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Back to the future

Dear Friends,

I'd like to share with you some thoughts regarding the Diplomatic Club activities.

1. As you probably know, the Israeli Diplomatic Club was established in 1998. We have bought the Internet domain name "diplomacy-club.com" and have retained one of Israel's most prestigious journalists as chief editorial consultant for the Diplomatic Club printed magazine. The Magazine is one of Israel's fast growing media magazines. We would greatly appreciate any proposals, suggestions and requests regarding the magazine.
2. From 2000 the Diplomatic Club management has been working on receiving credit for the diplomatic community. I am happy to inform you that on April 2005 an agreement was signed between the Diplomatic Club and Leumi Credit Company regarding the credit for the community and issuing Diplomatic Credit Cards: Platinum, Gold corporate and Gold individual. Consequently we are undergoing intricate negotiations with the Israeli banks concerning the privileges for opening keeping account by diplomatic community. Credit card is an acceptable form of identity which makes it easy to receive discounts, benefits and specially targeted offers that the Diplomatic Club management has organized.
3. Five years ago the Diplomatic Club initiated the first Israeli Diplomatic Insurance plan. The first Medical directory issued by the DC was printed in 1999. However finally, we have agreed with the one of the biggest state sponsored insurance companies on special insurance plans and conditions for the diplomatic community in Israel. We will further inform you when final organization is completed..
4. Please note the opening of a new rubric "SELL and BUY" that will provide additional services for the convenience of the diplomatic corps. If you want to sell or buy anything just send us an e-mail, and we will print it in the magazine or on the web-site magazine.
5. HEADLINES FROM THE HEBREW PRESS can be found on the page of our web site.

Sincerely Yours,

Julia Vedel

General Manager
The Diplomatic Club - Israel

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TURNING WATER INTO FIRE:

THE JORDAN RIVER AS THE HIDDEN FACTOR IN THE SIX DAY WAR

By Ofira Seliktar

The dispute over water resources has been a feature of the Arab-Israeli conflict since its beginning, however the issue has been paid little attention in works on the Six-Day War. This neglect stems from the fact that research on water issues in the Jordan basin has often been highly technical and has been mostly overshadowed by the more dramatic diplomatic and strategic narrative.

Although the dispute over the water resources of the Jordan River basin was not the immediate *CASUS BELLI*, its ramifications provided both the rationale and the organizational framework for the Six-Day War. In a sense, these events served as a “*dress rehearsal*” for the war. Such a view is consistent with theories of international relations which stipulate that water-related outbreaks of armed conflicts are preceded by a state’s unilateral act in developing an international river. Such an act serves as a red flag and, if not mediated by the international community, can lead to a round of increasingly belligerent actions by states bordering the body of water (riparians). Worse, because water is such a basic necessity of life, such conflicts serve as potent vehicles for mobilizing public sentiments on related issues and attract meddling by non-riparians, who use the resulting opportunity to further

their own interests. The outbreak of the Six-Day War is a classic illustration of this theory. While this work does not attempt to reconstruct the entire background of the Arab-Israeli water dispute, an analysis of the renewed round of water hostilities that began in 1960s.

WATER AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT:

PARADIGMATIC INSIGHTS INTO THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR

Well before the emergence of independent states in the Middle East, it was recognized that an optimal utilization of water resources of the Jordan-Yarmuk basin required a rational cooperative approach by riparian states. The 1938 Lowdermilk plan, which sought to create a Jordan Valley Authority along the Tennessee Valley Authority model, was only one in a series of ambitious cooperative solutions proposed over the years.

Due to the intense hostility between the Arab states and Israel following the 1948 war, none of the cooperative utilization schemes were adopted. What is worse, optimal water-resource development of surface flows gave way to unilateral water projects by

Israel, Jordan, and Syria. As noted, the American-mediated Johnston plan sought to address the raising tensions resulting from such practices. But these efforts ran into a roadblock which becomes apparent when analyzed through the prism of international theory paradigms.

