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Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy

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## **Cultural Diplomacy:**

### **An Important but Neglected Tool in**

### **Promoting Israel's Public Image**

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# Table of Contents

## **1. Introduction and Research Methodology**

Introduction.....	3
Research Questions.....	4
Methodology.....	5

## **2. A Definition of Cultural Diplomacy and its Benefits**

Cultural Diplomacy: A Definition.....	7
Benefits of Cultural Diplomacy – In General and Specifically for Israel.....	8
Can the Benefits of Cultural Diplomacy be Measured?.....	17
Examples of the Positive Effects of Cultural Diplomacy Programs.....	18
French-German Relations: A Case Study of Successful Cultural Diplomacy.....	21

## **3. Appreciation for Cultural Diplomacy in the United States and Europe**

The United States of America.....	25
Europe.....	28

## **4. Cultural Development in Israel**

Israeli Culture.....	31
Organizations in Israel Promoting Culture.....	34
Governmental Support of the Promotion of Culture.....	35

## **5. The Israeli Government’s Attitude Toward Cultural Diplomacy**

Does the Israeli Government Value Cultural	
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Diplomacy?.....	36
Reasons for the Inferior Status of Cultural Diplomacy	
In Israel.....	42
A History of Cultural Diplomacy in Israel.....	45
<b>6. Cultural Diplomacy as a Means to Promote Israel’s Public Image</b>	
Israel’s Public Image in the United States.....	46
Israel’s Public Image in Europe.....	47
Israel’s Public Image Ranking in the Anholt	
Nation Brands Index (NBI).....	48
Israel’s Public Image in the Middle East.....	49
<b>7. Existing Programs that Promote Cultural Diplomacy Throughout</b>	
<b>The World</b>	
7.1 An Outline of Governmentally-Sponsored Cultural	
Diplomacy Programs.....	51
7.2 Cultural Diplomacy Programs as Private Initiatives.....	52
7.3 Cultural Diplomacy Programs Between Israel and	
its Neighboring Arab Countries.....	54
<b>8. Conclusions.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>9. Recommendations.....</b>	<b>57</b>

# **1. Introduction and Research Methodology**

## **1.1 Introduction**

In today's turbulent political world, diplomatic means play a crucial role in a country's efforts to achieve political goals and to promote its image in the international arena. No democratic country relies solely on military and economic means in its interactions with other countries. Rather, all maintain Ministries of Foreign Affairs whose goal it is to interact with other countries via diplomatic channels.

In contrast to traditional diplomacy, which involves interactions between governments, nowadays, states' diplomatic efforts are targeted at people as well. This form of diplomacy which targets the masses is commonly referred to as public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is defined as "an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public".<sup>1</sup> The goals of public diplomacy are "to inform, engage, and influence global audiences...to reach out beyond foreign governments...".<sup>2</sup> Public diplomacy manifests itself in a broad range of programs that employ people-to-people contacts; print, broadcast, and electronic media; and other means.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars nowadays speak of the *New Public Diplomacy*. While compatible with the above definition of public diplomacy, *New Public Diplomacy* takes into account key shifts in the practice of public diplomacy.<sup>4</sup> The *New Public Diplomacy* approach rests on the assumption that recent dramatic changes in politics, communication, and international relations have altered the

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<sup>1</sup> Cull, J. N. (April 2007). *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, 6. Retrieved 21.05.2008 from [http://www.annenberg.usc.edu/images/pdfs/pubd/cull\\_pd\\_report\\_for\\_fco\\_final\\_version.pdf](http://www.annenberg.usc.edu/images/pdfs/pubd/cull_pd_report_for_fco_final_version.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2003). *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Expands Efforts but Faces Significant Challenge* 4, (Publication No. GAO-0395). Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Cull, *op. cit.* p. 7.

conduct of both traditional and public diplomacy.<sup>5</sup> For instance, the revolution in communication and information technologies have led to the globalization of electronic communication and journalism, and have contributed to a significant growth in the number of media consumers worldwide. Therefore, in today's age, a country's status in the international community is determined not only by military and economic power, but by a nation or leader's image, values and control of information flow as well.<sup>6</sup>

One important and central aspect of New Public Diplomacy is cultural diplomacy, i.e. the use of a country's culture to reach out to foreign audiences and to project a positive image in the international arena. As this paper will explain, cultural diplomacy is an increasingly important component of countries' diplomatic efforts nowadays.

This paper will focus on the benefits of cultural diplomacy, specifically as they serve the purpose of promoting Israel's public image in the world. Its goals are: a. to establish what are the aims and benefits of cultural diplomacy; b. to ascertain whether these benefits could be helpful in promoting Israel's public image in the world; c. to evaluate the extent of governmental support for cultural diplomacy in Israel; and d. to provide recommendations to the Israeli government for future governmental activity in the area of cultural diplomacy.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The research questions which this paper explores are three-fold; first, what makes cultural diplomacy so valuable that it is increasingly becoming a significant component of many countries' diplomatic efforts; second, does the government of the State of Israel view cultural diplomacy as an important part of its diplomatic efforts, and if not, what are the underlying

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<sup>5</sup> Gilboa, E. (2006) Public Diplomacy: The Missing Component in Israel's Foreign Policy, *Israel Affairs* 12(4).715, 718.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

reasons for this; and third, can cultural diplomacy significantly help improve Israel's public image in the world, thus making it a worthwhile investment for the Government of Israel.

