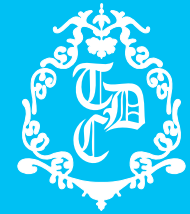
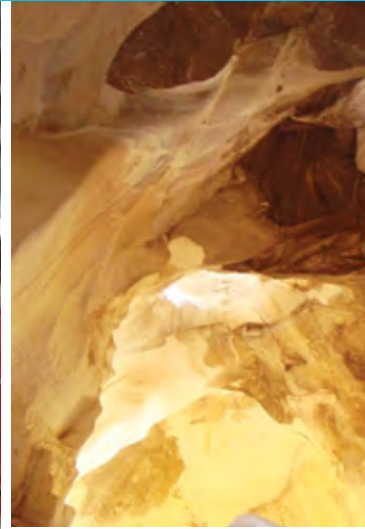


The Diplomatic Club



APRIL 2015

Yom Ha'atzmaut **67**th Independence Day Celebrating Israel's



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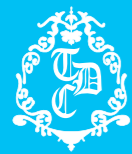
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ISRAEL AND GREECE,
25 YEARS OF FULL
DIPLOMATIC TIES

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THE ISRAELI CAMP
THAT BRINGS INTERNATIONAL
TEENS TOGETHER





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Dear friends,

This issue was composed in the atmosphere of preparing for the celebrations marking 67 years of Israeli Independence.

The people of Israel are celebrating this event with great hope for peace and prosperity during these tense times. After the hopes of a better future that were raised during 2014 in the Middle East, uncertainty has returned. Concerns regarding in Iran are at the forefront while Syria remains in a disastrous civil war. The whole of the Middle East appears quagmired with no foreseeable end to the chaos in sight. Meanwhile in Europe, questions on the future of the Euro are left open ended.

So, what should be the approach for the diplomatic media moving through in this world?

We hope to provokes intelligent discussion from within the heart of the Diplomatic Community and lead the fomentation of creative ideas and solutions.

To this end we continue to back our activity of diplomatic social activity and diplomatic service, organized since 1998.

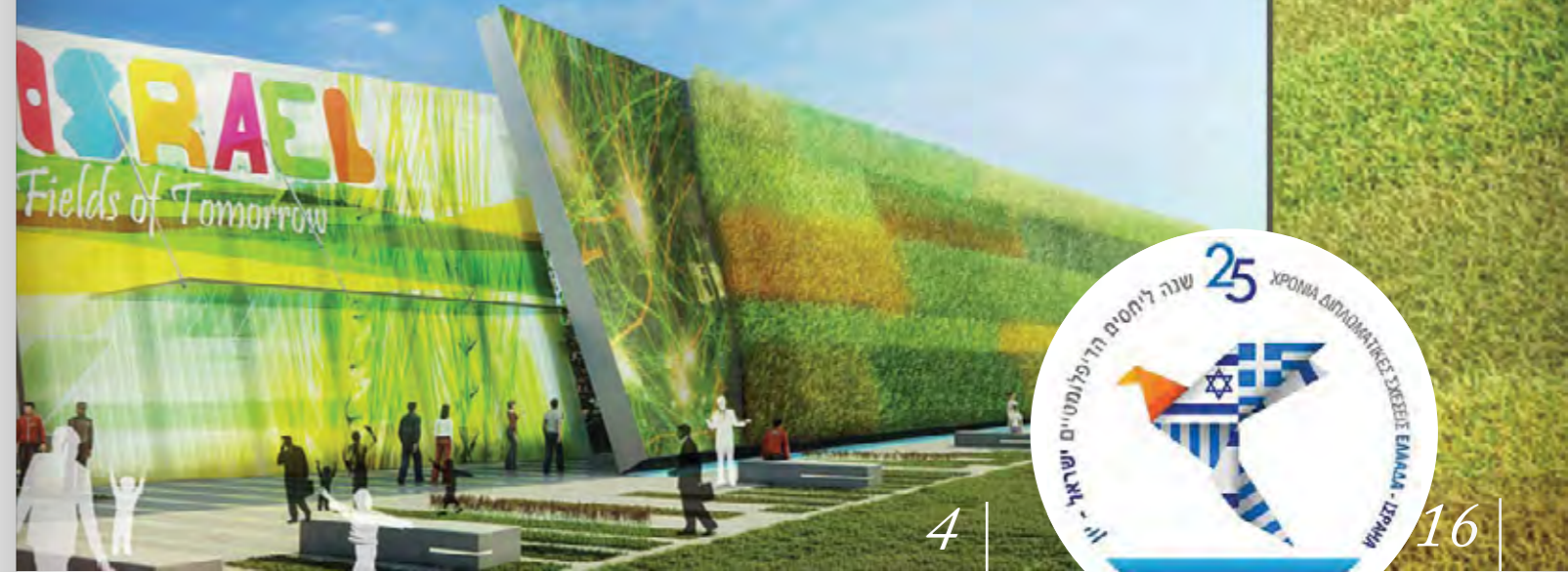
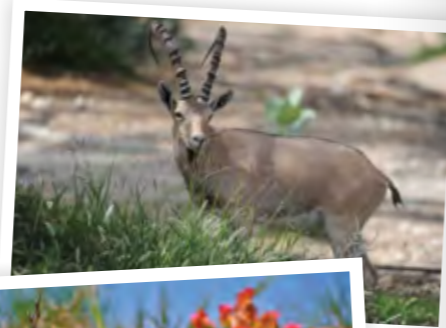
As always, The Diplomatic Club Magazine does not take any political sides: neither left, nor right.

We steadfastly strive for objectivity, bringing you facts straight from the sources. We invite you to join us as we seek out unique destinations in hope that you will receive objective information and reach your own conclusions.

We look forward to seeing you as participants in our activities and users of services we provide.

Faithfully,

Julia Verdel
CEO & Publisher
And the Editorial team



Made in Italy

INTERVIEW WITH MR. FRANCESCO MARIA TALÒ,
AMBASSADOR OF ITALY TO ISRAEL.



By Julia Verdel

DC: There are 12 bilateral agreements from public safety, civil protection, energy, health, education, research to technology signed between Israel and Italy. How would you assess the development of bilateral relations between Israel and Italy? Which areas between the two countries can develop in the future?

The partnership between Italy and Israel is a very deep and comprehensive one. For example twelve bilateral agreements were signed only in the last bilateral summit. Our trade stands at more than 3 billion Euros and Italy is the fifth exporter to Israel.

Our collaboration is mainly based on three interrelated directions: culture, science and growth. From the ancient cultures of both countries we received a common understanding in putting into practice our spirit of innovation. And the high level of human capital helps Italy and in Israel to prepare the ground for a solid growth in the future.

Economically speaking, the two Countries can also be a bridge for each other to conquer new markets and to reach new frontiers of consumers. Not only we can further expand the fame of "Made in Italy", but we can work together in third countries in order to integrate our points of strength in technologies and



marketing. This can be of great benefit for Israel, Italy and other involved partners. One day we could really be together protagonists of a vast area of prosperity around the Mediterranean Sea. As President Peres likes to say, we could make a step forward from the Start-up Nation to the Start-Up Region. Luckily we have a powerful instrument to boost our aims of growth and innovation. In 2002 Italy and Israel signed an Industrial, Scientific and Technological Agreement that finances every year common projects between institutions

“The partnership between Italy and Israel is a very deep and comprehensive one”

from both Countries, especially Universities or research centers. It is a tool which has proved to be very practical both for companies and research centers and it helps to make Italy one of the very first scientific partners of Israel.

An area that we can further develop is tourism. Israelis love Italy but we

should better highlight not only the famous places, but all the little and unknown excellences that we have. It is almost impossible to visit all the cultural sites in Italy or in Israel. You should come back many times! In addition, Italy and Israel could develop a win-win co-operation in promoting joint tourist packages for

missions of the region. Our main companies have very strong relations. We had a proof in 2012 when the Italian company Alenia Aermacchi signed a contract with Israeli Air Force to provide 30 M-346 (a very advanced trainer airplane). It has been the first time since the 70s that Israel has bought a non-US military plane.



visitors coming from other continents. Especially in the Americas (first of all in the USA, Canada, Brazil and Argentina) there is a huge potential of people with roots in both countries. We could tell them: “next time you go to Israel make also a stop in Italy or next time you fly to Italy why don't you visit also Israel”. Or, for instance, it could be useful to organize interesting programs both for Jewish and Christian visitors in the two countries.

DC: Arms trade and military cooperation between Israel and Italy are strong and ongoing, especially in Homeland security. Is it correct?

This is correct. Italy participates in major training and monitoring

DC: Italy seemed to put a lot of efforts in strengthening its international role. The new approach of the Italian governments is moving Italy in the right direction: Italy wants to be active at European as well as international level. Please, comment it.

Italy has always been in favour of multilateral fora and we are fully engaged in every international organization. The 31st of December 2014 ended our Presidency of the EU Council and we are satisfied with what we did. We guaranteed a smooth transition in the EU institutions (in May we voted for a new EU legislature and later a new Commission has been appointed),

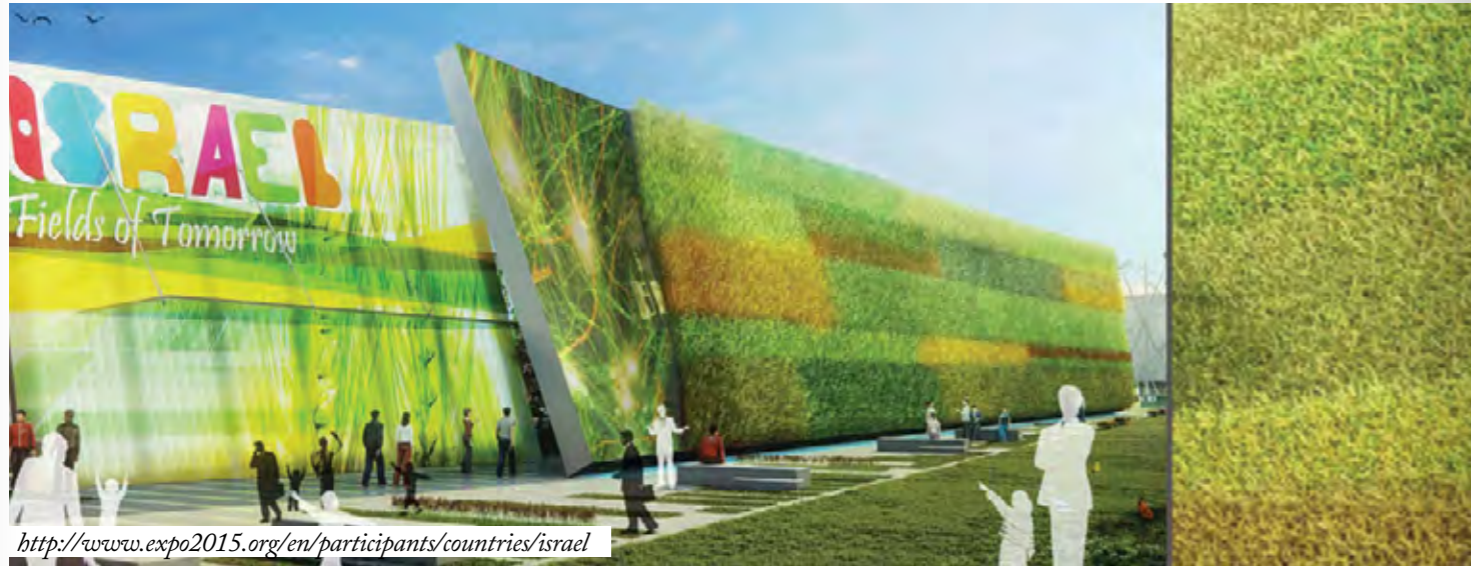
we were successful in putting growth as the focal issue on the economic agenda and we stressed the crucial importance of the Mediterranean region not at the periphery but at the heart of our commitment.