The realist and neo-realistic paradigm postulates that under conditions of political-structural anarchy prevalent in international relations, states are motivated by fear and distrust, which leads to competition and conflict over resources. In the absence of an enforceable world order, states become preoccupied with autonomy, security, and power. As a result, they tend to shun cooperative outcomes, a posture also explained by fear that cooperation might give a prospective partner a larger relative gain. The liberals and their philosophical soulmates -the functionalists and liberal-institutionalists- claim that cooperation could and should become a norm in international relations. To facilitate cooperation, the liberal paradigm in general and the liberal-institutional in particular, favor an activist role for international mediation and other international institutional intervention. The paradigm postulates that small, but cumulative “*confidence-building measures*” would increase the

overall propensity to cooperate over water.

Both paradigms fail to capture the very complex web of motivations that dictated the behavior of the regional actors and their superpower patrons. The actions of the Arab countries could be construed as classically realist or neo-realist in the sense that they feared that cooperating over the Jordan-Yarmuk water resources would give Israel legitimacy and increase its absorption capacity, leading to a better Jewish demographic balance vis-a-vis the Arabs and the Palestinians.

Syria, which had alternative water resources, felt no compulsion to share and the non-riparian Egypt paid no penalties for refusing to cooperate. Moreover, both Nasser and a succession of Syrian leaders turned the highly symbolic issue of water into a rallying cry for a campaign to destroy the Jewish state. Turning water and the equally symbolic Palestinian issues into a banner was also viewed as a sure substitute for lack of internal legitimacy, especially in Syria's case. It is interesting that only Jordan among the Arab states, despite its overburdened water demands, stayed within the quotas proposed by the Johnston plan.

On its face, Israel's eagerness to cooperate bears out the assumptions of the liberal-institutional paradigm. However, it can be claimed that it was in Israel's interest as defined by the realistic paradigm to achieve a cooperative solution. Not only was such a solution optimal from the perspective of water management in the basin, but it would have accorded the Jewish state a modicum of recognition and legitimacy. Indeed, Ben Gurion and especially Eshkol made a major effort to use water as part of the confidence-building measures in Israel's dealing with the hostile Arab states. Only when rebuffed by its neighbors did Israel proceed with the unilateral National Water Carrier, although not before obtaining America's blessing. As noted, Rotem taught the Israeli

leadership to prepare for the worst, thus persuading Rabin to launch the IDF on an ambitious reorganization plan that bolstered Israel's resolve to go to war in June 1967. Still, Rabin was too much of a rationalist to believe that Nasser would decide to launch a war while still involved in Yemen. This view was widely shared by the Israeli intelligence



community and virtually everyone else.

The Arab League's renunciation of the Johnston plan and its diversion decision raises another paradigmatic issue. Both the realistic and the liberal-institutional paradigm imply that the actors involved are rational decision makers, an assumption colored by Western notions of rationality which assume conventional notions of cost-benefit. In terms of rational choice literature, such an outcome is known as Stag Hunt where mutual cooperation is preferred. However, when actors are somewhat hostile or competitive, the preferred choice is called the Prisoners Dilemma where each player's rational interest would be to defect, that is, to engage in a non-cooperative, but not necessarily hostile, posture. When hostilities are very high, the game of chicken would be pursued, with each riparian trying to preempt his opponent by diverting the maximum amount of water.

Even by the rationality standard of the chicken model, the Arab League's decision to divert the Jordan springs is puzzling. Not only were the Arabs ready to accept a suboptimal utilizing of the water, but the technologically daunting diversion project carried extremely high economic costs. According to one study, it represented "a clear demonstration of the triumph of irrational ideology over rational considerations in international relations."

Soviet efforts to use the water problem are clearly envisaged in the Chicken model. It was a long-standing practice of Soviet leaders to seize upon local conflicts to further their interests, often using brinkmanship as the Cuban missile case indicates. Indeed, the Soviet Union, buoyed by its Aswan Dam success, sought to utilize the Jordan River dispute to bolster its standing in the Middle East. Clearly, Stag Hunt or even Prisoners Dilemma would have been counterproductive to such efforts. A careful reading of the Politburo utterances, let alone its actions, reveals that the Soviet leaders used the water dispute as a backdrop for orchestrating their ever growing presence in the region.

As noted, Moscow played a pivotal role in the Rotem episode, which was lauded throughout the region as a success of the progressive camp against the "Zionists and imperialists." Given the Byzantine structure of decision making in the Politburo and its penchant for reckless decisions even after the removal of Nikita Khrushchev, these "exploitation politics" had created a dynamic which could not be easily arrested. While the traditional view holds that Moscow simply stumbled into its catalytic role in precipitating the war, recent disclosures indicate that Soviet leadership at the highest levels deliberately used misinformation about Israel. Although it is impossible to prove whether Moscow tried to apply the so-called "Cuban model" of brinkmanship--as Meir Amit, a former head of the Mossad asserted--or actually hoped that Arabs could fight and win a brief

war that would rearrange the political landscape of the Middle East to their advantage, manipulating the water issue put both the Soviets and the region on a sliding slope toward war.

