-fragile economy.

(Talk about your issue in one paragraph here.)

We all hope and pray for a time when the Jewish State can live in harmony with its neighbors and that Israelis can continue their lifestyle of democratic freedom without fear and terror.

For your efforts on behalf of Israel and her citizens, thank you.

Sincerely,

Tips:

Read through the sample letter above. What sticks out to you?

- Just like when you meet with a politician, *open with a thank you.*
- Make reference to legislation you're writing about by name and number.
- Be concise! It is more important to raise an issue and give two or three points than to write a full essay.
- Be clear in what you are asking for.
- Have a good close to the letter. *Remind politicians of the democratic ties between the U.S. and Israel.*
- Avoid using form letters; make your letter your own. Even if this is part of a campaign, you can express your own voice.

Sources: American Israel Public Affairs Committee; *Advocating for Israel: An Activist's Guide*, Anti-Defamation League.

MEETING WITH OFFICIALS

Meeting with an elected official or staff member is a very effective way to convey a message about a specific legislative issue. Below are some suggestions to consider when planning a visit to a congressional office.

Plan Your Visit Carefully. Be clear about what it is you want to achieve; determine in advance which member or committee staffer you need to meet with to achieve your purpose.

Make an Appointment. When attempting to meet with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler. Explain your purpose and who you represent. It is easier for Congressional staff to arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the member.

Be Prepared. Whenever possible, bring to the meeting information and materials supporting your position. Members are required to take positions on many different issues. In some instances, a member may lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular matter. It is therefore helpful to share with the member information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact or benefits associated with a particular issue or piece of legislation.

Limit the Agenda. Discuss only one, or at most two to three issues during the visit. Don't try to cover a long laundry list. Members of Congress generally only have a small amount of time to hold meetings, so the best way to keep focus and move your agenda forward is with a few topics.

Be Political. Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member's constituency. If possible, describe for the member how you or your group can be of assistance to him/her. Where it is appropriate, remember to ask for a commitment.

Be Assertive. Ask the legislator to agree to do something specific: become a sponsor of the bill, support a specific amendment to the bill, talk to another legislator, sit in on upcoming hearings, work for defeat/passage, talk to fellow legislators who are on your side, etc. Always be respectful, but don't be afraid to ask for something reasonable.

Be Responsive. Be prepared to answer questions or provide additional information, in the event the member expresses interests or asks questions. Follow up the meeting with a thank you letter that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, and send along any additional information and materials requested.

Say Thank You. Not only is it important to ask your legislator for help in person, but it is immensely valuable to express your appreciation in person as well. This helps you establish a good relationship, which will invariably help you with future meetings and issues. Even when you are meeting with a legislator for help with an issue, thank him or her for a position/action on something else he or she did for an issue that you support.

Don't Get Offended. Often when you meet with a legislator, he or she will have a staff member in the meeting and may even have to leave the session. This does not mean you and your issue are not important. Legislators make decisions largely based on the recommendations of their staffs, so it is often the case that the legislative assistant you talk to will guide the issue to completion. Legislators juggle a tremendous schedule, so when they leave, it may be for another meeting or possibly a vote.

Sources: American Israel Public Affairs Committee; *Israel Advocacy: A Practical Guide for Jewish Leaders*; Jewish Council for Public Affairs and United Jewish Communities.

COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGE

One of the hardest parts of good public communication is sticking to your original message. Every day, politicians and corporations must do spin control to be sure that what is said and done doesn't damage their message. Likewise, speaking about Israel has the same challenges.

Often, the most challenging time to stick to the message is in an interview. A reporter you speak with probably already has an idea of what you're going to say, so he or she may be looking for ambiguities or areas to push you where you're not comfortable. Even more dangerous is if multiple people are interviewed and each gives a different answer.

What a message isn't:

- It's not an issue or a slogan;
- Nor is it two pages long;
- Nor is it a bunch of happy or positive sounding words simply strung together.

Messages are discrete bodies of information, drawn as comparison, communicated to targeted groups of people who have not fully made up their minds – those who can be persuaded to support your position. It's not preaching to the choir or converted, nor is it seeking the support of the unconvertible.