DC: Sometimes the political situation looks like choosing between Israel and Arabs. Difficult choice. Italy's vote in favor of granting the Palestinians non-member observer status was undoubtedly the most surprising. What is the position of Italy in Palestinian - Israel conflict?

Italy has a clear position on the issue. Recently our Parliament has approved a non-binding resolution that promotes a constitution of a Palestinian State after a negotiation process and the full recognition of Israeli security needs. We support a “Two States for two peoples solution” with both countries living peacefully and free from terrorism. That is why Italy is backing every international effort to endorse direct negotiations between the parties on the basis of mutual recognition.

“Economically speaking, the two Countries can also be a bridge for each other to conquer new markets and to reach new frontiers of consumers”

DC: ISIS official propaganda magazine Dabiq promised, that it would “conquer” Rome. ISIS received an official “invitation” from social media, as: “Dear ISIS, feel free to come here, you'll get stuck in the traffic anyway.” To be serious, what do



<http://www.expo2015.org/en/participants/countries/israel>

you think about wave of terrorism in the world?

It is a serious concern for the International Community and Italy is in the forefront of the fight. Last summer Italian Prime Minister Renzi was the first Western Head of Government to visit Baghdad and Erbil. Italy is a member of the core group of the most active countries involved in the coalition engaged against Daesh. The geography puts us in the centre of the Mediterranean and, as a country that believes in religious dialogue and open society, we should dedicate all of our energy to defeat this threat. This is why Italy is actively participating with a specific contribution to the vast coalition forged in order to defeat the new terrorist threat emerged in the last months. We are determined and they will not prevail. All the big players, including the Muslim countries, should find a common and transnational response.

DC: In one of the previous magazines of the Diplomatic Club we published an opinion that the third world war already started: this is a war between religions.

The Italian media are widely reporting alleged threats against Vatican City by the Islamic State. Christian priests say :”Israel is the only Mideast country not persecuting Christians”. Please, comment it.

The religious factor among political players has increased. But religion is a personal feeling and should not interfere with political actions. In these months we saw what happened to IS’s prisoners or to cultural treasures. In the name of religion, people were burned or beheaded and historical sites were destroyed.

“The religious factor among political players has increased”

Culture scares fundamentalism. We should educate young generations with respect for diversity and tolerance. Italy, with its cultural heritage and its special relation with the Vatican, is an example of supporting culture, dialogue and diplomacy in every scenario. Since years we are also supporting with special forces - both in security

and in art restoration field - the protection and conservation of the historic heritage in crisis areas. We did this in difficult places as Iraq and Afghanistan with the so called “blue helmets of culture”.

DC: The role of Italy and many individual Italians in saving approximately 80% of the Jews in Italy during the Holocaust is very important. In 2015, the International Day of Commemoration was marked by a number of national and international events in Italy. Please, comment it.

Italy is the first country in the world that established by law the Day of Commemoration in 2000. The United Nations decided to follow our path in 2005. In Italy we organize many events practically in every area of the country and particularly in schools, to allow pupils and students to become acquainted with the truth on Shoah. It is very common at high school to visit concentration camps in Central-Eastern Europe.

As the Italian Embassy in Israel, every 27th of January - the day of Auschwitz liberation by the Allies - we go to Yad

Vashem and with Italian survivors and the Italian Community we commemorate the Shoah. In addition, we organize in those days several events. The same happens in many Italian Embassies and Consulates all over the world. Probably many people in Israel are not aware that since years January 27th is in Italy an official day of mourning, all the flags must be half-mast in public buildings and it is mandatory to organize initiatives to promote a better understanding of the Shoah. Nevertheless this is not enough, we have to work every day of the year to fight against the resurgent scourge of anti-Semitism. Last December the Italian Ministry of Education together with Yad VaShem organized for the first time in Rome an EU seminar for educators on Shoah. And following this initiative - promoted by the Italian Presidency of the EU Council - we created a European network.

DC: Italian culture enjoys a very high standing among Israelis. Can you describe the cultural relations between two countries?

Italy and Israel are countries with long history. It is easy to promote Italy in Israel and vice versa. Therefore we are encouraging the knowledge of Italy, outside the traditional routes. We are helped by the Italian Institute of Culture in Tel Aviv and Haifa (www.iictelaviv.esteri.it; www.iichaifa.esteri.it). In this framework, the aim of the activities is to enhance the knowledge of the infinite greatness of the Italian culture (with an art heritage acknowledged by UNESCO as by far the largest one in the world) as well as its linguistic vehicle: the Italian language.

DC: Expo Milano 2015 is the Universal Exhibition that Italy will host from May 1 to October 31, 2015 and which will be the largest event ever organized on food and nutrition. What does “Feeding the



“The World Expo lasts for six months, from May 1 to October 31. It takes place only once every five years and is the largest event in the world of this kind.”

Planet” mean? What will Expo Milano 2015 be like? Will Israel be represented there?

The World Expo lasts for six months, from May 1 to October 31. It takes place only once every five years and is the largest event of this kind in the world. Countries, international organisations as well as institutions, companies and civil society are involved. Built in a specially designed site where participants assemble their own pavilions, each World Expo is an opportunity for sharing a unique and innovative experience on the theme of the event. In a world where one out of eight people (870 million of human beings) is starving, 12% of the population is obese and almost 800 million people do not have access to clean drinking water, addressing the problems and potential solutions to improve global access to sustainable nutrition is the strategic goal of

Expo Milano 2015. Participants will have to propose specific and real solutions. Discussion on the theme, from economic, scientific, cultural and social viewpoints, will bring together skills and competences from around the world. Participants will work to demonstrate their excellence in the methods, techniques and rules of food production, proposing strategies to combine production with energy saving, the use of renewable energy sources and protection of natural resources.

This theme appears tailor-made for Israel, which will be represented in Milan and is ready to show to the world its techniques in sustainable agriculture, aiming to become a world leader. The Israeli pavilion will be a wonderful architectural masterpiece. EXPO will also be the theme, like in 2014, of our National Day, June 2, and we are planning many events during the week to reach every target of people. Italy and Israel are EXPOential Partners, this is our mantra, and EXPO will be the place to be in 2015. That’s why the New York Times has proclaimed Milan the top destination to visit in 2015 and over 20 million visitors from all over the world are expected in the city in the next months. At a short distance from Israel, this is an experience not to be missed!

DC: Personal details.

Born in La Spezia in 1958. Lieutenant (Res.) of the Carabinieri Corps, he entered the Diplomatic Career in 1984 and he served abroad in Tokyo, Bonn and twice in New York (at the UN and as Consul General). Married with three children. ●



By Eveline Erfolg

AMOS GILAD

REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Major General (res.) Amos Gilad has been serving in numerous key positions in the Israeli defense establishment for many decades. Today, he is the Director of the Bureau of Policy and Political-Military Affairs of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, as well as Chair of the Security Relations with Regional and Strategic Partners of the Ministry.

DC: How do you see the security situation that Israel is facing today?

AG: I'll try to describe it. First of all, the IDF is a powerful army and we have a deterrent against the surrounding borders. Nevertheless, in the north, we have a country called Lebanon, which simply does not exist. Instead, there is an area we call 'Hezbollahstan' that has a hundred thousand missiles aimed at Israel, in addition to other means of warfare. Hezbollah is a military terrorist-political entity that simply consumed Lebanon from within, using billions of dollars aid from Iran. They do not attack us because of our deterrence.

The good news is that this deterrence has been successful for a long time, and it is based on the strength of

the IDF and its abilities. The bad news is that the military capabilities of this terrorist-political entity are increasingly growing and improving thanks to massive financial support that is costing Iran a fortune.

Lebanon itself, as opposed to other countries, has a constitution without a state, i.e. the President of Lebanon is largely a ceremonial and symbolic post, and he decides nothing. The person who rules the country de facto is the Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who is not even a civil servant.

Secondly, Assad has lost control over two-thirds of his country. The northern third, maybe even a little more, is under the control of IS. As for southern Syria, from Damascus

“Peace in the Middle East is a complicated matter”

and south to the borders of Jordan and Syria, what we call the Golan Heights, this part is controlled by the infamous Al-Qaeda, under the name 'Al-Nusra Front'. This is very bad news. However, it is relatively quiet along this border, because it also relies on deterrence – deterrence against the use of force.

Nevertheless, this deterrence can wear off; therefore we must be prepared every day for the threat of force, which was not implemented yet. Make no mistake, this is a first-rate security challenge.

On the east and south we have two very important countries – Egypt and Jordan – that have signed peace treaties with us. This fact, of course, has a security dimension, because the Jordanians, for reasons and interests of the Kingdom of Jordan, maintain internal stability, which is very challenging, because there is IS in western Iraq, and Al-Nusra/ Al-Qaeda north of Jordan.

Despite all that, the Jordanians maintain an impressive degree of stability, due to governance capacity and exceptional control, as well as excellent security forces. The result is quiet along the Jordanian border, which is a very complicated and dangerous border.

The bad news is – we all have to deal with IS and Al-Qaeda – which is also good news, because all the moderate Arab countries, under the leadership of the United States, decided to fight them. Although there is much criticism about these intentions not being effective enough, still, this huge



Arab system led by the US is a better combination than any other. Europe is joining too, because IS and Al-Qaeda operate in European countries using authentic citizens passports, as has already happened in Brussels and Paris.