### **1.3 Methodology**

In order to validate the premise that cultural diplomacy is a significant component of many countries' diplomatic efforts nowadays, we examined the scope of governmental support for cultural diplomacy in the United States and Europe. Our findings regarding the status of cultural diplomacy in the United States were based upon statistics regarding the cultural diplomacy budget of the United States government, various State Department reports, and an analysis of governmental leaders' statements regarding the value of cultural diplomacy. Our conclusions regarding the status of cultural diplomacy in Europe were primarily based upon an overview of the European Union's Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), which was obtained by collecting information found on various European Union websites.

In order to evaluate the benefits of cultural diplomacy, we interviewed numerous senior officials at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Head of the Raphael Recanati International School at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, the Project Manager of the Israel Youth Exchange Council, and the Head of the Cultural, Youth and Leisure Wing at the municipality of the city of Ra'anana, who also serves as a member of the Israel UNESCO Committee and Chairman of the International Music Council in Israel. In order to ascertain the benefits of cultural diplomacy in the educational sphere, we met with Dr. Eric Zimmerman, Academic Secretary and Director of Research at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. We also spoke with graduates of cultural diplomacy programs, referenced statements by world leaders regarding the benefits of cultural diplomacy, and analyzed academic literature written on the topic. As a case

study of successful cultural diplomacy, we studied the evolution of French-German relations since the implementation of cultural diplomacy programs in the 1960's.

In order to reach a conclusion regarding the status of cultural diplomacy in the Israeli government, we interviewed senior diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a member of the Israel UNESCO committee, and the Project Manager of the Israel Youth Exchange Council. We obtained statistics from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding its budget for cultural diplomacy activities. We conducted an online search for newspaper articles that were published over the last few years that discuss cultural diplomacy programs funded by the Israeli government. We also used the Google search engine to locate websites of cultural diplomacy programs in order to understand the scope of cultural diplomacy programs sponsored by the Israeli government.

In order to assess possible explanations for the Israeli governments' attitude toward cultural diplomacy, we examined the Israeli governments' attitude toward the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Science, Culture, and Sport. In order to gain a complete picture of the Israeli government's attitude toward the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we conducted a historical analysis of the relations between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and analyzed academic literature on the subject. In order to ascertain the Israeli government's relation toward the Ministry of Science, Culture, and Sport and toward the development of Israeli culture in general, we read through protocols of Knesset meetings of the Ministry of Science, Culture, and Sport, and obtained statistics of the government's budget to promote culture within Israel. We compiled an outline of organizations in Israel supporting cultural development by reading through various governmental websites. The purpose of evaluating the government's attitude toward culture in general was to ascertain if the

government's approach to cultural diplomacy can be explained in part by its approach to the development of culture in general.

In order to reach a conclusion regarding whether cultural diplomacy can help improve Israel's public image in the world and whether it is as such a worthwhile investment, we analyzed our findings regarding the benefits of cultural diplomacy and applied them to the specific needs of Israel. In order to show how much Israel's public image is suffering, we studied various world surveys regarding Israel's public image in the United States, Europe, and the Arab world. Drawing on our findings regarding the benefits of cultural diplomacy and its proven success in promoting a country's public image, we were able to reach the conclusion that the negative public image of Israel can be improved through more extensive governmental support for cultural diplomacy programs.

In order to ascertain whether Israel's culture is sufficiently developed for it to be exported abroad and be viewed in a positive light by foreign audiences, we used the Google search engine to obtain articles about Israel's advances and international acclaims in the fields of culture, science, and other areas.

## **2. A Definition of Cultural Diplomacy and its Benefits**

### **2.1 Cultural Diplomacy: A Definition**

Cultural diplomacy is best described as “the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding”.<sup>7</sup> Cultural diplomacy includes exchanges between people in different countries, through which individuals

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<sup>7</sup> Milton C. Cummings. *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: a Survey*. Center for its Arts and Culture, 2003. p. 1.

are able to visit foreign countries and learn about the culture and society of the foreign country. It includes the study of another country's language, traditions, and lifestyle. Culture is an exceedingly broad term, thus contributing to the vast range of areas that fall under the definition of cultural diplomacy. For instance, culture includes literature, the arts in general, customs, habits and traditions, humans' behavior, history, music, folklore, gestures, and social relationships.<sup>8</sup> Thus, any interaction or exchange between the people of two countries in any of these areas is considered cultural diplomacy, as is the study of these fields as they exist in a foreign country.

## **2.2 Benefits of Cultural Diplomacy – In General and Specifically for Israel**

Cultural diplomacy is in essence the mobilization of what Joseph Nye referred to as “soft power”.<sup>9</sup> In Nye's words, soft power “rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others”.<sup>10</sup> Nye stipulates that “the soft power of a country rests primarily on three sources: its culture..., its political values...and its foreign policies...”.<sup>11</sup> By enabling a country to expose people of other nationalities to its culture, society, and people and by increasing personal connections between people of different countries, cultural diplomacy enables a country to make its political ideals and policies more attractive in the eyes of foreign audiences. When a country's culture includes universal values and interests other share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationship of attraction and duty that it creates.<sup>12</sup>

Cultural diplomacy is essentially a two-way communications process that involves efforts to promote a nation's image and values amongst other foreign audiences as well as to try to