Standing in an antithetical paradigmatic position to the Soviet Union was the United States. Guided by a mix of realist and liberal-institutional considerations, American administrations since Eisenhower sought to facilitate a cooperative solution in the Jordan-Yarmuk basin, as epitomized in the Johnston plan. American self-interest in a cooperative outcome was quite obvious. In addition to securing Israel's water rights, such a solution would have calmed regional tensions and denied the Soviets a platform. Defusing tensions in the Middle East was at a premium because the Johnson Administration faced increasing difficulties in the Vietnam war. At a more basic level though, American foreign policy culture was suffused with liberal-rationalistic thinking. Such thinking values symmetry and balance in policy and attributes a transforming efficacy to negotiations, all the while counting on an inherent harmony of interests between human groups. Since liberalism-rationalism involves a high degree of self-projection, it was hard for the administration and especially the State Department to realize that the Arabs would follow the logic of Chicken rather than that of Stag Hunt or Prisoners Dilemma.

American misperceptions of the Soviet Union were even more glaring. In line with the then prevalent view that the Brezhnev leadership represented an embrace of a more cautious and "rational" foreign policy in Moscow, the Johnson White House had a hard time envisioning that Moscow could engage in a reckless game of Chicken of its own, the dispatches from its own embassy in Moscow notwithstanding. Indeed, Under Secretary of State Walt Rostow urged that Moscow be approached in view of the fact that *"the Soviets have in past attempted exercise restraining influence on Damascus."*

The Israeli diplomat Ephraim

Evron noted that the United States had no credible response to Soviet brinkmanship and no contingency plan beyond urging restraint on Israel and appeals to the United Nations, an observation confirmed by Mordechai Gazit. Such misperceptions have been part of the larger revisionist paradigm in American foreign policy which came to view the Soviet Union as a responsible member of the international community rather than as an ideologically motivated player out to export the communist revolution around the world. In this sense, the water dispute was seen by Brezhnev's Politburo as an effort to improve the "correlation of forces" which was expected to give the Communists a victory over capitalism. These views have even survived the collapse of the Soviet empire. For instance, Ambassador Richard B. Parker confessed that he had been troubled by allegations of Soviet recklessness because *"it would have been extremely "imprudent" of them to do this."*

REFLECTIONS ON THE WATER CONFLICT AND PREDICTIVE FAILURES BEFORE THE WAR

Attempts to understand the dynamics which lead to the Six-Day War have preoccupied scholars, foreign policy practitioners, and intelligence officials. As always, implied in this type of endeavor is an effort to discern the policy choices of the actors, assess the degree of misperceptions which underpinned these choices, and speculate whether different choices could have averted the war. This paper argues that the decision of the Arabs and the Soviet Union to engage in a game of Chicken over the Jordan waters created the dynamics which led to the war. Israel's relative restraint and American misperceptions, combined with the burden of the conflict in Vietnam, fueled this dynamic.

Both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations disregarded the red flags posed by Rotem, the Arab League diversion plan, and repeated Syrian violations. Distracted by the conflict in Southeast Asia and beholden to

the liberal-structuralism paradigm embedded in the Johnston accord, the Johnson White House was late in realizing that the water issue had become hostage to a wider array of interests that transcended the narrow confines of rational management of water resources.

To the extent that this study offers more general insights into the predictive failures which lead to war, the conclusions are sobering. A successful effort to prevent an escalation of a conflict over resources requires the international community to step in and mediate the dispute. This model was successfully implemented in the Johnston phase of the conflict, but could not be duplicated after Rotem because the structure of opportunity had changed. Preoccupied with the Vietnam War, Washington was anxious to avoid another regional confrontation. The result was a major regional war which reshaped the political landscape of the Middle East forever.