So everything is intertwined, and we must look at this situation with a very sober eye. Today, as a result of the peace treaties signed long ago, we have no military threat by regular armies. It does not mean that the Arab world did not accumulate serious

power, but it is directed towards other purposes, and they are not as hostile to Israel as they were before. There is peace, and though it looks “cold” from the outside, it still exists from the security point of view.

DC: What do you think will happen next, will Egypt and Jordan continue to be our partners in this “cold peace” you mentioned?

AG: Peace in the Middle East is a complicated matter, but our common ground is very wide, especially in the security field, because there are enormous risks here to all the regimes and countries. The best thing about the situation is that they are working to eradicate terrorism out of their internal considerations. They are not doing favors for anyone, not for Israel, and not for the United States.

If we look at Egypt – General Sisi was elected president, and he decided that the Muslim Brotherhood poses a threat, because this group wishes to take over the Middle East and change it radically. It is also engaged in murderous terror.

Egypt is one of the most important countries in the Middle East, it is a leader, and it also has the support of all the other Arab countries. The Muslim Brotherhood was defeated. Though it is impossible to disable them permanently, President Sisi is still fighting against terrorism, taking every possible measure. In my opinion, he also maintains a democratic framework. Again, it all stems from Egyptian interests, not for the benefit of Israel or the US. This



“Egypt is one of the most important countries in the Middle East, it is a leader, and it also has the support of all the other Arab countries”

regime simply fulfills the historic responsibility of Egypt to fight the forces of evil.

DC: Speaking about evil, assuming that Iran will get nuclear weapons, how do you think this will change the Middle Eastern map of interests?

AG: Iran is one of the darkest and vilest regimes on Earth, and they don't even hide it, let alone the way they treat themselves and their people. This regime has a religious

dimension, and it has declared a desire to destroy Israel. They also don't hide the fact that they wish to create their own empire. They are very violent, and once they get their hands on nuclear weapons, we should firstly listen very carefully to what they have to say, and take them seriously. Even if we assume that they are not going to launch a nuclear bomb, they will use blackmail.

Iran is sponsoring the world's most dangerous terrorist organizations. It is working together with Hezbollah, and the heads of Hezbollah military apparatuses are in direct contact with the Iranians, who provide the weapons and aid. Imagine Iran having nuclear weapons, what will our deterrent be? Our image will weaken.

Iran will threaten other countries as well, for example – Saudi Arabia, where in the south, in Yemen, the

Houthis are supported by Iran. There are also large concentrations of Shiites in the Dhahran oil zone in the east.

The moment Iran gains atomic weapons it will begin shaking the entire region as it usually does everywhere else. This is a country that has systems that are built to facilitate the performance of terror all over the world. There is a body in charge of South America, Africa, etc. Gaining nuclear weapons will enhance Iran's abilities and image all at once.

DC: What can be done about it?

AG: One of the most important things that have happened is that the whole world, the United States, and the leading countries of Europe, they all recognize this threat and the need to resolve it. All international activity on the subject, all the negotiations, they are all based on the international

sanctions. Even Iran cannot cope with the entire world, despite its being a rich country that has oil and gas resources, and so on.

Eventually, the world imposed sanctions, and today, in the realm of modern economy, it is very difficult to deal with it. So Iran came to negotiate with the US, which is “the devil”, just because they needed to loosen the noose.

Iran is determined to get an arrangement that will allow it to reach the same nuclear weapons capability. Today, the whole world is united against it. At the end, there will be tactical arguments, but there is a consensus. I believe that even the Russians, with their image of having good relations with Iran, are not happy about it having nuclear weapons, to say the least. They are actually against it.

In fact, we are in the midst of a fateful period. The completion of negotiations was postponed to another date, and it is based on a delicate balance of Iranian feasibility considerations – whether they can withstand sanctions or not. As the price of oil goes down it does not work in their favor, even though the price of oil is the product of many different global considerations and developments, ultimately most of the Iranian economy and budget is based on the price of oil.

DC: How about Abu Mazen? Is it possible to talk to him and promote some kind of negotiations?

AG: Let's make some order: the Palestinian Authority consists of two main parts – Judea and Samaria – the West Bank as they call it, and Gaza. Gaza has become Hamastan, which is part of the Muslim Brotherhood. That part strives to get rid of Abu Mazen, to take over the West Bank and the Palestine Liberation Organization,

which is more important to them than the PA, because PA is a body that was set up as a result of the agreement between the PLO and Israel.

There are those who say that we can negotiate with them, talk with them... I disagree. They totally reject any kind of negotiations or peace agreements with us. No matter what. This is a fact. Some will say otherwise, but we have to look at reality in an accurate way. It is an illusion to think that they are ready to negotiate with us, because they sincerely think that Israel should not exist at all in the Middle East, perhaps in another place, but not in the Middle East.

These are Hamas tactics. They are willing to put all their time into terrorism and murder, mostly of civilians, to shake the country from the inside. As an imitation of Hezbollah they also developed military capabilities, which were put to the test during last summer.

Going back to the question – Abu Mazen does not control them, he lost Gaza. I cannot see how he can take back the control over it. With the absence of his ability to take over Gaza, there is no potential to the establishment of the Palestinian state, because he is not able to eradicate the extremist organizations.

It seems that the Palestinians themselves, as well as the Arab world, want Palestine. However, the Palestinians are unable to overcome the split between them, and I don't believe they will, at least not at this point. At the end, we are facing the PA leadership – the PLO.

As for Hamas – it has conquered the Gaza Strip and turned it into Hamastan, using Hezbollah's methods in Lebanon as their model. This is the harsh and bitter reality. Although Hamas does not have Hezbollah's strengths, just its extremist ideology against Israel, it operates not only in

“Iran is determined to get an arrangement that will allow it to reach the same nuclear weapons capability”

Gaza. Recently, the Shabak thwarted a huge infrastructure of Hamas terrorists, who wished to drown Israel in blood, just like they did a little more than 10 years ago.

It is an ongoing struggle, and in the meantime we have the advantage to deal with them, because they want to move the center of their operations from Gaza to the West Bank and Jerusalem. They are not able to do that, so instead they are making great efforts to shock Israel from the ground up, to kill as many as possible, and to scare. They do not agree to any peace agreements or negotiations, and Abu Mazen is in the midst of all that. When he leaves, they would want to take control over the West Bank.

DC: You mentioned IS, Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, is this a religious war?

AG: It may be. What happens between the Sunnis and the Shiites is a war with a religious dimension. We should do everything in our power to avoid becoming involved in a religious war, because a religious war has a beginning, but it has no end.

Although we are not there yet, but certainly, if you look at the organizations involved, they all have a religious orientation – Hezbollah are Shiites, Hamas and other terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda are extremist Sunnis, and the IS are even more extremist Sunnis.

There is definitely a potential danger, but we are not there yet, because, as I said before, the Arab world is enormous. Look at the map – Egypt

is a huge country; Saudi Arabia is a huge country, in addition to other vast Arab territories. These countries will eventually decide to get organized and prevent this danger of religious war that is threatening them as well.

DC: Which diplomatic relations should we strengthen or, perhaps, rebuild?

AG: First of all, we should always strive for normal relations with all countries. For example, some describe our relationship with the US as gloomy sometimes. In my opinion, our relationship with the US, from security point of view, is excellent. Both parties of the US Congress support us.

On the other hand, I don't believe that we can reach any kind of agreement with Hamastan. Some will not agree with me. I think that the only thing

“*The Syrian regime requires daily attention and consideration, but there is no Syria as a country anymore*”

that we can agree upon is practical matters. For example, if relatives of Ismail Haniyeh are in need of medical treatment, he will not hesitate to send them to Israel for treatment. But he will not soften his approach as part of the Hamas ideology to rule out the existence of Israel and wish to destroy it. There is no connection between these; it is a question of being practical.

Some mention a model called 'Hudna' i.e. a truce, when you know that you can do all sorts of activities designed to strengthen you. However, this is in essence a unilateral decision, so there is no obligation to keep the ceasefire, no peace treaty, no acceptance of your existence, and so on.

We must constantly strive for full peace in the region, it is important for us, but it is clear that if we look to the north, or the east, there is no one to talk to. And when you look at Jordan and Egypt – we must do everything in our power to deepen and strengthen the ties between us on the basis of the peace treaties signed a long time ago.

DC: What do you think about a kind of 'cold war' or 'cold peace' here in the region? At least people will stop dying.

AG: I'm absolutely for it, but we should strive for a real, 'warm' peace. Let's take Syria for example. The Syrian president now controls about a quarter or perhaps a third of his country. He is more of a governor than a president. There were all kinds of assumptions regarding his status as a ruler, but to those who know him, he is tough and surrounded by very tough people. They do not surrender. So a tragedy happened, and if the father would see what the son had done, he would not be satisfied. The Syrian government has shrunk, but, there is still a Syrian army, there is still air defense, and there is still the cooperation of Hezbollah and Iran.

The Syrian regime requires daily attention and consideration, but there is no Syria as a country anymore. There is well over a million refugees living in Jordan, and very large parts of the Syrian population, other than those who were killed, that have no present and no future. They have nothing. So obviously it's not a country, it was broken apart.

There is a disintegration of countries: Libya is not a country, Syria is not a country, Iraq is not a country, Lebanon is not a country... So obviously, we must be realistic and sober. We must maintain deterrence, that's what we do, because what matters above all is the security of the citizens.

Peace is very important, we should strive for it all the time, but the basis for everything, even for peace and the lack of it, is security built on deterrence. There is more of a potential threat than the threat itself.

DC: What would you wish to all citizens in the Middle East, not the ones who fight or kill?

AG: First of all, I am appalled by the humanitarian suffering. It is terrible. Israel, for example, has opened a field hospital, were the wounded Syrians can receive medical treatment. Some are in very serious condition. People come here in a terrible state. There is chaos in Syria, there is severe human suffering. A large part of the population is in fact murdered on a daily basis. Many are wounded, injured and disabled.

Moreover, in large, very significant parts of Syria, people, children have absolutely no future. There are no schools, no infrastructure, nothing. In addition to various terrorist organizations trying to gain control over Syria, the Syrian army also uses improper methods of warfare such as chemical weapons, a fact which distances it from the international community.