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<sup>8</sup> Sztetka, B. *A Case Study on the Teaching of Culture in a Foreign Language*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.beta-iatefl.hit.bg/pdfs/case\\_study.pdf](http://www.beta-iatefl.hit.bg/pdfs/case_study.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ross, C. (2002). Public Diplomacy Comes of Age. *The Washington Quarterly*, 25(2), 75-83, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Nye, J. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 5. Public Affairs, New York.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p.5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

understand the culture, values, and images of other countries and their people. Cultural diplomacy is a means through which governments can increase respect and understanding of themselves amongst other countries in the world. Gifford Malone, former Deputy Assistant and Associate Director of the United States Information Agency (USIA) and renowned author regarding U.S. diplomacy and foreign policy, so aptly stated, “If we strive to be successful in our efforts to create understanding for our society and for our policies, we must first understand the motives, culture, history, and psychology of the people with whom we wish to communicate and certainly their language”.<sup>13</sup>

The benefits of cultural diplomacy programs are large in number. Cultural diplomacy programs create forums for interaction between people of different countries, thus laying the groundwork for the forging of friendships and strong connections between people of different nationalities. Cultural diplomacy helps create a “foundation of trust” with other peoples. Policy makers can build on this trust to create political, economic, and military agreements.<sup>14</sup> Given Israel’s history of attempts to create political and economic agreements both with its neighboring Arab countries as well as with many western countries, laying a foundation of trust and understanding amongst the mass public in these countries can help bolster public opinion in favor of signing such agreements with Israel.

Further, cultural diplomacy can succeed in reaching influential members of foreign societies who cannot be reached through traditional embassy functions.<sup>15</sup> For instance, cultural diplomacy programs expose businessmen and investors to the economy, society, and people of another country, which may result in these individuals making significant economic investments

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<sup>13</sup> Wyszomirski J. M. et al. (2003). *International Cultural Relations: A Multi-Country Comparison*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/MJWpaper.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of State (2005). *Cultural Diplomacy The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 8. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/inside/StateCommitteeReport.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

in the country to whose culture they are exposed. Cultural diplomacy programs which expose foreign investors to the flourishing Israeli society and culture are particularly beneficial to Israel, as many investors are hesitant to invest in Israel because of their perception of Israel as a war-torn nation, with very high business stakes. Bringing foreign businessmen to Israel and exposing them to Israeli culture can help undermine this phenomenon. In 2006, American businessman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffet, paid four billion dollars for an eighty percent share in Iscar Metalworking, an Israeli-based company. After visiting Israel later that year, and witnessing firsthand the success of the company and the incredible talent within Israeli businesses, Buffet urged other investors to come to witness on their own the incredible amount of talent and brains within Israel. Though Buffet made his acquisition without ever having set foot in Israel, he explained, “Being in Israel has a major advantage of having the exposure to a fabulous pool of talent and brains”.<sup>16</sup> Thus, cultural diplomacy programs which bring foreign investors to Israel have the advantage of creating opportunities for foreign investments within Israel by exposing foreign investors to the multitude of talent and brain-power imbued in the Israeli people and by assuaging foreign investors’ fears regarding the political situation in Israel. Being in Israel and being exposed to the beautiful and serene nature of Israel as well as its flourishing culture can have a very positive and calming effect on investors who would otherwise be afraid to invest in Israel.

In addition to attracting foreign investors, cultural diplomacy programs have other economic benefits as well. In today’s age of globalization, many businesses export to overseas markets and maintain business connections with overseas counterparts. Without appropriate foreign-language skills and cultural knowledge, businesses will have smaller chances of success.

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<sup>16</sup> Wrobel, S. (2008, May 13) Buffet: Berkshire in Israel Forever, *Jerusalem Post*. Retrieved May 13, 2008 from <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1157913655448&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>.

Further, many of today's global business challenges necessitate global teams which are comprised of individuals of different nationalities who work together across cultural barriers and time zones for extended periods of time.<sup>17</sup> The success of these multicultural teams is becoming increasingly vital to success in the global marketplace. Inadequate familiarity with foreign cultures can have negative impacts on those businesses operating through multicultural teams. American companies, for instance, have lost an astounding two billion dollars a year due to inadequate cross-cultural guidance for their employees in multicultural situations.<sup>18</sup> Cultural diplomacy programs which expose people in one country to the culture and lifestyle of people in other countries around the world can therefore have positive impacts on businesses with international orientations. Given the aspiration of many large Israeli businesses to broaden their international dealings, increasing international cultural awareness will help train today's businessmen and businesswomen and future generations of businessmen and businesswomen for the global business arena.

Moreover, cultural diplomacy programs are often aimed at young audiences. Increased cultural interaction with youth in foreign countries allows a country to have a positive impact on individuals who may one day become highly influential leaders in their respective countries. Friendships forged with counterparts in another country and fond memories of visits to a foreign country will not likely be forgotten when a leader is in a position of power and must make important decisions that may impact the country he visited years earlier.

Further, cultural diplomacy programs are able to counter misunderstandings, ignorance, and baseless hatred that people in other countries may bear toward a certain country. This benefit

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<sup>17</sup> Marquardt, M. (1998). *The Global Advantage: How World-Class Organizations Improve Performance Through Globalization*. Gulf Press: Houston TX, retrieved from Committee for Economic Development (2006). *Education for Global Leadership: The importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security*, 6. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report\\_foreignlanguages.pdf](http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report_foreignlanguages.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

is especially relevant to Israel, as most of the world learns about Israel through media channels,<sup>19</sup> which most often portray Israel solely through the lens of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with little or no emphasis on Israel's flourishing culture, developed society, and successful business arena. Cultural diplomacy programs which expose people to Israel's society, people, and traditions can succeed in portraying Israel in a different, more positive light to audiences around the world. People in foreign countries will finally understand that there is much more to Israel than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel is one of the most developed societies in the world in the field of high-tech, business and culture. Its people are humane, law-abiding and affable. All these aspects of Israel are lost in the media portrayal of Israel, but can be exposed through cultural diplomacy initiatives.