The best formula to follow in crafting your message is the Seven C's

The Seven C's:

- Clear
- Contrasting
- Concise
- Connected
- Compelling
- Credible
- Consistent

Speaking to a Reporter

Most journalists and reporters do not have a political or ideological agenda in mind when they are interviewing. They need to have a story that is limited to a specific amount of time and space. You only have a short amount of time to communicate your message, so here are some tips to remember:

- Know your facts and your goals; every word you use (or don't use) has an effect.
- Keep your answers short; most quotes or sound bites do not last for more than a few seconds.
- Keep your ideas clear, simple and easy to understand.
- Make sure what you say is airtight. Write down your statement and look for ambiguities.
- Remember, reporters and journalists are probably not going to have a feature just about you. Your statement has to fit in a word or time limit to be most effective and useful.

Source: Israel in the Media: Effective Pro-Israel Advocacy Tools by Matthew Dorf; published by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and United Jewish Communities

REPRESENTING YOURSELF, YOUR ORGANIZATION AND ISRAEL

The American media often turn to the Jewish community to speak about Israel. Many times reporters will ask questions like, "Why does Israel...?" When you answer these questions, you have to remember your role. Are you a community member, an organization's spokesperson, a representative of Israel? Each of these roles brings certain responsibilities.

- When you are speaking for yourself, always be sure to open your statements with "I think...", "I believe...", "I feel..." or other modifiers that make clear that what you say only represents your perspective.
- Even if you are part of an organization, unless you are the designated spokesperson, you should not use the organization's name.
- If you are an organization's official spokesperson, make sure your comments accurately reflect the organization's views.
- Make sure you are well informed; you only have one shot at your comments!
- If you don't know the answer to a question, refer the interviewer to another person.

The hardest questions that anyone will ask you are to stand up for, or represent, a particular Israeli view or action. It is important for you to remember, and for you to explain to the media, that you do not represent Israel and that it is appropriate for a government official to answer the questions. Still, you can support Israel in the broadest terms. Here are a few phrases you can use to answer basic questions:

- Israel, like any democracy, has the right to defend herself from terrorists and protect her citizens.
- Palestinians deserve better leadership, and they deserve a better society – with functioning institutions, democracy and the rule of law.

Source: The Israel Project's Guide to Proven Pro-Israel Communications

TALKING TO REPORTERS

When you call a reporter

Reporters are busy people with an important job to do. When calling reporters to pitch a story, be aware of their deadlines. In other words, don't call someone an hour before deadline unless it's for breaking news.

Don't be surprised if the reporter is abrupt and asks you to call back without taking a message.

- Practice your pitch before you call.
- Think like a reporter – what's most important to your organization might not be what's most newsworthy.
- Keep it brief and to the point.
- Include all the relevant details.
- Remember that if the reporter buys the pitch, you're speaking on the record. Unless you have a close, long-time relationship with a reporter, you should consider all conversations on the record.
- If appropriate, ask for an e-mail address to send follow-up information.

When a reporter calls you

- Get the name of the reporter and his or her publication.
- Try to learn as much about the story as possible.
- Ask who else the reporter is talking to.
- Ask what the story is about.
- Speak to make the cut: keep answers short; stress the message points you want to make; speak slowly (not too slowly) to allow a reporter time to write down quotes.

- Be sure to clarify when you're speaking to the reporter whether you are speaking for yourself or an organization.
- If you need some time to think, stall:
 - "I would love to talk to you – let me finish this call on the other line and I'll get right back to you."
 - Make sure to ask when the deadline is.
- Never go into an interview unprepared. It is ok to use notes!
- If you decide not to do the interview, always call the reporter back.
 - Suggest other possible sources if appropriate.
- Keep it simple and remember that it's ok to say, "I don't know. Let me get back to you."
- Try not to say "no comment," but instead, "That's something I'm not qualified to speak about, but let me say..."
- When answering questions, do not repeat words the reporter uses that you disagree with.
 - Example: "Israel's heavy-handed tactics"
(You don't want to be quoted saying that Israel uses heavy-handed tactics.)
- Don't respond to hypothetical situations.
- If asked to react to information that you have not seen, ask to see it or have it read to you. It's ok to say, "Let me look into that, and I'll get back to you."
- Give answers that include your message. If the questions go "off message," bridge back to your points to advocate for your position.
- Offer a phone number where you can be reached if the reporter needs more information and clarification.