The conditions in which citizens live in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon are just terrible. I wish them only well, I wish them to have some kind of future, a better future, though, unfortunately, I believe it won't happen soon. ●

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER IN JERUSALEM

Catholics and Protestants both celebrated Easter on April 5. Meanwhile, Jews worldwide are celebrating the festival of Passover, or Pesach, which commemorates their liberation from slavery in Egypt.

Orthodox Christians are celebrating Paska, marking the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It started with the centuries old tradition of lighting the Holy Fire in Jerusalem, before the flame was transported around the globe.

On Easter and the preceding Holy Week, Jerusalem fills with pilgrims from all over the world. For Orthodox and Catholic Christians, celebrations focus on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where six historic denominations have marked the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus since the fourth century.

On Palm Sunday pilgrims come streaming down the Mount of Olives singing hymns and bearing palm fronds, reenacting Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1-10). Another highlight is Maundy Thursday, when the Patriarch washes the feet of his priests in imitation of Jesus (John 13:1-15).

On Good Friday, a procession of thousands along the Via Dolorosa mark the Stations of the Cross (Mark 15:16-37). On Saturday, Orthodox Christians celebrate the Ceremony of the Holy Fire, when thousands gather to await the miraculous lighting of the Patriarch's candle from within the tomb. The crowds are tight and excitement runs high, but the sight of the flame jumping from taper to taper held by the chanting faithful inside the darkened church is unforgettable.

Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter later in the spring than Catholics and Protestants do, due to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar by the Western churches. What's more, Easter is celebrated on a different date each year because it coincides with Passover, which is determined according to the lunar calendar.

For Orthodox and Catholic Christians, Easter Sunday is marked by masses and solemn processions at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Protestants in Jerusalem flock to the Sunrise Service at the Garden Tomb

About 130,000 visitors came in Israel over the period of Holy Week and Passover. About 20 direct flights arrived in Ovdah airport, bringing tourists from France, Russia and the UK to celebrate the Passover holidays in Eilat.



EASTER MESSAGE OF THE HEADS OF CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

"He has given us new birth into a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1.3)

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, send our Easter Greetings and Blessings to all people everywhere in the name of our risen Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In the face of so much that threatens to devalue or diminish human life, the hope that springs from the Resurrection is rooted here in Jerusalem. The message of Easter has shaped the very identity of this Holy City over many centuries. Here is located the site of the Empty Tomb, the place where God's sovereignty over death and the powers of darkness was manifested in the raising of Jesus from the dead. As a consequence of this reality, the location where the Resurrection took place is not merely an object of archaeological curiosity but remains a living focus of Christian worship. It is a place where God's grace has been manifested in numerous ways down the centuries and for that reason alone it deserves respect.

Along with all people of good will, we are deeply distressed by the level of violence still being falsely perpetrated

in the name of religion in parts of the Middle East and elsewhere in recent times. Members of some of the ancient Christian communities in this region – especially in Egypt, Iraq and Syria – have been among those most directly affected, along with other minority populations. There is no true religion which advocates violation of the human person or the victimization of minority groups in society and we condemn such actions in the strongest possible terms. Those who engage in such barbaric behaviour dehumanize not only their victims, but themselves.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we urge people everywhere not to fall into despair. The very existence of this city of Jerusalem is paradoxically a sign of hope that God's kingdom of peace, love and justice will prevail. There are indeed signs of darkness around us which make this a painful time to live through, but the darkest part of the night is often shortly before the dawn. The joyful proclamation of the Resurrection at dawn on Easter Sunday assures us that the last word lies not with violence and inhumanity but with God's purpose of love, justice and hope which runs like a thread throughout history and will find its ultimate fulfillment in the coming fullness of his Kingdom.

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!

+Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

+Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarchate

+Patriarch Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate

+Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land

+Archbishop Anba Abraham, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem

+Archbishop Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate

+Archbishop Aba Embakob, Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate

+Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zerey, Greek-Melkite-Catholic Patriarchate

+Archbishop Mosa El-Hage, Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate

+Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East

+Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

+Bishop Pierre Malki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate

+Msgr. Georges Dankayé, Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate



PASSOVER 2015 QUOTES: 10 SAYINGS TO SHARE WITH LOVED ONES ON THIS HOLIDAY

Passover begins Friday, April 3 until Saturday, April 11.

Passover is the Jewish holiday that celebrates the escape of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt and its slavery. Passover (or Pesach) begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan according to the Gregorian calendar. The holiday acts as a reminder to the whole Jewish community about the struggle that their forefathers had to face in order to create the land of hope and happiness. In the narration of Exodus, the Bible says that God inflicted ten plagues upon the Egyptians before Pharaoh released his Hebrew slaves. To celebrate the meaningful holiday, we've gathered quotes that convey and commemorates the message of hope:

"The willingness to sacrifice is the prelude to freedom." – *Unknown*

"Freedom is within our grasp, and Pesach reminds us that we need to reach." – *Bradley Shavit Artson*

"Passover affirms the great truth that liberty is the inalienable right of every human being." – *Morris Joseph*

"The point of cleaning for Pesach is to remember that we are leaving Egypt, leaving the things that constrict us spiritually." – *Shimon Raichik*

"Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how Adonai freed you from it with a mighty hand." – *Exodus 13:3*

"Passover and Easter are the only Jewish and Christian holidays that move in sync, like the ice skating pairs we saw during the winter Olympics." – *Marvin Olasky*

"What is national freedom if not a people's inner freedom to cultivate its abilities along the beaten path of its history?" – *Ahad Ha'am, 1902*

"The cause of Freedom and the cause of Peace are bound together." – *Léon Blum, "Problems of Peace"*

"Get rid of the old leaven of sin so that you may be a new batch of dough — as you really are." – *Bible, 1 Corinthians 5:7*

"The Exodus from Egypt occurs in every human being, in every era, in every year, and in every day." – *Rabbi Nachman of Breslov*

"The message of Passover remains as powerful as ever. Freedom is won not on the battlefield but in the classroom and the home. Teach your children the history of freedom if you want them never to lose it." – *Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks*



“ISRAEL AND GREECE, 25 YEARS OF FULL DIPLOMATIC TIES”

by Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Spiros Lambridis

These days we celebrate twenty-five years since the establishment of full relations between our two countries, Greece and Israel, representing two peoples that have been interacting throughout History for more than two thousand years. Let us only briefly look back at these relatively few years of fruitful cooperation and instead take a deep breath while gazing forward to the great challenges ahead, which the two peoples are called upon by mere reality to tackle together, hand in hand.

We sometimes hear the bizarre argument that current flourishing relations between Greece and Israel constitute a “marriage of convenience” since other states in the region have turned hostile to both countries. Nothing could lie further from reality. A brief survey of regional geo-strategic and economic parameters shaping up over the last years, easily proves even to a non-expert that Israel and Greece share in today’s precarious East Mediterranean environment a series of converging if not identical interests, goals and characteristics. In a broader area where tensions are mounting simultaneously from the entire Middle East up to Central Asia or parts of Eastern Europe and down to North and sub-Saharan Africa, countries that possess democratic structures, rich historic and

cultural background, mature societies with highly educated and politically active citizens, or economies based on functional, liberal, technologically and financially advanced infrastructures, are truly scarce.

In this framework, Greece wisely decided a while ago that it will cooperate closely with Israel among other neighboring friends to promote peace, stability and socio-economic progress, thus contributing also, to a degree, to the development of the entire region and perhaps even beyond. By all means, let us be daring! In the words of Golda Meir “if you do not believe in miracles, then you are not a realist”.

Our two countries have so far engaged in an intensive cooperation, exchange of ideas and experiences in the fields of science, culture, commerce, innovation, energy, security and defense. These fields already open great opportunities to institutions, individual citizens and entrepreneurs alike, as they affect almost every aspect of contemporary activity in our respective open, modern and democratic societies. Certainly, there is plenty more to explore in agriculture, tourism, medicine, research, transport, communications, even space technology where synergies are already multiplying. The institutional framework has already been set, skilled people are available, the political will also exists. Therefore, the road to progress and cooperation is open wide, constituting a one way street with no turning back, because:

Greece has been dragged in a severe economic and, consequently, social crisis over the past six years despite being a member of the nucleus of the European Union, one of its older members. A series of grave inherent structural, financial and political deficiencies caused the derailment of our economy. Furthermore, only to aggravate things, the prescription ordered by the international community to remedy an unprecedented situation unfortunately proved by now to be inadequate to a great extent.

As a matter of fact Europe itself has been plunging in an equally severe crisis over the last years, a deep shock that is not purely and solely economic but that, alas, is currently damaging its social, cultural and moral cohesion, endangering seriously the democratic and ethical values on which it is founded. In this gloomy context, Greece’s ever blooming affiliation with the young, daring and innovative Israeli society is already infusing our aging productive structures and old-fashioned state bureaucracy with new, “out of the box” ideas and methods. This fact is greatly appreciated by our younger productive generation that have foregone stereotypes long ago, possessing by now high educational standards and specialized skills in a number of fields.

Respectively, Greece is offering Israel, which in a way feels isolated geographically and culturally within an increasingly turbulent and hostile



Middle Eastern environment, a broad and secure gateway to the challenges and opportunities of Europe in every sense. Greece is a safe haven as a holiday destination for hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens, a vibrant potential opportunity for Israeli entrepreneurs, a worthy partner for Israeli scientists and academics, a cultural Mediterranean “alter ego” for Israeli artists but also for simple music lovers or food gourmets, a truly reliable interlocutor when it comes to issues of defense training or sensitive security information sharing.

Certainly the Middle East is a particularly volatile area, where relations, interests and, consequently, trusted friends often shift sides. Nevertheless, in this particular instance, things seem much simpler. What was long overdue in the context of our bilateral relations is finally materializing as things have taken their natural course, based on pure rational thinking and taking into account the broader regional picture and the two countries’ mutual interests. As a matter of fact, Greece has always been keenly interested in developments in this particular region,

since its long term strategic interests are far better served through a stable, open, democratic, cooperative and peaceful evolution of all states in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In this context, our steady drive towards a full strategic partnership with Israel falls well in line with our excellent traditional relations with the Arab world and our unwavering support for reaching a just, viable and peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue through a final Agreement providing for the existence of two sovereign and democratic states in this region, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, mutual recognition and respect.

Our close cooperation with Israel by no means develops at the expense of any other state, nor does it direct itself against any third party. Our strong conviction is that our common democratic and human values should ultimately prevail over violence, hatred, fanaticism and sectarianism that leads people back to the dark ages. Therefore, we are inviting all others to join us in a regional partnership of peace and progress, in order to bring prosperity and freedom to the entire region that is

currently undergoing horrible ordeals involving massive destruction, terrorism in its most brutal form, involving scores of innocent civilian victims of war and inhuman oppression.