One of the most important fields in which cultural diplomacy can reap important benefits is the field of education. Education and academic institutions are considered the backbone of cultural exchange.<sup>20</sup> Around the world, cultural diplomacy has penetrated the field of education in the past and continues to do so today. Textbooks in secondary school and universities are often inundated with information about the cultures of different countries, religions, and ethnic groups. Such efforts are often designed to educate children to understand and respect the traditions and lifestyles of people of other nationalities. Many universities around the world offer students the opportunity to spend a semester abroad, immersing themselves in the culture of a foreign country. Some countries, such as the United States for instance, have even opened American universities in countries such as Egypt. All these efforts succeed in exposing youth to their counterparts in foreign countries and help build a platform of tolerance and understanding amongst nations in the

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<sup>19</sup> Lee, J. (2006, March 24). Israel Impacted by Media Bias. *Daily Trojan*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://media.www.dailytrojan.com/media/storage/paper679/news/2006/03/24/News/Israel.Impacted.By.Media.Bias-1716000.shtml>.

<sup>20</sup> Thayer, H. R. *Seeing is Believing, a speech delivered* at the University of Maine Orono, Maine, August 10, 1959 Vital Speeches of the Day 10/1/59, Vol. 25 Issue 24.

world. According to Jackie Eldan, Head of Bureau and Senior Deputy Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "If you want peace, you have to change the reality of hatred and put an emphasis on education".<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Eric Zimmerman, Academic Secretary and Director of Research at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, explains that student exchange programs which bring foreign students to Israel increase the diversity on campus, which contributes to a more positive learning environment. He adds that by sending Israeli students abroad, universities help prepare their students for their future careers by exposing them to other cultures and to the English language.<sup>22</sup>

Another field through which cultural diplomacy can greatly help promote a country's image is the field of law. By educating other countries about its own fair and just legal system, a country can increase its respect in the eyes of other nations. Drawing on this very reasoning, for the past two years the America-Israel Friendship League, a non-sectarian, non-political organization, has brought twelve American judges to Israel each year in order to expose these legal figures to Israel, and specifically to Israeli law. By learning about Israeli law, these justices were able to gain a much deeper insight into Israeli society in general. Hon. Justice Carol Edmead, a New York State Supreme Court Justice who participated in the trip, described the purpose of the trip as follows: "The U.S. and Israel are both democracies that believe in freedom and the rights of the individual. In the media you never see how Israelis live and interact – what they really do everyday in their good and ordinary lives. You have to do this more often. Bring more Americans who can go back and tell what Israel is all about".<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Eldan, J. (2008). Interview with Jackie Eldan, Head of Bureau and Senior Deputy Director General at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, April 29 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Zimmermann, E. (2008). Interview with Eric Zimmermann, Academic Secretary and Director of Research at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. Herzliya, May 11, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> America-Israel Friendship League. (2007) Activity Summary. Retrieved May 21,2008 from [http://www.aifl.org/html/web/people\\_missions\\_israel\\_byyear.asp?isyear=2007#](http://www.aifl.org/html/web/people_missions_israel_byyear.asp?isyear=2007#).

Placing an emphasis on teaching a country's students languages other than the country's home language is another form of cultural diplomacy. Students who familiarize themselves with the languages of other countries will be better able to communicate with and understand people living in other countries. It is noteworthy that many countries around the world mandate the study of a foreign language in secondary school. All but two countries in the European Union, for instance, mandate the study of a foreign language, which usually begins in primary school.<sup>24</sup> Further, learning the language of another country is a diplomatic means of showing an interest in the other country and its people, which can lead to more amiable relationships between the two countries. As President George W. Bush stated, "Learning a language...is a kind of gesture. It's a gesture of interest. It really is a fundamental way to reach out to somebody and say, I care about you. I want you to know that I'm interested in not only how you talk but how you live".<sup>25</sup>

Learning foreign languages, an important part of cultural diplomacy initiatives, is also an important means through which western countries can protect their national security. The United States' diplomatic efforts with many Middle Eastern states, for example, have often been hampered by a lack of cultural awareness and by an insufficient capability to communicate in the language of the leaders of these states.<sup>26</sup> The more the Western world understands the culture and language of hostile states, the more prepared it will be to conduct dialogues with these countries. For this reason, the Committee for Economic Development in Washington D.C. recommends that in order to confront today's reality of threats to the United States' economy and national security, the education system in the United States must be revised to increase the foreign language skills and cultural awareness of students.<sup>27</sup> President George W. Bush himself acknowledged the

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<sup>24</sup> Committee for Economic Development, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Committee for Economic Development, op. cit., p. 16

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 2

benefits of cultural diplomacy as a whole, and in particular the importance of increasing our knowledge of foreign languages. In his words, “America’s leadership and national security rest on our commitment to educate and prepare our youth for active engagement in the international community. I call on schools, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders to promote understanding of our nations and cultures by encouraging our young people to participate in activities that increase their knowledge of and appreciation for global issues, *languages*, history, geography, literature, and the arts of other countries” (emphasis added).<sup>28</sup> Although it is often difficult to expose Western culture to many of these countries as their governments resent the penetration of western culture,<sup>29</sup> it is imperative that the Western countries at least allow themselves to have a greater knowledge and understanding of the languages and cultures of Middle Eastern countries.