OFIRA SELIKTAR is a Professor of Israel Studies at the Harry Stern Institute for Israel Studies, Gratz College. She was previously a fellow-in-residence at the Middle East Research Institute where she worked on water resource issues. Her books on problems of prediction and American foreign policy include *Failing the Crystal Ball Test: The Carter Administration and the Fundamentalist Revolution in Iran; Politics, Paradigms and Intelligence Failures: Why So Few Predicted the Collapse of the Soviet Union and Politics of Prediction; and the War in Iraq: Who Said What Why and When*. In October 2005 Ofira Seliktar will be a visiting professor in the Securities Studies Program at Tel Aviv University where she plans to write a book on whether it was possible to predict the failure of the Oslo Agreement.

An earlier version of this article was presented at the U.S. Department of State's conference "The United States, the Middle East, and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War," held on January 12 and 13, 2004.

Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) 2005

*“In the winter it’s the snow,
in the spring it’s the rushing water
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and the flowers in bloom,
in the summer it’s the cherries,
and in autumn it’s the amazing fall
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\$500 Million in Supplies to Gaza Hospitals



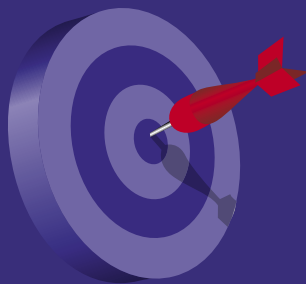
Medical supplies worth \$500 million have been distributed to four hospitals in the Gaza Strip by USAID in response to a request by the Liaison and Coordination Administration in the Gaza Strip. The medical supplies, which include oxygen compressors to produce oxygen rich air, were placed yesterday (Wednesday) in the hospitals ‘Beit Hanun’ in Beit Hanun, ‘Dora’ in Gaza City, ‘Nasser’ in Khan Yunis and ‘Tel Sultan’ in Rafiah.

Coordinating the activities in the field was Maj. Gen. Yosef Mishelov, who went to the head of USAID about six months ago with a request to improve the hospitals in the Gaza Strip by installing four air compressors. The cost of the donation by USAID includes a budget to build reinforced rooms for the compressors in the hospitals. The four compressors arrived via the Port of Ashdod and were then taken to the Karni Crossing where they entered into the Gaza Strip.

The entrance of the compressors into the Gaza Strip reduces the dependence on imported Israeli oxygen tanks for medical needs while improving the quality of medical care offered to residents of the Gaza Strip.

The Liaison and Coordination Administration in the Gaza Strip has accompanied this project from the beginning, coordinating the transfer of the compressors and was even present today after the supply transfer. The Liaison and Coordination Administration is looking to collaborate with international organizations on similar projects. With the approval of the Activity Coordinator in the Territories, it has been recognized that relief projects to Palestinians should be exempt from import taxes

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How does the

The ambassador of China to Israel



to acknowledge the People's Republic of China. Why did the partnership take so long to officially establish and what do you think about the connection between the two ancient people?

they both subscribe to a hierarchic social structure, (head of the family) where every one has his place in society, and also regard family as sacred. Are there any other familiarities between the two seemingly dichotomous traditions?

A few weeks ago I participated in the ceremony at Yad Vashem celebrating 50 years since the liberation of the concentration camps in Europe. Many diplomats and official delegates were there, as well as the president Mr. Moshe Katsav who has become a good friend of mine. The Jews suffering at the hands of the Nazis and the Chinese loss at the hands of the Fascists is yet another mutual historical tragedy that creates a strong connection between the two people. Before and during the war china remained one of the only countries open to Jews fleeing from occupied Europe, and issued "life visas" to those who entered. 25000 Jews remained in china at the time of the Japanese occupation and helped china resist the fascist occupation. Many stories that rest on tragic backgrounds further the special relationship between the two countries. Furthermore, both traditions are very friendly and hospitable and have similar mentalities regarding social interaction. And although china is one of the largest countries and Israel is one of the smallest, even an elephant and an ant can become good friends.

Your Excellency, how do you see bilateral economic, trade, scientific and technical interaction of our two countries?