Source: *Israel in the Media: Effective Pro-Israel Advocacy Tools* by Matthew Dorf; published by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and United Jewish Communities.

WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Writing letters to the editor are an effective means of responding to news articles, op-eds and editorials in newspapers and magazines. You have the opportunity to express an opinion, correct misinformation, or raise new and important issues. Here are a few basic tips:

- **Letters must be timely.** Allowing a week, or even a few days to pass before responding to an article will greatly diminish the likelihood of your letter seeing print.
- **Write in response to a particular news item, editorial or op-ed.** Newspapers and magazines are not interested in letters that do not address a story or issue discussed in their pages. In your letter, make specific reference to the story's headline and the date it appeared. If you read the article on the Internet, many Web sites offer online comment sections where you can allow your voice to immediately be heard.
- **Be brief and address a specific issue.** Newspapers generally will not publish lengthy letters that go into the entire history or background of an issue. Many only accept letters for publication of 250 words or less. Be succinct, brief and as "to the point" as possible. Review the publication's instructions for submitting a letter to the editor.
- **Be civil.** Do not personally attack the writer. If responding to an opinion column or op-ed, you may refer in your letter to the writer by name, indicate that you disagree with his or her point of view, and explain why.
- **End with a thank you.** Be sure to express your gratitude to the editor for reading your letter and taking the time to consider it for publication.
- **Be sure to include your name, address and a daytime telephone number.** With the exception of online comment boards, most newspapers will not accept anonymous letters; most will not publish a letter without first attempting to check the identity of the author.

- **Send your letter by e-mail or fax, or use the online comment form.** When using e-mail, direct the letter to the appropriate address for letters. Do not use multiple addresses, or copy others. This will diminish your chances of being published.

In addition to writing a letter to the editor, you may write to the ombudsman (the reader's advocate). Most newspapers, radio stations and television networks have people in this position to address specific grievances, which may then be presented to the editorial staff and management. A new avenue for posting commentary is also online at news websites that have message boards. **You have the opportunity to express an opinion, correct misinformation, or raise new and important issues.**

Source: *Advocating for Israel: An Activist's Guide*, Anti-Defamation League.

NATIONAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS: SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a sampling of some national organizations that work in partnerships on behalf of Israel. They can serve as resources for speakers, program ideas and staying up-to-date on current affairs in Israel.

Aish HaTorah/Hasbara Fellowships - www.hasbarafellowships.org

American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) - www.aipac.org

American Jewish Committee (AJC) - www.ajc.org

American Jewish Congress (AJCongress) - www.ajcongress.org

American-Israel Cooperative Enterprise (AICE) - www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

Americans for Peace Now (APN) - www.peacenow.org

Anti-Defamation League (ADL) - www.adl.org

Committee for Reporting Accuracy in the Media (CAMERA) - www.camera.org

Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations - www.conferenceofpresidents.org

The David Project - www.thedavidproject.org

Hadassah - www.hadassah.org

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life - www.hillel.org

Honest Reporting - www.honestreporting.com

Israel on Campus - www.israelcc.org

The Israel Project - www.theisraelproject.org

Israel University Consortium (IUC) - www.israelstudy.net

Jewish Council for Public Affairs - www.jewishpublicaffairs.org

Jewish Heritage Programs (JHP) - www.jhp.org

Jewish National Fund (JNF) - www.jnf.org

J Street - www.jstreet.org

Media Watch International (MWI) - www.mwio.org

StandWithUs - www.standwithuscampus.com

Union of Orthodox Congregations of America (OU) - www.ou.org

Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) - www.urj.org

United Jewish Communities (UJC) - www.ujc.org

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) - www.uscj.org

World Zionist Organization (WZO) - www.wzo.org.il

Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) - www.zoa.org

SUGGESTED READING LIST

Below you will find a recommended list of published books on Israel.

- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Middle East Conflict* (Second Edition) by Mitchell Bard (2003) - This guide sorts through the political and military quagmire of the Middle East in language anyone can understand.
- *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (revised edition) by Mitchell Bard (2002) - Mitchell Bard specifically breaks down the myths that Israel's foes use to discredit her.
- *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz (2003) - Alan Dershowitz sets the record straight and explains why Israel, while not perfect, is, in fact, the sole outpost of liberty and democracy in the Middle East - a country that has earned the right to exist within secure boundaries and defend itself.
- *What Went Wrong?: The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* by Bernard Lewis (2003) - Bernard Lewis examines the anguished reaction of the Islamic world as it tried to understand why things had changed - how they had been overtaken, overshadowed and to an increasing extent dominated by the West.
- *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* by Benny Morris (2001) - Righteous Victims is a history of the long battle between Arabs and Jews for possession of a land they both call home. Professor Morris finds the roots of this conflict between the deep religious, ethnic and political differences between the Zionist immigrants and the native Arab population of Palestine.
- *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* by Michael B. Oren (2002) - Though it lasted for only six tense days in June, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War never really ended. Michael B. Oren's internationally acclaimed bestseller is the first comprehensive amount of this epoch-making event.
- *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* by Ambassador Dennis Ross (2004) - Dennis Ross recounts the search for enduring peace in that troubled region with unprecedented candor and insight. As the chief Middle East peace negotiator for both George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, Ross came to be someone respected by all parties to the negotiations.
- *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (Second Edition, Revised and Updated) by Howard M. Sachar (1996)
- *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* by Michael B. Oren (2002)
- *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz (2003)
- *The Grand Mufti* by Zvi Elpeleg (1993)
- *Terror Out of Zion* by J. Bowyer Bell (1997)
- *Battling for Peace: A Memoir* by Shimon Peres (1995)
- *A Peace to End All Peace* by David Fromkin (2001)
- *Exile and Return: The Struggle for a Jewish Homeland* by Martin Gilbert (1978)
- *From Beirut to Jerusalem* by Thomas Friedman (1990)
- *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* by Amb. Dennis Ross, Special Presidential Envoy to the Middle East (2004)
- *The Much Too Promised Land* by Aaron David Miller (2008)
- *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel* by Walter Laqueur (2003)
- *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* by Shlomo Avineri (1981)
- *The Fate of Zionism: A Secular Future for Israel & Palestine* by Arthur Hertzberg (2003)
- *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis & Reader* by Arthur Hertzberg (1997)

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Below you will find a list of recommended websites that will provide you with information on various aspects of Israel. Most sites listed are in English, though many have Hebrew and Russian versions.

Israeli Government:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs - www.mfa.gov.il
- The Knesset - www.knesset.gov.il
- Israel Defense Forces - www.idf.il
- Israeli Embassy, Washington - www.israelemb.org

Israeli News Sources:

- *Ha'aretz* - www.haaretzdaily.com - Leading Israeli daily newspaper
- *Jerusalem Post* - www.jpost.com - Daily Israeli newspaper published in English
- *Ma'ariv International* - www.maarivintl.com - Israel's most widely read newspaper
- *Jerusalem Report* - www.jrep.com - Israeli news and commentary magazine
- Israel Broadcast Authority - <http://mabat.iba.org.il> - Israel's electronic media (this site is in Hebrew)

American News Sources:

- Jewish Telegraphic Agency - www.jta.org
- *Forward* - www.forward.com
- *Baltimore Sun* - www.baltimoresun.com
- *Baltimore Jewish Times* - www.jewishtimes.com
- *Washington Post* - www.washingtonpost.com
- *New York Times* - www.nyt.com
- *Wall Street Journal* - www.wallstreetjournal.com
- *The Daily Beast* - www.thedailybeast.com

Media Monitoring Sites:

- Camera - www.camera.org - Monitoring of Western media
- Honest Reporting - www.honestreporting.com - Monitoring of Western media
- MEMRI - www.memri.org - Monitoring of Arab media and speeches
- Palestinian Media Watch - www.pmw.org.il - Monitoring of Palestinian media

U.S. & State Government:

- White House - www.whitehouse.gov
- U.S. House of Representatives - www.house.gov
- U.S. Senate - www.senate.gov
- U.S. State Department - www.state.gov
- Maryland Governor - www.gov.state.md.us
- Maryland General Assembly - <http://mlis.state.md.us>

Please note that this list is provided for information purposes only. It is not comprehensive, nor is it endorsed by or reflective of the views of the Baltimore Jewish Council or THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT ISRAEL

There are literally thousands of activities and projects that you can do in your own backyard to support Israel. They can be big or small, but everything you do for Israel has an impact.