The new Greek Government, in the course of the customary ceremonial opening session of our Parliament, pledged to struggle for a humane, democratic and liberal drastic change benefitting the average citizen not only in Greece, but in Europe as a whole. If this message of hope is valid for an ailing Europe, then it is certainly imperative for a bleeding Middle East.

Let us indeed offer a glimpse of light and allow an excited heartbeat in the perpetual struggle for a more humane society and better individuals. Let us give our long forgotten human smile a new chance. In the words of yet another pillar of wisdom, Shimon Peres: “Count daily the number of your dreams and compare them to the number of your perceived accomplishments. If dreams are more than deeds, then you are still young with a bright future ahead of you”. So are the relations between Israel and Greece.

ISRAEL'S DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD: STATUS OF RELATIONS. 2015 - CELEBRATING OF JUBILEES

| STATE | PLACE OF REPRESENTATION | REPRESENTATION | STATUS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS | DATE | YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS | HEADED BY |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| Bolivia | | Severed relations 1/2009 | (Recog.) | (1/1950) | 65 | |
| | Santa Cruz | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Brazil | Brasilia | Embassy | Recog. | 1/1950 | 65 | Ambassador |
| | Sao Paulo | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| | Rio de Janeiro | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Bulgaria | Sofia | Embassy | Renewal | 5/1990 | 25 | Ambassador |
| | Varna | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Burundi | | Non-Resident | Renewal | 3/1995 | 20 | Rep. by Ambassador in Ethiopia |
| Cyprus | Nicosia | Embassy | Recog. | 10/1960 | 55 | Ambassador |
| | Limassol | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Ecuador | Quito | Embassy | Recog. | 1/1950 | 65 | Ambassador |
| | Guayaquil | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Egypt | Cairo | Embassy | Estab. | 2/1980 | 35 | Ambassador |
| El Salvador | San Salvador | Embassy | Recog. | 1/1950 | 65 | Ambassador |
| Fiji | | Non-Resident | | 8/1970 | 45 | Rep. by Ambassador in Australia |
| Germany | Berlin | Embassy | Estab. | 10/1965 | 50 | Ambassador |
| | Munich | Consulate General | | | | Consul General |
| Grenada | | Non-Resident | Estab. | 1/1975 | 40 | Rep. by Ambassador in Dominican Republic |
| Guatemala | Guatemala | Embassy | Recog. | 1/1950 | 65 | Ambassador |
| Haiti | | Non-Resident | Recog. | 1/50 | 65 | Rep. by Ambassador in Dominican Republic |
| | Port-au-Prince | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Honduras | | Non-Resident | Recog. | 1/1950 | 65 | Rep. by Ambassador in Guatemala |
| Ireland | Dublin | Embassy | Estab. | 1/1975 | 40 | Ambassador |
| Macedonia | | Non-Resident | Estab. | 12/1995 | 20 | Rep. by Ambassador in Serbia |
| | | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Malta | | Non-Resident | Estab. | 12/1965 | 50 | Rep. by Ambassador in MFA, Jerusalem |
| Mexico | Mexico City | Embassy | Recog. | 1/1950 | 65 | Ambassador |
| | Guadalajara | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| | Tijuana | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| | Monterrey | | | | | Honorary Consul |
| Nepal | Kathmandu | Embassy | Estab. | 6/1960 | 55 | Ambassador |
| Poland | Warsaw | Embassy | Renewal | 2/1990 | 25 | Ambassador. |
| San Marino | | Non-Resident | Estab. | 11/1995 | 20 | Rep. by Ambassador in Italy |
| South Africa | Pretoria | Embassy | Estab. | 1/1975 | 40 | Ambassador |
| Sri Lanka | | Non-Resident | Renewal | 5/2000 | 15 | Rep. by Ambassador in India |
| Tanzania | | Non-Resident | Renewal | 2/1995 | 20 | Rep. by Ambassador in Kenya |
| Venezuela | | Severed relations 1/2009 | (Recog.) | (1/1950) | 65 | |



Efi Stenzler presents Ambassador Zhan Yongxin with a mounted Blue Box.
Photo: Edi Israel, KKL-JNF Photo Archive

CHINESE AMBASSADOR VISITS THE ISRAEL-CHINA FRIENDSHIP FOREST

China's new ambassador to Israel, Zhan Yongxin paid a visit to the Israel-China Friendship Forest in the Negev in celebration of the Chinese New Year.

In the course of their visit the ambassadorial delegation had the opportunity to observe two KKL-JNF Negev projects at first hand: Beersheba River Park and the Abraham's Well Visitors' Center.

"Our two nations share a friendship that dates back over many years," said the Chinese ambassador. "Relationships between people form the basis for relationships between states. We've gathered here in the Israel-China Friendship Forest in order to care for the woodland, which symbolizes the strong links between our two nations."

KKL-JNF World Chairman Efi Stenzler told those assembled that, apart from a message of friendship, this grove in Lahav Forest on the fringes of the desert also communicates an important ecological message. "We've learned how to plant trees in arid areas by combining techniques used by the

desert dwellers of old with modern equipment," he said. "These methods developed by KKL-JNF foresters can be adapted by many other countries throughout the world and used in the battle against desertification and global warming."

The visit took place on April 1st, shortly after the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

The Chinese guests showed great interest in Israel's observance of the current sabbatical (shmita) year. KKL-JNF's Head of Protocol Andy Michaelson explained that no trees would be planted this year, and that the ground would be left to lie fallow. "But don't worry, we've got a trick up our sleeve," he added with a smile. "We plant the tree in a pot and then transfer it to the ground at the end of the year."

Ambassador Yongxin remarked that China has a similar tradition of allowing the land to rest. "There is a great deal of similarity between our two nations," he said. "We both respect tradition, family values, and the riches of an ancient culture."

The planting ceremony was held on

a rainy day, a rare occurrence in this part of Israel. "You've brought the rain with you, and we thank you for that," World Chairman Efi Stenzler told the Chinese delegation.



Ambassador Yongxin plants a tree in the Israel-China Friendship Forest. Photo: Edi Israel, KKL-JNF Photo Archive



PALESTINIAN CULTURE MONTH

This is the fourth year in which The Mossawa Center is coordinating a month of cultural events, in cooperation with institutions and cultural centers throughout the region.

March was chosen carefully, as it holds dates of significance both locally and internationally, beginning with International Women's Day, National Day of Palestinian Culture, World Storytelling Day, Mother's Day, the commencement of the spring season, and Palestinian Land Day- all of which contain national, humanitarian, and cultural elements.

The wide-range of activities and events held throughout the month will take place in towns, villages, and cities across the region. The content of the events is derived from humanitarian, national, and individual concerns, along with a striving for peace, equality, justice, and respect for one's self as well as for others.

Among the events and activities of the month, Acre will host an important symposium which will confer the question of political and cultural confluence under a fierce election campaign, Haifa will host the Palestinian Film Festival initiated

by the Midan Theater and Zochrot Organization, and various plays, film screenings, exhibitions, storytelling, poetry readings, and seminars will take place in Jaffa, Tira, Qalansawa, A'ara, A'ara'ara, Taybeh, Jeser el Zarka, Acre, Nazareth, Fassouta, I'billin, Nahef, Majd el Kroum, KufriYaseef, Shefaa'mer and other villages and cities.

This program was implemented in cooperation between The Mossawa Center, Al Mashghal, Forum of Cultural Institutions, and Alrowad. Supported by the European Union, Arab local councils, and local culture organizations.

BEANNACHT LÁ FHÉILE PÁDRAIG 2015



Saint Patrick's Day, or the Feast of Saint Patrick (Irish: Lá Fhéile Pádraig, "the Day of the Festival of Patrick"), is a cultural and religious celebration held on March 17th, the traditional death date of "Saint Patric, the foremost patron saint of Ireland.

*May the Irish hills caress you;
may her lakes and rivers bless you;
may the luck of the Irish enfold you;
may the blessings of St Patrick behold you*

The St.Patrick's Day reception was held at the residence of the Ambassador of Ireland, H.E. Dr. Eamonn McKee on the evening of the March 16th with around 200 guests. Entertainment included Irish dancing from the Israeli Academy of Irish Dance Company. www.irishdance.co.il All photos were taken by Mrs Mary McGillis McKee.



THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL DAY

The Estonian National Day was celebrated with music on February 21. The concert at Tel Aviv's Hatakhana outdoor space was part of the Estonian-Israeli music festival MustonenFest Tallinn – Tel Aviv 2015. Featured at the event were the internationally recognized choirs from Estonia, the Ellerhein Girls' Choir and the National Male Choir.

Photo by Maxim Reider



GHANA'S NATIONAL DAY

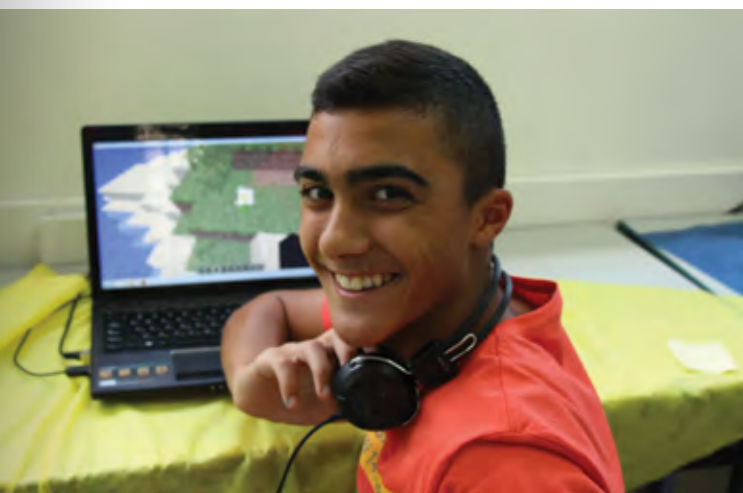
Every year on the 6th of March, Ghana's National Day is celebrated by Ghanaians all over the world to mark the attainment of independence of their beloved country in 1957.

This year, His Excellency Ernest S. Lomotey, Ambassador of Ghana to Israel, his wife Mrs. Evelyn Dodoo Lomotey, and members of the staff at the embassy in Tel Aviv hosted a reception at the Afecka Events Hall in Tel Aviv on March 8th to celebrate Ghana's 58th National Day Anniversary.