An additional field which has witnessed an inundation of cultural diplomacy programs around the world over the past few years is the sphere of arts. As part of cultural diplomacy programs, countries may send artists abroad to display their exhibits in foreign countries or may host foreign artists at international exhibitions on their own soil. Such interactions enhance knowledge and correct stereotypes, preparing the ground for a more open environment for diplomatic and political relations.<sup>30</sup> Through international arts exchanges a country can demonstrate to other countries around the world just how developed and sophisticated it is in the field of arts and can succeed in dispelling various negative stereotypes that people in other countries may harbor toward it.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2006). *U.S. Public Diplomacy: State Department Efforts to Engage Muslim Audiences Lack Certain Communication Elements and Face Significant Challenges* (Publication No. GAO-06535). Washington, D.C.

<sup>30</sup> Szanto, A. (2003). *A New Mandate for Philanthropy? U.S. Foundation Support for International Arts Exchanges*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/Szanto.pdf>.

Further, cultural diplomacy programs which serve to increase the people-to-people interaction between people of all different fields of occupation can help increase international civil cooperation. Joint cooperation between leaders in different countries in fields such as medicine, for instance, can help increase achievements in these areas. As former Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, “To solve most of the major problems facing our country today – from wiping out terrorism to minimizing global environmental problems to eliminating the scourge of AIDS – will require every young person to learn more about other regions, cultures, and languages”.<sup>31</sup>

One example which illustrates how international cooperation can help mankind achieve great achievements is the International Space Station. The International Space Station (ISS), which upon completion will be a first-class research facility in space, is the result of the joint efforts of space agencies from fifteen different countries.<sup>32</sup> The ISS is a prime example of how international cooperation can result in great advancements which benefit all of mankind.

The fact that the participants of cultural diplomacy programs are ordinary citizens and not government representatives can be beneficial in a country’s efforts to penetrate the minds and hearts of world audiences. This is because when a group of Israeli artists, for example, travel to France, their views and opinions are their own. They act not as representatives of the Israeli government, but as representatives of Israeli society, and thus foreign audiences who disagree with the policies of the Government of Israel are more likely to accept these artists as people, and unconsciously form new opinions of Israel through their interaction with these individuals.

Finally, cultural diplomacy programs take on a special significance in the context of Israel and the Jewish People. Israel, as a Jewish State, can take advantage of cultural diplomacy

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<sup>31</sup> Committee for Economic Development, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> NASA (2007). *Partners Sign ISS Agreements*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/station/structure/elements/partners\\_agreement.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/structure/elements/partners_agreement.html)

programs to instill in Jews around the world a sense of connection to the Jewish People and Israel. Israel can use cultural diplomacy programs to bring Jews to Israel, who upon their return will have a heightened awareness of their Jewish identity. Taglit-Birthright Israel, for instance, is an excellent example of a cultural diplomacy program which accomplishes this very purpose. Since 2000, the program has brought 145,000 18-26 year-old Jews from around the world to Israel on free 10-day trips. Research shows that an overwhelming number of those who participate in the program return from the trip with an increased sense of their Jewish identity. Many return to their universities and take on greater roles in the Jewish community on campus. Many enroll in Jewish studies courses and sign up for subsequent trips to Israel and semesters abroad in Israel. Others, upon returning from the program, decide to pursue careers in the Jewish community or to engage in Jewish life in traditional and non-traditional ways.<sup>33</sup> According to studies released by Dr. Leonard Saxe, a professor of Jewish community research and social policy at Brandeis University, even three years after the trip, 61 percent of Birthright alumni said they felt very connected to Israel and 71 percent felt a strong connection to the Jewish people.<sup>34</sup>

### **2.3 Can the Benefits of Cultural Diplomacy Be Measured?**

As cultural diplomacy initiatives mainly aim to win the hearts of foreign audiences and earn their respect and indirectly, political and economical cooperation, their results are often intangible and thus difficult to measure. Some angles of benefits derived from cultural diplomacy programs may not be visible until many years after the implementation of the programs. For instance, when a student who participated in an exchange program becomes a political leader in

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<sup>33</sup> Bronfman, R. C. (2007, October 18). Birthright Needs Communal Funds. *Haaretz.com*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/914143.html](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/914143.html).

<sup>34</sup> Kantor, R. (2008) Birthright Day 11. *World Jewish Digest*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/birthright-day-11/>.

his or her home country and bears an affinity toward the country he or she visited, the tangible political results may only be measured once he or she is elected to office, and even then, it is difficult, if not impossible, to measure in monetary terms, or in any terms, the exact benefit that the host country reaped from its investment in that particular cultural diplomacy program. Mr. Amir Ofek, a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirms that there is no definite way to measure the direct influence of cultural diplomacy.<sup>35</sup> Yet, though not always visible or measurable immediately after a cultural diplomacy program, these programs undoubtedly have an immediate effect on those who participate in them, for the feelings and impressions left with the participants are felt right after the program, and often last a lifetime. According to Mr. Jackie Eldan of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one can see the impacts of cultural diplomacy programs immediately.<sup>36</sup> Eldan gave the example of a journalist in Spain who sees a remarkable performance of an Israeli performer. When this journalist sits down the next morning to write an article about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, his tendency to demonize Israel will be less. Thus, despite the obvious benefits of cultural diplomacy, the nature of its goals, i.e. influencing people's minds and hearts, leads to the inevitable conclusion that the results of cultural diplomacy programs can not be measured scientifically.