The trade agreements between china and Israel are currently expanding regarding both trade areas and quantity. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the state consulate have reached a consensus and the trade has doubled already since 2002. By the year 2008 bilateral trade between the two countries is expected to double again and thus reach 5\$ billion. My counterpart in Beijing is very busy implementing the agreements reached

The relationship between Israel, or more specifically the Jewish people and china, established long before the official diplomatic ties were declared. Beginning back in the 8th century BC the first Jews arrived in china and initiated close personal and financial relations, especially due to the Silk Road and the opening of a trade rout from the Middle East through to the Far East. A prosperous Jewish community began and by 1316 it counted around 500 families that had integrated into the Chinese culture, learned the language and participated in the communal activities. Thereafter, beginning in the 1860's, the political situation in the former Soviet Union drove thousands of Jews to china in search of political and social refuge. This connection however doesn't only have politics and geography at its foundations. The Jewish people and the Chinese have many fundamental cultural and ideological similarities tying the two people together, as they both regard education and family with utmost importance and carry into the future the wisdom and tradition of an ancient civilization. It is on this backbone that our relationship rests, and therefore I can foresee a long standing friendship between the two ancient people.

China was one of the only countries that remained an open sanctuary to Jews during WW2, and still today there is a thriving and involved Jewish community in shanghai. Furthermore, there is a cultural similarity between the Confucius philosophy and the Jewish religion, as

His Excellency Mr.

CHEN Yonglong, the ambassador of the people's republic of China, arrived in Israel with his wife two years ago, after traveling and working in 116 other regions of the world. Preceding his arrival in Israel he was ambassador to Jordan, which to his explanation accounts for his fast assimilation to the hot Mediterranean temperament, and I don't mean the weather.

You have been in Israel for two years, do you speak any Hebrew yet?

Very little, only shalom and toda. I have spent many years in many different countries. In university I studied English, and immediately after my graduation I was recruited by the foreign ministry and sent to Bangladesh where I began to study the language. Thereafter I was posted as a diplomat in many countries such as Uganda in 1974, and in London where I worked at the UN. I have been to almost every country in Africa, besides Nigeria and Swaziland, and most of Europe and America. Therefore it is very difficult for me to learn the language of every place I am posted. But I am learning some.

Israel and China established diplomatic relations in 1992; however already back in the 1950'2 Israel was one of the first countries in the Middle East

elephant befriend the ant?



provides personal insight on the relationship between the two countries.

between the two countries. The constant relations between business men in Israel and in china, as we both can learn a lot from one another regarding the different ways of doing business, and assist in developing a prosperous future economic and technological relationship. Furthermore, Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has attached the importance of bilateral economic relations between china and Israel, and therefore it is expanding and growing stronger.

China proudly displays a long and prosperous history, resting on the backbone of a deeply established tradition. What measures are being taken to sustain such a long-standing tradition, whether cultural or agricultural?

Although there is an industrialization of many rural areas in china, the Chinese are still a very traditional people, and preserve it despite the modernization. In cities such as Sin w which was once a fisherman's town and now does a large city inhabit 4 million residents. Regardless of the fundamental economic reform there is still integration between the modern urban life style and architecture, and the old traditional. There are many nature parks which preserve the wild life of the area, and people are encouraged to travel the natural parts of china.

How are the preparations for the Olympic Games 2008 proceeding?

The preparations began already three years ago, and we are proceeding in a good and steady pace towards 2008. There are many efforts to design and build the Olympic village to be environment friendly and ecologically resourceful. So far things are going very smoothly.

How do you like living and working in Israel?

I like it very much. It isn't very different

from the last place I was posted, which is Jordan. The people are very friendly and curious about how to do business with the Chinese. Sometimes I even get stopped on the streets and asked questions. We used to hold seminars and programs on business strategies and



His Excellency Mr. CHEN Yonglong and his wife

relations, and I talked so much that it took me three weeks to recover my voice. I have traveled through out Israel, from the upper Galilee to Eilat, and I visit Jerusalem often. Furthermore, I recently toured the Bedouin area on camel-back with the minister of tourism. Being a tourist is very tiring work, you meet many people and exchange information about the two countries, I loose my voice

How has your family adjusted to the Middle Eastern culture?

My wife lives with me here, and my son has graduated from university in Virginia in the US, and is staying there to work, he enjoys being independent. My wife is a part of the International Woman's club and finds our stay in Israel very pleasurable. We enjoy traveling. In fact when I retire, in one year I reach retiring age, I think I will continue to travel the world with my wife and do educating and community work in China.

Your children are being educated in

a foreign country. Are their many fundamental differences between the education system in Israel and in china?

