



Israel Council on Foreign Relations

September 2010 – May 2011

Events

Since the last meeting of the Governing Board in August 2010, the ICFR has hosted a number of visiting foreign dignitaries and conducted several important symposia. These events were well attended and received extensive press coverage in both Israeli and foreign media:

Righting an Historic Wrong: The Ongoing Challenge of Restitution in East Central Europe: (panel discussion). Speakers were Dr. Laurence Weinbaum, who spoke on the phenomenon of larceny as a motivation for locals to participate in the destruction of their Jewish neighbors; Dr. Raphael Vago, Senior Lecturer in Modern East European History, Tel Aviv University, who spoke on antisemitism and the present political situation; and Ambassador David Peleg, Executive Director, World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), Former Israeli Ambassador to Poland, who discussed current efforts to retrieve Jewish assets (May 2011).

The European Union: Facing New Challenges: (Conference in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, The Center for the Study of European Politics and Society). The event focused on the effects on Europe of the popular uprisings and regime changes in the Middle East. Speakers included Prof. David Newman, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, BGU; Prof. Amy Verdun, Co-Editor of the *Journal of Common Market Studies*; Prof. Alfred Tovias, ICFR Board Member and Chair of Department of International Relations, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Prof. Charles Kupchan, Georgetown University; Dr. Claire Spencer, Head, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House, UK; Dr. Sharon Pardo, Head of Center for the Study of European Politics and Society, BGU (May 2011).

Austrian Association of International Affairs and United Nations hosted ICFR President Ambassador Avi Primor in Vienna, where he was invited to speak before a capacity audience (May 2011).

Kick-off event of Israeli-European Young Diplomats Forum: held at the residence of the EU Representative in Israel, Ambassador Andrew Standley (April 2011.) For more on this program, see below.

Perspectives on the Current Maelstrom in the Middle East: (symposium dedicated to the memory of Dr. David Kimche on the first anniversary of his passing). The evening was chaired by ICFR President Ambassador Avi Primor and Board Member Ambassador Moshe Arad, both of whom were close friends

of Dr. Kimche for over forty years. The speakers were Prof. Shlomo Avineri, Hebrew University; David Sultan, former Israeli ambassador to Egypt; and Dr. Shmuel Bar, IDC Herzliya. Rafi Barack, Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, also presented a brief evaluation of recent developments. The event was attended by a capacity audience, including representatives of some fifteen foreign embassies and was covered in the media (March 2011).

Joschka Fischer: Former Vice Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany (in cooperation with IDC Herzliya Center for European Studies and the Heinrich Böll Foundation), who spoke on "The German Foreign Ministry and the Nazi Past." Greetings were delivered by ICFR President Ambassador Avi Primor; H.E. Dr. Dr. h.c. Harald Kindermann, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Israel; and Marc Berthold, Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Israel. Mr. Fischer was introduced by Prof. Moshe Zimmermann, Richard M. Koebner Professor of German History, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem/Member of the Historical Commission of the German Foreign Ministry. The event was moderated by Marianne Zepp, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Israel (March 2011).

Dinner for Foreign Ambassadors posted in Israel: Held at residence of ICFR President Avi Primor. Attendees included members of the foreign diplomatic corps stationed in Israel as well as members of the ICFR board (January 2011).

Moshe Zimmermann: Richard M. Koebner Professor of German History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Member of the Historical Commission of The German Foreign Ministry, who spoke on "Secrets and Revelations: The Wartime History of the German Foreign Ministry." The evening was chaired by Ambassador Avi Primor, ICFR President (December 2010).

Dinner for Members of the ICFR Board and Foreign Ambassadors posted in Israel: Held at residence of Belgian ambassador to Israel H.E Bénédicte Frankinet. Attendees included members of the foreign diplomatic corps stationed in Israel as well as members of the ICFR board (October 2010).

Luncheon for Visiting Members of the Estonian Parliament: The delegation included the Head of the Foreign Commission of the Estonian Parliament. The luncheon, chaired by Dr. Weinbaum, was also attended by the Estonian ambassador to Israel; the head of the Israel–Estonia Parliamentary friendship group, MK Anastassia Michaeli; and Ambassador David Peleg, Director, WJRO (November 2010).

Twenty Years since the Re-establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Israel and Poland: (conference in cooperation with the Polish Institute for International Affairs). Speakers included: Former Polish Foreign Minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld; Andrzej Towpik; Andrzej Ananicz; Roman Frister; Polish Ambassador to Israel Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala; Israeli Ambassador to Poland Zvi Ravner; Ambassador Szewach Weiss; Prof. Shlomo Avineri; Prof. Eytan Gilboa; Ambassador Avi Primor; Dr. Laurence Weinbaum; David Witzthum; and Efraim Halevy (September 2010).

The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs

Since the last Governing Board, three more issues of the Council's thrice-yearly 'Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs' (IJFA) have been published. The journal has succeeded in developing a strong reputation, attracting the writings of many of the best-known practitioners and scholars in the field of foreign affairs from Israel and abroad. Many of the most important issues on the WJC agenda have been addressed in the pages of the journal, such the delegitimization of Israel, anti-Semitism, the threat of a nuclear Iran, and the restitution of Holocaust-era assets. Among other topics discussed were

US–Israeli relations, the effects on the Middle East of the Arab Awakening, the role played by new media in those uprisings, and Palestinian-Arab incitement.

The IJFA regularly publishes the proceedings of lectures presented at the Council and these constitute an important record of the remarks of visiting foreign statesmen. The publication is now circulated worldwide, and among its paid subscribers are major universities, libraries, and institutes/councils of foreign affairs.

A selection of the articles is available online (www.israeljfa.com). Through the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin, some of the journal's articles are catalogued and accessible on the internet site 'IREON Gateway: International Relations and Area Studies Online.' Individual articles are also posted on the Faculty Forum site of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME). The Faculty Forum is regularly read by over 20,000 people, mainly academics. The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) also regularly posts IJFA articles on its site. Many Israeli and foreign university professors use material taken from the journal in courses on international relations. This has also increased the publication's prestige and visibility.

Cooperation with other Institutions

The Council maintains a close relationship with several Israeli institutions, with which it has co-sponsored events, most notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya; the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Jerusalem; the Menachem Begin Heritage Center; and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. It also has a cooperation agreement with the Australian Institute of International Affairs, which has coordinated several international gatherings of representatives of councils and institutes of foreign affairs.

The ICFR has just launched a new initiative, The Israeli–European Young Diplomats Forum, supported by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the EU Delegation to Israel, the Polish Embassy, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and various other EU member state embassies in Israel, including those of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, and Sweden.

The Israeli–European Young Diplomats Forum

The Israeli-European Young Diplomats Forum is a new program designed to enhance relations between Europe and Israel. It aims to provide a much-needed opportunity for informal contacts between Israeli and European young diplomats - without a political agenda. The objective is to promote close and vibrant relationships that will endure beyond the period of service of the European diplomats in Israel.

One of the forum's main activities will be monthly policy talks with high-ranking Israeli and European officials, academics, and civil society representatives. At these talks, Israeli diplomats will be provided with deeper insights into the history, structure and internal workings of the EU as well as EU perspectives on Israel and EU–Israel relations. At the same time, European diplomats will be provided with a better understanding of regional political realities while their interaction with Israeli diplomats will give them first-hand insights into Israeli society.

The program was launched in April at a kick-off event at the home of the EU Delegation's Representative in Israel, Ambassador Andrew Standley at which some fifty foreign and Israeli young diplomats participated.