The Guest of Honor for the event was Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, MK Yair Shamir. Other distinguished guests included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, members of the diplomatic corps, and a cross section of Ghanaians living in Israel.

Ghana's rich and spectacular culture was on display with colorful Kente clothing, as well as traditional songs and dances performed by Nokoba Cultural Troupe based in Israel.





THE ISRAELI CAMP THAT BRINGS INTERNATIONAL TEENS TOGETHER

Where in Israel can you find a place for kids and teens from all over the world to meet and design their future? The answer is clear –

At the BIG IDEA camp of course. Many parents these days are looking to give their child that special summer experience – the one where he or she can explore, gain new skills, mature, and have a lot of fun along the way. BIG IDEA Israeli summer camp is exactly that program - An international tech program taking place in the heart of the start-up nation.

Children and teens between the ages of 7-18 arrive to BIG IDEA every summer from 30 countries: The US, France, UK, Spain, Italy, Canada, Germany, Turkey, Japan, Russia, China, and many more. The primary language at camp is English, although you get to hear many other languages as well. Half of the campers are Israeli and the other half are international, which creates the unique multicultural atmosphere at camp.

During the two week session, participants get hands-on experience in tech and media workshops of their choice. Some campers choose to create their own computer game, build robots, or even program and develop apps. Other can choose to learn photography or graphic design, become a DJ, and even design jewelry with 3D software, which they can



later print in a 3D printer and wear. The workshops are led in small groups of up to eight campers by the professional staff.

Teens who want to explore other fields can enjoy a daily surfing course in the Mediterranean, a theater workshop where they get to perform in front of the whole camp, martial arts, and even scientific experiments. As a part of the program, the older groups have the opportunity to start designing their own start-up in a special entrepreneurship program in collaboration with the Adelson School at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. The high-school age participants also go on a special field trip to main tech companies in Israel, such as Google and Giving Imaging, BIG IDEA is not just about technology and sitting in front of the computer all day long. The variety of outdoor activities make the kids jump, dance, and make new friendships. The talent show, pool party, bonfires, and sports competitions are just a small part of the exciting programs available to campers.

BIG IDEA camp is located in the Meir Shfeya Youth village, a gorgeous evergreen campus located on Mount

Carmel (Near Zichron Ya'akov). These are not your typical American camp bunks. Beautiful dorms house 3-6 campers per room, with AC, and private showers and bathrooms, making BIG IDEA a leader in the field of international summer camps. The camp also offers prospective campers and their families to visit the campus and meet the staff in Open House events during April and May.

The idea to open a technology summer camp in Israel started eight years ago with Dotan Tamir, the CEO and founder of BIG IDEA. Dotan says that making the camp international was the goal from the get-go. "People are looking up to Israel when they talk about the success story of the Israeli start-up. For the past eight years, we had thousands of teens coming to Israel and exploring this on their own. Some of them fly in to Israel in the summer, and some are based in Israel and looking for a meaningful summer experience for their child." Dotan explains and smiles "Nothing beats the look on a camper's eyes when he or she creates something on their own, or uses a skill they just learned. The satisfaction they have is the best feeling in the world!" ●



WRAPPING YOUR PASSENGERS WITH THE BULLETPROOF "SUIT"

THE ARMORGUARD: A PORTABLE BULLETPROOF SHIELD TO PROTECT PASSENGERS IN A "SOFT SKIN" VEHICLE.

As the need for armored civilian vehicles has become more substantial in the last years throughout the increasingly volatile Middle East, finding affordable solutions for protecting passengers in vehicles continues to present a significant challenge for security professionals. In an effort to overcome the high cost barrier, a new patented application has recently been developed (Patent #184533). The ArmorGuard, which was developed and produced by Top Car Armoring Ltd., protects passengers without the need for modifying the vehicle.

Top Car Armoring Ltd. is a privately held company that was established by Mr. Doron Labock, who has worked in the vehicle protection industry since the late 1980s. Top Car based in the town of Sderot, only 7 minutes from Erez check-point, by the Gaza border.

How did you come up with this patent?

For many years, we have been working in providing armor solutions for both civilian and commercial vehicles, both for local and international markets. The market we familiar most with, is the local

Diplomatic sector, as alongside with supplying it new armored vehicles, we continuously provide for its existing armored fleets with reparation and maintenance services, as well as armor vehicles rental.

We have noticed that managing fleets of armored vehicles is a complicated matter. On one hand, when a task should be conducted in the West Bank, let alone Gaza, the security officers always prefer to drive their mission colleagues in armored vehicles. On the other hand, there are never enough armored vehicles in the fleet, even among small missions.



One of the solutions to facilitate this situation is equipping the staff with bullet proof gear (vests and helmets). Bulletproof gear is a good solution when it comes to protection, but regrettably it fails in ergonomics: sitting with vest & helmet in a vehicle, even for half an hour, you will start to feel your back hurts. Another issue is that exchanging gear from one staff-member to another bothers many people. Consider that also that if a staff member dresses elegantly, you can imagine what a vest does to his or her shirt, and what a helmet does to their hair.

Facing these concerns brought me to look for some kind of application which provides bulletproof protection that is affordable and ergonomic. This how we came out with the ArmorGuard.

What is the ArmorGuard exactly?

It is a portable device, based on a few ballistic plates, all decoratively upholstered. The plates are "hooked"

to each other with tenon, what makes the application modular. The size of each plate as well as the number of plates to be "hooked", are flexible and subjected to the customer's vehicle as well as to his "fleet management"; therefore, instead of equipping all vehicles with ArmorGuard per passenger, it is more advantageous to procure a number of ArmorGuard kits and modulate them according to the vehicle's bench length, number of passengers, etc.

You have mentioned that the ArmorGuard is an affordable product. Can you please give me an idea how much an ArmorGuard will cost?

Well, of course the prices derive from parameters such as protection level, number of plates, upholstery level, etc., but generally speaking and concerning the common bullets threatening our region, the price for an ArmorGuard is around \$4,500. You should bear in mind that this

protection application has minimal "Wear and Tear" costs and one ArmorGuard kit can be used for many years and serve many passengers.

Where can prospective customers see a sample of the ArmorGuard?

Well, on May 19th-21st Top Car will present both armored SUV models and the ArmorGuard at the Security Exhibition which is being held at the Conference Center in Tel-Aviv.

And of course, I welcome anyone to visit Top Car Armoring in the town of Sderot, where we can show the armoring process and capabilities, the ArmorGuard. ●

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ASSUTA IMAGING THE FUTURE WITH LOW- RADIATION TECHNOLOGY

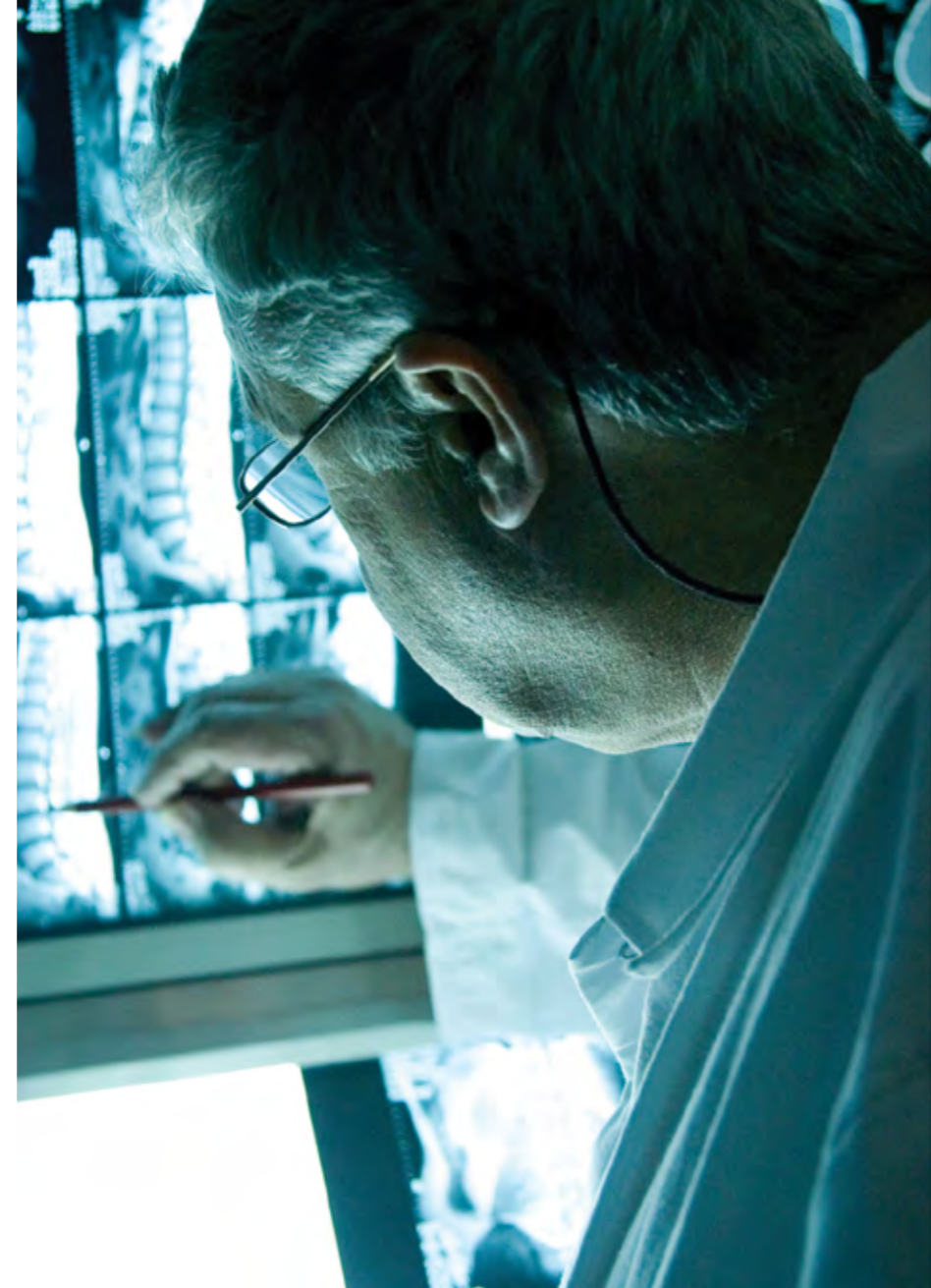
Just a few years ago, it would seem like something straight out of a science-fiction film: full-color images showing the inside of someone's body in incredible detail. Yet this is now a familiar scene in hospitals worldwide, and has become a cornerstone of modern medicine. Today, imaging plays a vital role in the diagnostic process, and its importance will only increase as the population ages.