## **2.4 Examples of the Positive Effects of Cultural Diplomacy Programs**

Though one can not methodologically measure the tangible benefits of cultural diplomacy, what can be measured is the degree to which these programs have a positive impact on the people who participate in them, regardless of who these people are and whether they, in

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<sup>35</sup> Ofek, A. (2008). Personal Communication by telephone with Amir Ofek, Diplomat at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, May 16, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Eldan, J. (2008). Interview with Jackie Eldan, Head of Bureau and Senior Deputy Director General at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, April 29, 2008.

the future, will become influential figures in their home countries. Any individual who leaves a cultural diplomacy program with a more favorable view of the people of the country he interacted with is a form of benefit to the country with whom he interacted. Though intangible in nature, these benefits, manifested in altered mindsets of foreigners, can be powerful ones.

One can assume that a country such as Israel, which boasts a flourishing society and culture, a beautiful landscape, a highly successful high-tech industry, and some of the greatest legal scholars in the world, will only have what to gain through exposing foreigners to its culture, society, and people.

Peter Henning, a German student who just a few weeks ago traveled to Israel for a week to participate in a joint legal seminar between law students from Heinrich Heine University in Dusseldorf and law students from the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, is just one example of how bringing foreign students to Israel can influence these students' perceptions of the State of Israel and the Israeli people. When asked about the trip's impact on him, Henning emphasized the positive affect the trip had on him. He explained, "First, I was not sure how Israeli people would react to German visitors regarding the German-Jewish history. But I never felt any kind of rejection...So I think that there is a possibility for a new start... in German-Israeli relations... Also I got a better understanding of Israel's political problems with its neighbors. In Germany you only have television and internet to get impressions of the political situation in Israel. But especially when we visited Jerusalem it was great to see Jews, Arabs and Christians living next to each other peacefully. I never could believe this when I was at home, because you only see the terrible things here".<sup>37</sup> Henning may be just one student, but he has many friends and classmates to whom he will convey his positive experiences in Israel. Thus, the benefits of cultural diplomacy impact not only the individuals who take part in the program, but many others as well.

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<sup>37</sup> Henning P. (2008). Personal communication by e-mail with Peter Henning, May 5, 2008.

Sam Chester, an American student majoring in East Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, is another example of the extraordinary benefits cultural diplomacy programs can have on the hearts and minds of those who participate in them. Chester spent the summer of 2008 studying Chinese at Suzhou University under the joint auspices of Suzhou University and Furman University (a liberal arts college located in South Carolina). The program was funded by a U.S. State Department Scholarship, which included, amongst other excursions, a week-long field trip to western China designed to provide exposure to the Chinese culture in addition to the intensive language training the program provided. Chester's statements regarding the trip's impact on him are powerful ones, ones that demonstrate just how much of an effect a cultural diplomacy program can have on its participants. "The two months of studying and the one month of independent travel in western China did not simply validate my interest in pursuing a future career in issues related to China but made me appreciate like no book or class ever had how fascinating China's culture and people are. Previously I had studied China and Chinese because it seemed important to what I wanted to do with my future. After my exposure to China in the summer of 2007, I realized I now was equally motivated to make China part of my future in order to learn more about the civilization's people and culture".<sup>38</sup> Thus, the money that China invested in this cultural diplomacy program is in essence a long-term investment, which has already demonstrated positive outcomes.

The Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, a private university in Israel, offers a unique educational experience in which business and government students can spend a semester studying at Singapore Management University. As a result of the unique ties between the universities,

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<sup>38</sup> Chester S. (2008). Personal communication by e-mail with Sam Chester, May 14, 2008.

Singapore Management University has implemented an “Israel Day” on their campus.<sup>39</sup> This is a clear benefit of this particular cultural diplomacy program.

David Weiner, a German student studying at the Raphael Recanati International School at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya participated in the exchange program with Singapore University in 2007. Through this exchange, Weiner made friends that he plans to stay in contact with in the future. He added that although he did not have any stereotypes about Singaporeans in particular, his interaction with the people of Singapore reinforced the widely-held belief that Asians in general are an “exceptionally hard-working” people. During his time in Singapore, Weiner believes to have had a positive impact on the Singaporean students’ perceptions of Israel. Being a participant in an exchange program made Weiner realize that both traditional diplomacy and cultural interactions are important; however, in terms of effectiveness, Weiner believes that large-scale student exchange programs have the upper hand. Not knowing anything about Singapore before his visit, Weiner “without a doubt” wants to travel to Singapore again in the future.<sup>40</sup>

## **2.5 French-German Relations: A Case Study of Successful Cultural Diplomacy**

A classic case in which cultural diplomacy played a key role in creating peaceful relations between two enemy countries is the example of France and Germany. Though today France and Germany enjoy good relations, their pasts have been rife with conflict, bloodshed, and war.

Since the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), which ended with Germany gaining control over Alsace, Lorraine, and Strasbourg, historians speak of a German-French “hereditary”

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<sup>39</sup> Davis, J. (2008). Interview with Jonathan Davis, Vice President for External Relations at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya and Head of its Raphael Recanati International School . Herzliya, May 11, 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Weiner, D. (2008). Personal communication by e-mail with David Weiner, May 14, 2008.

enmity.<sup>41</sup> Only a little over seventy years ago a renowned philosopher, Joseph Sieberger, stated that Germans and French each symbolize the complete opposites of human kind,<sup>42</sup> illustrating the vast differences among the cultures, values and national identities of these two countries. Indeed, for the early part of last century, France and Germany were fierce enemies, engaged in wars and violent conflicts. Yet, today the two countries maintain close diplomatic relations and have been tightly linked with a “special relationship” during the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> The close relationship between the two countries can be attributed mainly to the signing of the Élysée Treaty on January 22, 1963. According to Dr. Rainer Seider, Head of Bureau of the Commissioner of German-French Cultural Cooperation, though the countries reached an official peace agreement in 1945, strong prejudices remained between the French and German People until the 1960’s.<sup>44</sup> It was not until the 1960’s, with the signing of the Élysée Treaty, that a new era began to dawn on French-German relations.