Well my son was educated in the United States, but between Israel's and China's education system there are some distinct differences. First of all china only has 9 years compulsory education whereas Israel has 12 years. Furthermore the Chinese education system is going under deep reform at the moment, and students are being more encouraged to learn from practice as well as from books. Chinese students are very dedicated and studious, which is necessary for the entrance examinations for higher education are very difficult to pass. Many Chinese students study abroad in English speaking countries, and it has been found that they raise the level of studying for the local students.

One of the modern traditions developing amongst the Israeli youth released from the army is to take a year to travel the world, and China has become a very popular destination. What would you recommend for the inexperienced tourist to do if he had a month in China?

As stated earlier, china is a large country with a rich and ancient culture and traditions, alongside the very impressive modern developments. On that account Chinese scenery is very diverse and therefore very interesting for tourists. Due to its size I would recommend that travelers see fractions of China at a time, beginning either from the north or from the south, take a few weeks to explore the nature and the architecture, to find out the specific province's favorite area, taking into account the diverse weather. There are many things to see in china, one just needs to have the time and the curiosity, which I think Israeli travelers already have, and thus will enjoy China tremendously. ■

IV 2005

June's National Days

Yet another month has gone by in 2005, during which several venerable countries celebrated the individualism of their nationality and independence.

Dignitaries of these countries became also the ambassadors of commemoration and celebration, signifying the occasions together with many of the top Israeli politicians and ambassadors, businessmen and academics, and of course the different representatives of their own countries. Congratulations to Sweden, Russia, Italy, Portugal, Croatia, Denmark, Philippines, and the democratic republic of Congo. Among the listed countries Portugal celebrated on June 14th along with Portuguese residents residing in Israel, Shimon Perez, Raanan Gissin Ron Pundak and Roni Milo representing the Israeli government. Chinese, Japanese, European and Egyptian legislature attended, and many more.

Russia proceeded celebrating the National Day of Russia on June 15th with no less than around 800 distinguished guests, including Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Ministers Dani Nave, and Shalom Simhon, and many others. Italy held a prominent event at the residence of Ambassador De Bernardin, including many of Italy's top representatives in Israel. All ambassadors and diplomats were invited to the events.



The garden of the Residence



Cons. Luca Franchetti Pardo with MK Ehud Rassabi



Ambassador De Bernardin presents Foreign Minister Shalom with the first issue of the publication "Italy in Israel"

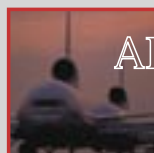


Ambassador De Bernardin greets President of Shenkar Prof. Amotz Weinberg after he presented him with his decoration.

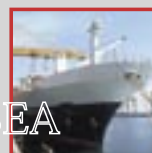
Next month many more countries celebrate their uniqueness and independence as well, we hope to see you there.

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INDEPENDENCE DAY JORDAN



On May 25th, the Jordanian Independence Day celebrations took place at the Dan Tel Aviv hotel. Many distinguished guests

arrived to celebrate with the hosts, the honorable Ambassador of Jordan to Israel, Dr. Marouf Bakhit and Mrs. Bakhit.



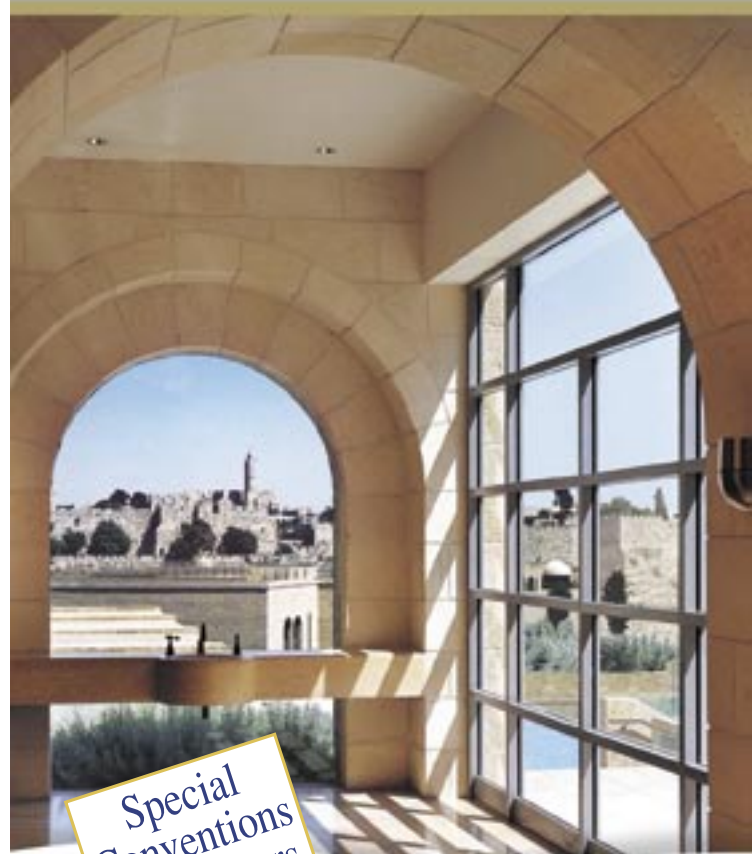
Israel's Foreign Minister, Sylvan Shalom and Egypt's Ambassador to Israel, the honorable Mohamed Assem Ibrahim also arrived to honor this very special occasion.