Imaging techniques such as MRI and CT scans enable doctors to pinpoint potential medical issues with far greater speed and precision than ever before, meaning patients can be diagnosed more accurately, with their treatment monitored over time. However, patients must also be made aware of the potential risks associated with these types of scans.

With CT scans, the key term is "ionizing radiation." This kind of radiation is also used in traditional X-rays, which most of us already understand can be very harmful, but this is often not considered by patients using less familiar, more advanced technologies.

Keeping Radiologists Up at Night

Dr. Michael Avital, a radiologist at Assuta Medical Center, explains that experts in his field have always sought new methods to minimize



risks without sacrificing accuracy. Their greatest concern is, naturally, the safety of their patients.

"At one time, the idea was to use less radiation – a low-dose CT – which would, in theory, reduce the patient's chance of developing cancer decades later. However, we have to pay the price of clarity in exchange for this lower radiation. The picture is less sharp: what we call a 'noisy' picture."

"Still, there are definitely cases in which this low-dose technology is very useful. It is particularly recommended for breast, lung, and other chest scans, because the lungs absorb very little radiation compared to the muscles,

bones, and brain. For example, low-dose CTs let us do follow-up on a patient with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder) every six to twelve months, which we would not be able to do with the higher dose."

CT VS. MRI

Even with low-dose CTs available for diagnosing certain areas of the body, surely the safest option is to avoid them altogether? MRIs, for example, use magnetic fields instead of radiation, and have no known harmful side effects. This seems like the perfect solution. Not so, says Dr. Judith Luckman.

"It's not true to say that an MRI emits no radiation at all, and a high-dose CT scan is a much better option in some instances, such as when examining bones and bone structures. In general, the MRI may give more detailed images, but the procedure takes much longer and requires a lot of patience, which means it's not suitable for everyone."

There are also logistical issues: if hospitals were to switch over to MRIs entirely, they would have to double or even triple their number of MRI machines, entailing a huge financial and resource cost.

At the Heart of Innovation

A pioneering new device is now making waves in the imaging world: the CZT camera, designed to provide all the advantages of low-dose radiation without harming diagnostic accuracy. This new technology has been shown to accurately diagnose the extent of ischemia in cardiac arteries, while using only low doses of radiation.

Assuta's Director of Cardiac Mapping, Dr. Tali Sharir, explains: "The American Society of Nuclear Cardiology recommends exposing patients to as little radiation as possible. By introducing the CZT camera, we can comply with this recommendation without forfeiting image quality."

Assuta Medical Center's Cardiac Mapping Institute is considered an exemplary model in the Israeli healthcare field, having achieved remarkable successes in reducing

radiation while maintaining image clarity – a win-win for patients and doctors. The Institute's counterparts from other hospitals often visit to learn more about their unique methods and research into reducing radiation still further. The CZT camera is a very significant marker of the Institute's dedication and advancement.

In addition, Assuta has purchased the Philips PET/CT scanner, which combines mapping with a CT scan. This groundbreaking technology reduces test time while also using approximately 75% less radiation than older-generation products in the market.

Assuta's Imaging Institutes

As the largest, leading medical center in Israel, Assuta is home to the country's finest state-of-the-art imaging institutes, providing expert diagnostics through all existing medical imaging tests, including MRI, CT, PET-CT, ultrasound, X-ray, and nuclear medicine procedures. This array is the most sophisticated of its kind in the country, staffed by Israel's foremost experts in radiology and nuclear medicine in order to obtain optimal results every time.

Assuta's imaging institutes are available to all members of Israel's health funds with a doctor's referral and form #17 from the relevant fund. It is also possible to pay privately.

Imaging analysis is carried out rapidly, so that all results are received within 72 hours and can also be viewed online upon receipt of a personal password.

HOSPITAL
Assuta
RAISING HEALTH STANDARDS

Contact: 20 HaBarzel St, Ramat HaChayal
Tel: +972-3-7644044
please mention that you are a Diplomat Club member
touristcenter@assuta.com

Official Website: www.assuta.com



Assuta is accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI) as representing the very highest quality patient care, which includes going that extra mile to ensure patient safety and wellbeing throughout the entire diagnostic and treatment process. This is why the hospital embraces innovation in every field, while also nurturing the skills of its expert staff members, providing every patient with an exceptional healthcare experience that exceeds all expectations.

In this spirit of moving forward, the entire Assuta team would like to wish you a very happy spring holiday season, and good health all year long.



RolexShow

WATCHES | DIAMONDS | JEWELLERY

ROLEX GOING 1000 MILES AN HOUR (REALLY)

KRIS BONIFAS



Continuing the coverage of Rolex adventures and the watches worn by people reaching heights that no others have attempted, Rolex looks again to break the land speed record. With backing and technical assistance from Rolex, Bloodhound SSC looks to smash the existing world speed record of 763 Mph by going 1000 Mph - 31% faster than the speed of sound sometime over the coming year.

The Bloodhound SSC is a pioneering blend of 50% race car and 50% aircraft technologies, packed into a vehicle powered by three jet rockets and internal combustion producing the horsepower equivalent of 180 Formula 1 racing cars. In order to break the record, the Bloodhound SSC must make two passes within an hour, and the two runs are averaged to validate the record. As much as making the car fast, much of the technology is for decelerating the

vehicle utilizing a combination of parachutes, as well as air and disk brakes, each having disadvantages at certain speeds. The vehicle will have to decelerate under the force of 3gs, an equivalent of dropping from 66 Mph to 0 (yes ZERO) in one second.

In addition to Rolex's support, the project is backed by Richard Noble, a Scottish entrepreneur and adventurer who broke the 1983 land speed record in Thrust 2, and was project director for Thrust SSC, the first vehicle to break the supersonic land speed record in 1997. Driving the Bloodhound SSC is Andy Green, Oxford mathematics graduate and British RAF fighter pilot who drove the Thrust SSC through the sound barrier. With as much thrust as the Bloodhound SSC has, there should be no surprise that these vehicles are not really driven, but rather piloted by certified jet pilots, including Noble and Green.

Rolex's long association with automotive sport, including the Rolex Motorsports Reunion at Laguna Seca Raceway, continues with its association with the Bloodhound SSC. Before this project, Malcolm Campbell wore a Rolex in his 1935 land speed record of 301 Mph. With Rolex's support for Formula 1 racing, 24 Hours of Daytona and LeMans, Rolex is quite at home backing a record breaking project such as Bloodhound SSC. Rolex is contributing both the speedometer and the chronograph that will sit inside the cockpit that assist in precision braking required so the vehicle does not run out off track on the 12 mile, straight line course. The speedometer and chronometer will still function despite a power failure in the vehicle. Building custom instruments is not new to Rolex. Rolex designed and manufactured the DeepSea SeaDweller Challenge, a watch that survived the immense water pressure at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, and Rolex produces the clocks and timers used at Wimbledon, the Australian Open, and the 24-hour timers used at Daytona and LeMans.

Rolex watches are available on Rolex Show boutiques in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Ra'anana, and Eilat.

For more details, please visit our website at www.euro-asia.co.il and search for our page on Facebook at Euro - Asia.



Stopwatch graduation tailored to the 60 minute time limit for turnaround

Stopwatch seconds hand

Stopwatch minute hand

Clock hour hand

Clock minute hand

SPECIFICATIONS

Functions
Stopwatch with seconds and minute hands (main dial)
Clock (subdial)

GPS
Time signal provided by GPS

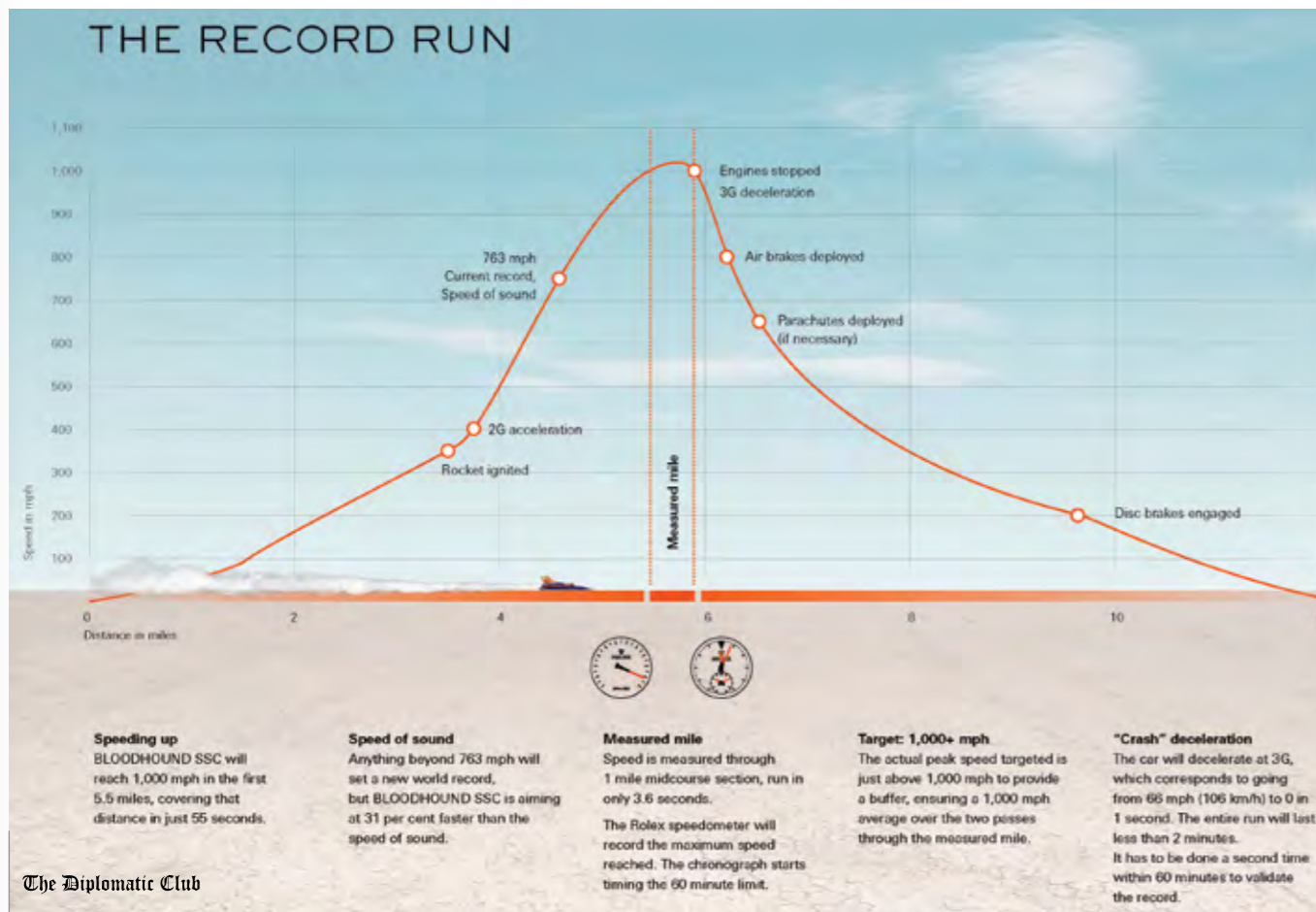
Motors
4 independent motors, 1 per hand

Battery
Autonomy: 30 mins

Dial
Plexiglas, backlit

Case
Satin finished stainless steel

Dimensions
Diameter: 95 mm
Length: 200 mm
Weight: 1.6 kg



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MEETING "CORTICAL DEVELOPMENT IN HEALTH AND DISEASE" IN REHOVOT 26 – 29 APRIL 2015