The treaty, signed by General de Gaulle, then President of the French Republic and Dr. Konrad Adenauer, then Chancellor of the German Federal Republic, is one of the most important documents governing the modern relationship between the two countries. It provides that “the two governments recognize the vital importance that knowledge of each other’s language in each of the two countries holds for Franco-German cooperation. They will strive, with this aim in mind, to take concrete steps to increase the number of German schoolchildren

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<sup>41</sup> Bölling, R. *Deutsche und Franzosen: Von der Erbfeindschaft zur Partnerschaft, 1945-1963*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.geographie.uni-marburg.de/parser/parser.php?file=/deuframat/deutsch/3/3\\_2/boelling/start.htm](http://www.geographie.uni-marburg.de/parser/parser.php?file=/deuframat/deutsch/3/3_2/boelling/start.htm).

<sup>42</sup> Müller, P. A speech in the German Parliament on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003, Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://dip.bundestag.de/btp/15/15019.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Krotz, U. (2007), Parapublic Underpinnings of International Relations: The Franco-German Construction of Europeanization of a Particular Kind. *European Journal of International Relations*, 393.

<sup>44</sup> Seider, R. (2008) Personal communication by email with Dr. Rainer Seider, Head of Bureau of the Commissioner of German-French Cultural Cooperation. May 5, 2008.

learning French and the number of French schoolchildren learning German”. Further, the treaty emphasizes the importance of cultural exchanges between the two countries. It establishes that “young people in the two countries will be given every opportunity to strengthen the bonds which link them and to increase mutual cooperation. In particular, collective exchanges will be increased.” The treaty provides that a body for developing these opportunities and promoting these cultural exchanges will be established by the two countries and will have at its disposal a joint Franco-German fund to be used for exchanges of school children, students, young artisans and workers between the two countries.

Ever since the signing of the treaty, cultural diplomacy in Germany has been considered a top priority. The Department of Cultural Affairs is a branch of the Foreign Ministry and receives the largest share of its budget.<sup>45</sup> France too, treats its cultural diplomacy programs as a top priority.<sup>46</sup>

Notwithstanding the great impact of the Élysée Treaty on German-Franco cultural relations, even before the signing of the Élysée Treaty, individual actions to promote closer German and French ties were visible. After the *Versöhnungsgedanke* (reconciliation) in 1945, Jesuit priest Jean du Rivau founded the *Bureau International de Liaison et de Documentation* (BILD) with a German equivalent *Gesellschaft für übernationale Zusammenarbeit (GüZ)* to promote French-German knowledge and understanding.<sup>47</sup> In 1947, the Union International de Maires (UIM) was founded, which in turn created a network of twin cities between France and

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<sup>45</sup> Sablosky, A. J. (1999) What others do and why: The cases of Germany and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Französische Botschaft in Deutschland (The website of the French Embassy in Berlin). *Politische Beziehungen* (Translation: *Political Relations*). Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.botschaft-frankreich.de/article.php3?id\\_article=2957](http://www.botschaft-frankreich.de/article.php3?id_article=2957).

<sup>47</sup> Cull, J. N. (2008) Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 40.

Germany, the first of which were Montbéliard and Ludwigsburg in 1950.<sup>48</sup> In 1981, France and Germany celebrated the 1000<sup>th</sup> French-German town twinship."<sup>49</sup>

The remarks at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Élysée Treaty note that a prerequisite to a closer cooperation between Germany and France was a mutual understanding of one another's societies and cultures first. Economically speaking, the two countries are each other's most important trade partner today. Indeed, the organizations and institutions founded as a result of the treaty have succeeded in making friends out of enemies. The fact that the people of the two countries speak different languages made this cooperation very difficult to sustain and to achieve in the first place. For this reason the Heads of States put a special emphasis on promoting the teaching of the other country's language in schools. Figures show, that after English (92%), French is the second most spoken foreign language in Germany (33% of German people speak French).<sup>50</sup>

The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) was founded on July 5, 1963 and was given the responsibility to enhance the mutual understanding amongst and deepen the relations between German and French youth. The FGYO has developed the most intensive exchange among young people that has ever existed between two countries."<sup>51</sup>

In the year 2007 the FGYO had an operational budget of 20.5 million Euro<sup>52</sup>, which is provided by Germany and France in equal share. Since its establishment, the FGYO has enabled about eight million German and French youth to participate in 300,000 exchange programs.<sup>53</sup> The FGYO's goals are to reinforce the culture of the partner, motivate young people to learn the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> Krotz, op. cit., p. 396.

<sup>50</sup> French-German Youth Office (2002) *Befragung von Jugendlichen (Translation: A survey among youth)*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.dfjw.org/de/ofaj/40ans/sondageresult.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> Krotz, op. cit., p. 393.

<sup>52</sup> French-German Youth Office. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [www.dfjw.org](http://www.dfjw.org)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

partner's language, and promote intercultural learning, among others.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the “Voltaire and Sauzay” programs offer thousands of French and German high school students exchange programs in the other country. The Franco-German Youth Office counted approximately 84,000 sponsored participants on the French side and 79,000 on the German side in 2002.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, to further promote French-German interaction, the Franco-German University (DFH/UFA) was founded in 1997 and began its work in 1999. Since 2005, 139 French and German universities have become members of the Franco-German University.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, a study of French-German relations over the past fifty years illustrates the central role that cultural diplomacy played and continues to play in bringing these two countries closer together than ever before. Prosperity and successful business joint ventures are the outcome of the 1963 treaty and its extensive implementation through the latter half of the past century.