- Vote! There is nothing more powerful than becoming involved in the political processes of the United States. Study the issues so that you are an informed voter, host get-togethers in your home to talk about the issues, and pay attention to the news.
- Bring Middle East experts into the community to meet with others and help them understand Israel on a personal level.
- Shop Israel! Attend local merchant fairs, shop online and look for Israeli products in your neighborhood stores.
- Read! Subscribe to e-newsletters and online news agencies that keep you informed about Israel and local events.
- Travel to Israel! Join a mission to travel with your family, or on your own. Nothing is more powerful than being there.

Source: United Jewish Communities.

ISRAEL: THE ASSOCIATED AND ITS AGENCIES

Baltimore-Ashkelon Partnership

The Baltimore-Ashkelon Partnership offers unique opportunities for people-to-people connections between residents of Baltimore and its sister city, Ashkelon.

[THE ASSOCIATED](#)

For more information: www.baltimore-ashkelon.org, Mary Haar at mhaar@associated.org or 410-369-9311.

Community Fund for Israel Experiences

The Community Fund for Israel Experiences offers financial assistance to teenagers participating in a high school summer, semester or gap-year program in Israel.

[The Louise D. and Morton J. Macks Center for Jewish Education](#)

For more information: www.cjebaltimore.org or 410-735-5032.

Diller Baltimore Teen Fellows

Diller is a teen leadership program involving leadership development seminars, an exchange with Ashkelon teens, a summer Israel experience and hands-on community service projects. The program is based on four pillars: leadership, Israel, Judaism and community service.

[Jewish Volunteer Connection](#)

For more information: Megan Goldsmith at mgoldsmith@associated.org or 410-843-7477.

The Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel

The Elijah Cummings Youth Program in Israel (ECYP) builds bridges between Baltimore's diverse communities. ECYP provides high school students with the tools and real-world opportunities they need to become future leaders through a trip to Israel and participation in the Jerold C. Hoffberger Leadership Enhancement Program.

[Baltimore Jewish Council](#)

For more information: www.baltjc.org or 410-542-4850.

Israel Awareness and Advocacy Committee

Baltimore Jewish Council uses its Israel Awareness and Advocacy Committee to find ways of educating, informing and raising awareness in the Jewish and broader community about Israel. BJC's Israel Advocacy and Awareness Committee mobilizes the community to take action for Israel.

[Baltimore Jewish Council](#)

For more information: www.baltjc.org or 410-542-4850.

The Maryland/Israel Development Center (MIDC)

The MIDC promotes trade and investment between Maryland and Israel to help create jobs in both economies. It provides an "instant infrastructure" of business contacts and support in the U.S. market for Israeli entrepreneurs. Professionals gain preferred access to Israeli, Maryland and U.S. business leaders, entrepreneurs, investors, scientists and government officials.

[Maryland/Israel Development Center](#)

For more information: www.MarylandIsrael.org or 410-767-0681.

Shinshinim

Shinshinim is a program through the Jewish Agency for Israel that brings to Baltimore two young high school graduates from Ashkelon who have deferred their military service to volunteer. The Shinshinim offer informal educational opportunities in schools and the community and create a personal connection to Ashkelon for our community.

[The Louise D. and Morton J. Macks Center for Jewish Education](#)

For more information: www.cjebaltimore.org or 410-735-5020.

For events relating to these programs, go to www.associated.org/overseascalendar

For local Israel-related news and opportunities, visit the Global Impact website at www.baltglobalimpact.org.

For mobile Israel updates, text PARTNERSHIP to 51818.