The Dept. of Molecular Genetics at the Weizmann Institute of Science is organizing the international meeting "Cortical Development in Health and Disease" with over 100 international scholars expected to participate. Gregor Kasprian from the Medical University of Vienna and Madeline Lancaster from IMBA will be among the speakers. Some of the lectures to be held at the event include:

Dr. Madeline Lancaster: Examining human brain development and disease in cerebral organoids. Weizmann Institute of Science. 26 April 2015, 10:30
 Dr. Gregor Kasprian: Diagnostics of cortical diseases by MRI. David Lopatie Conference Centre, Kimmel Audit. Herzl St. 234, Rehovot. 27 April 2015, 9:00
 Dr. Gregor Kasprian © Billrothhaus
 Dr. Madeline Lancaster © IMBA

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**IRRWISCH THEATER WITH SHOW
"HUPFT! HOPS!" AT THE CHILDREN'S THEATER
FESTIVAL IN HAIFA, 5 – 7 APRIL 2015**

Irrwisch Theater's street art is popular around the world with children and adults alike. At this year's International Children's Theater Festival in Haifa during the Pesach holidays, the Austrian artists will perform "Hupft! Hops!". The audience may expect boyish charm, artistic footwork, and enchanting wit.

5, 6, 7 april, 12:00 and 14:40. Haifa Theatre, Pevzner St. 50, Binyamin Garden opposite the Haifa Theater, Haifa.
"Hupft! Hops!" © Irrwisch

**"JERUSALEM SPIRITS" – PHOTO
EXHIBITION BY RONNIE NIEDERMAYER
IN JERUSALEM 7 FEBRUARY - 31 MAY, 2015**

For the photo series "Jerusalem Spirits", Ronnie Niedermeyer documented the daily life of the Abrahamic world religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The project represents not only a vivid and comprehensive portrait of Jerusalem's spiritual life, but also explores what "spirit" truly means to people.

The exhibition was opened on 7 February 2015 and runs until 31 May 2015.
Opening hours: 10:00 – 18:00. Austrian Hospice, Via Dolorosa 37, Jerusalem.
Entrance is free.

The Spirit of Jerusalem, 2003 © Ronnie Niedermeyer



**UNESCO INTERNATIONAL
JAZZ DAY FEATURING
STEFAN HECKEL IN
JERUSALEM 30 APRIL 2015**



The accordion and Jazz are the passions of musician Stefan Heckel. The Austrian will perform at the UNESCO International Jazz Day in Jerusalem, organized by the College of Music of Al-Quds University.

"Without doubt, Stefan Heckel is one of Austria's long established, leading, and most multifaceted accordionists" (Music Information Centre Austria). Old City of Jerusalem, Jerusalem. More information to follow..

**AUSTRIAN FILM FORUM:
MOVIE SCREENING OF "JESUS,
YOU KNOW" IN JERUSALEM 16 APRIL
2015 | 16:00**



In the framework of the movie series "Ulrich Seidl A Retrospective", the Austrian Film Forum at the Hebrew University will screen the Austrian documentary "Jesus, You Know" by Ulrich Seidl (Austria 2003; with English subtitles). The film depicts six Catholics who share their prayers and confessions with the filmmaker in different Viennese churches.

Bloomfield Library for the Humanities and Social Sciences, media center,

room 31. Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Entrance is free.

© Ulrich Seidl



**CINEMA ITALIA- ITALIAN FILM FESTIVAL
12-25/4/2015**

The Italian Cultural Institute of Tel Aviv is proud to present the second edition of Cinema Italia Italian Film Festival in Israel, a major event in its 2015 cultural program, under the auspices of the Embassy of Italy in Israel. Cinema Italia is the result of a close and fruitful collaboration between the Italian Cultural Institute, ADAMAS Italia-Israel, the Cinematheques of Israel and the Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo.

Special thanks to Simonetta De Felicis, Director, and Marina Trivella, Italian Cultural Institute of Tel Aviv, Iris Mor, Head of the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality's Culture Department, Monica Moscato, Camilla Cormanni and Paola Ruggiero, Istituto Luce Cinecittà Filmmitalia, Andrea Meneghelli and Carmen Accaputo, Cineteca di Bologna, Silvia Bonucci, Tina Martelloni, Michal Rubin, Ronit Zimmer, and Shiri Lev-Ar.



**LAURYN HILL
IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL
MAY 7, 2015**

American hip-hop singer, Lauryn Hill will perform this May in Rishon LeZion, a city just a few minutes south of Tel Aviv. Best known as a member of the successful group, 'The Fugees', and for her hits, "Doo Wop (That Thing)", "Ex-Factor", and "Everything Is Everything", Lauryn Hill's music is one of the most recognizable sounds of the 90's, with a continued dedicated global fan-base. Coming to perform for her fans in Israel, Lauryn Hill will perform one concert on May 7, 2015 at the Rishon Lezion Park Live Amphitheater (about 20 minutes south of Tel Aviv).

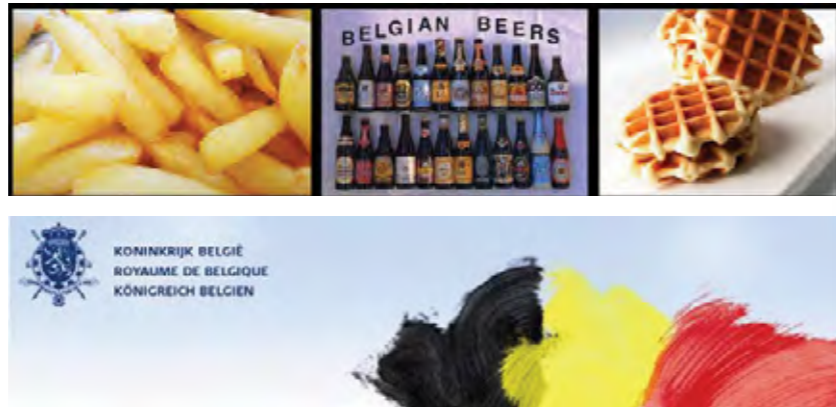


FILME 50/50/50
EVERY MONDAY FROM 13 - 27/4 AT 21:00.

The title stands for 50 films from 50 years by 50 German directors – that is the concept of the film series organised by Goethe-Institut Israel to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations being established between Israel and Germany. Different films will be shown in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Holon, Haifa, and Sderot.

CULINARY NEWSFLASH

The Belgian Culinary festival was held at the Tel Aviv port between March 30 - April 2, 2015. The festival grows from year to year, and presents the many aspects of Belgian culture and traditions. On offer was typical Belgian food, a variety of Belgian beers, and Belgian music. On Monday March 30th were the finals of the Stella Artois draught masters competition, and featured a performance by the famous pianist and blues singer Boogie Boy. On Tuesday March 31st, the UEFA EURO 2016 qualifying match between Israel and Belgium was re-transmitted on a huge screen.



BEEINIE MAN CONCERT
IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL
APRIL 22, 2015

Grammy award winning reggae artist Beenie Man comes to Tel Aviv for a concert this April. Among Beenie Man's most famous hits are Who am I, Street Life, Feel It Boy, which was sung with Janet Jackson, Dude King of the Dancehall, all of which reached the top 15 in the UK charts. Beenie Man's career spans over 30 years, during which time he has also performed alongside Wyclef Jean and Sean Paul. Beenie Man will perform at the Haoman 17 Club in Tel Aviv on April 22, 2015. Tickets are on sale now from NIS 185.



DIONNE WARWICK
IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL
MAY 19, 2015

Legendary American singer, Dionne Warwick is heading to Tel Aviv for a concert this May. The superstar singer, ranked as one of the 40 biggest of the entire rock era, Dionne Warwick is the second most-charted female vocalist of all time, with over 69 hit songs. Her repertoire includes "Walk on By", "I Say a Little Prayer", and "That's What Friends Are For". Dionne Warwick will give one concert in Tel Aviv, at the Palace of Sport (formerly Nokia Arena), on May 19, 2015. Tickets are now on sale.



THE DINOSAURS
ARE COMING TO THE
NEGEV BEER SHEVA
MARCH-JUNE, 2015

An exciting dinosaur exhibition is coming to the Negev Zoo in Beer Sheva during the Spring of 2015, bringing Jurassic Park to the Negev Desert. The exhibition which has toured the world with great success, will bring more than 30 kinds of life-size dinosaurs (up to a height of about 13 meters in height!) to Israel, as well as more exhibits, activities, and interactive displays. The Dinosaurs will be in the Negev Zoo from March 26 to June 14, 2015. Tickets are on sale now.

CARL COX AND BALKAN
BEAT BOX IN TEL AVIV
FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY
APRIL 23, 2015

World-acclaimed DJ, Carl Cox, and legendary Israeli act, Balkan Beat Box are joining together for a mega-party in Tel Aviv to mark Israeli Independence Day, Yom Haatzmaut, on April 23rd. Carl Cox was twice named as the world's number one DJ, and continues to tour the world as a regular part of the line-up of many top festivals. Balkan Beat Box are one of Israel's most successful musical exports whose unique electronic-Balkan fusion sells out shows in Israel and across the globe. The Carl Cox and Balkan Beat Box Independence Day event will take place at Tel Aviv's Fairgrounds on April 23, 2015 in a party which will kick off at 14:00 and continue for 10 hours, until midnight in what will be a unique mini-festival. Tickets are on sale now.





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