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TARGA FLORIO

Antique car rally crosses the Mediterranean





The Italian antique car rally, "Targa Floria", hit the streets of Tel Aviv for the first time on May 27, with as much youthful zest and enthusiasm as a brand new Mazda. Beginning in antiquity, Jaffa hosted the starting point which led the rally through Tel Aviv northwards to Caesarea, another counterpart with remnants of a time long passed, and reaching completion back at the starting point, the coast of Tel Aviv – Jaffa at the feet of these ancient wonders.

In celebration of a hundred years since the initiation of this festive tradition and 20 years since establishing the classic Israeli car club, it was decided to hold the rally in Israel for the first time.




Among the participants was a rare antique Lancia, from 1938, arriving especially from the shores of Italy along with the proud owner. This Lancia rode alongside 60 more antique cars, including a Fiat Topolino from 1949 and a Fiat Millicento from 1946.

The rally is part of "Spring Italy" festivities taking place during April – June 2005.


The Italian embassy initiated these events along with the Italian trade consul and the Israel-Italy department of trade and commerce, with the intention to introduce the Israeli audience to the Italian culture and traditions.

Additional "Spring Italy" events take place simultaneously in more than 80 other countries in the world.



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Unprecedented initiative brought Chinese and Israeli foreign ministers to the Ping Pong table

Sunday, 19th of June, 7pm, Aba Ibn Atrium, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minister Silvan Shalom and Minister Lee Chao Sin of China stripped of their formal attire down to specially made T-shirts, imprinted with the flags of the two countries and the Olympic symbol, and took to a new way of diplomacy – Ping Pong. Initiated by Chief of Protocol Ambassador Eldan, this unprecedented event beginning the diplomatic correspondence struck gold, creating a lighter and a less formal atmosphere for the remaining work schedule.



Warming the table was a team constructed of 3 Israeli professionals playing versus 3 Chinese professional Ping Pong players, opening the friendly match with a win 4-1 under Israel's belt. Then the two Ministers approached the table, displaying high professional capacities and sportsmanship, evening the scale with a win 11-8 for China. Following the two categories excitement was heightened and team work doubles when Minister Shalom and Minister Chao Sin united forces and played against Mr Eldan and Chinese Ambassador Chen Yonglong. The games were attended by the president of the Israeli Olympic committee who spoke of the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008 and the close relations between the Olympic committees of the two countries. This expression of the beauty in sports diplomacy eased the consultations, creating smooth and positive relations during conferences. Perhaps this is the nest startup in diplomatic relations. May this unique event, as exceptional as it was, set an example for future consultations reminding us that even in politics one can loosen his necktie.



*Caesarea Golf Club,
8 May, 2005
Start at 10:00*



Diplomats display their skills, this time at golf



May 8th, a bright Sunday morning, before the summer arrives with all its splendor, or in other words heat and humidity, a group of unprofessional yet serious sportsman, or in other words diplomats, met at the Caesarea golf course for a friendly golf tournament organized by the Diplomatic Club. Among the participants were representatives from Canada, Great Britain, The United States of America, Taiwan, South Africa, Finland, Korea and Chile. The day was a delightful success, and those who participated displayed wonderful enthusiasm for both the sport and the social correspondence. The winners, Mr. and Mrs. S.J. Kruger, from South Africa were represented with certificates and the prize.



We hope this was only the first of many mutual events bringing together the diplomatic community.

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