It would be naïve to claim that prejudices no longer exist between the French and German people. The relationship between the two countries, more precisely, between the two peoples, is not perfect, yet it is closer than ever before, due in large to the uniquely close cultural ties between the two nations.

### **3. Appreciation for Cultural Diplomacy in the United States and Europe**

#### **3.1 The United States of America**

In 1946 Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas initiated one of the most famous cultural exchange programs in American history by sponsoring and helping to pass the Fulbright

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> French-German Youth Office. (2003). *40 Jahre DFJW*. Pressemappe (Translation: 40 Years FGYO Press Release). Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.dfjw.org/de/ofaj/40ans/dossier\\_40.pdf](http://www.dfjw.org/de/ofaj/40ans/dossier_40.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 395

Act. Under this law, the Department of State was authorized to enter into agreements with foreign governments and to use revenue acquired through the sale of U.S. war surplus to finance academic and cultural exchanges. In 1996, when the program reached its fiftieth birthday, it was evaluated by a survey of a committee of the National Humanities Center. The committee noted that between 1946 and 1996 some 250,000 men and women had benefited from Fulbright Scholarships.<sup>57</sup>

The Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 is a founding legislation of U.S. cultural diplomacy. This law pledged the United States government “to conduct international information, education, and cultural exchange activities on a worldwide scale”.

While some proponents of cultural diplomacy in the United States argue that since the Cold War the importance of cultural diplomacy in the State Department has waned,<sup>58</sup> the past few years have witnessed a renewed sense of U.S. commitment to public diplomacy, and specifically cultural diplomacy. The September 2000 Strategic Plan of the U.S. Department of State states: “In this increasingly interdependent global society, it is essential to foster a clear understanding among future and current foreign leaders of the social, political and economic context shaping U.S. foreign policy, and to project the creativity, idealism, dynamism and democratic tradition of the American people.” The plan further notes that “protecting national interests and advancing U.S. goals...requires a set of strategic assets including...academic and cultural exchanges...”<sup>59</sup> Further, the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States of America promises to employ

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<sup>57</sup> Cummings op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> Sablosky, A.J. (2003). *Recent Trends in Department of State Support for Cultural Diplomacy: 1993-2002*, Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/JASpaper.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> U.S Department of State. (2000). *Summary of the U.S. Department of State Strategic Plan*, 8. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.state.gov/www/global/general\\_foreign\\_policy/2000\\_dos\\_stratplan\\_body.pdf](http://www.state.gov/www/global/general_foreign_policy/2000_dos_stratplan_body.pdf).

“effective public diplomacy to protect the free flow of information and ideas to kindle the hopes and aspirations of freedom”.<sup>60</sup>

The generous governmental budget allocated to cultural diplomacy programs in the United States is indicative of the great importance the United States places on cultural diplomacy. In the fiscal year 2005, the State Department allocated \$597 million to public diplomacy and public affairs. Exchange programs received \$356 million, the majority of that year’s funding.<sup>61</sup> This was a 12.4 increase over fiscal year 2004. The programs that benefit from this funding include international visitors, citizen exchanges, the Fulbright academic exchange program, and English-language teaching.<sup>62</sup>

Over the last few years the State Department has specifically increased public diplomacy resources to countries with significant Muslim populations. Since 2002, the State Department has initiated three public diplomacy activities focused on the Muslim World – Shared Values, a media campaign; Hi, a youth-oriented magazine; and Partnerships for Learning, a group of exchange programs geared to younger audiences.<sup>63</sup> In addition, the State Department initiated a unique program this year which provides grants for foreign language study for American high school students. The program, known as the National Security Language Initiative-Youth (NSLI-Y) program, provides grants for approximately 550 students to spend a semester or a full academic year in countries in which the following languages are widely spoken: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Turkish, Indic, and Farsi.

It is noteworthy that despite the vast funding for and implementation of cultural diplomacy programs by the United States government, some cultural diplomacy proponents and

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<sup>60</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2002). The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 12. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2006). Op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Department of State. (2006). Op. cit., p. 6.

diplomats in the United States criticize the United States government for not giving cultural diplomacy programs the attention and funding they deserve.<sup>64</sup>

### 3.2 Europe

The European Union was created to further political, economic, and social cooperation, and has a significant cultural influence on its member states as well. The Maastricht Treaty of 1993 enabled the European Union to act in the field of culture. Cultural diplomacy has been a central focus in Europe this year.

The member states of the European Union have declared the year 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID). The “European Years” initiative is designed to allow the countries of the European Union to choose one issue a year that it considers of particular importance and to focus on improvements in that area. It generally enables NGOs that are active in the chosen area to generate more public awareness on the chosen topic. In its decision to make “intercultural dialogue” the focus of the 2008 year, the European Parliament acknowledged the importance to “provide the means for intercultural dialogue and dialogue between citizens to strengthen respect for cultural diversity and deal with the complex reality in our societies and the coexistence of different cultural identities and beliefs”.<sup>65</sup> In an interview, Hans-Gert Pöttering, the President of the European Parliament pointed out the important role cultural understanding plays in efforts to achieve world peace. He added that cultural dialogue and understanding are

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<sup>64</sup> Finn, K. H.(2003) The Case for Cultural Diplomacy. *Foreign Affairs* 82(6), 15-20.

<sup>65</sup> Decision No. 1983/2006/EC (2006), *Official Journal of the European Union*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l\\_412/l\\_41220061230en00440050.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_412/l_41220061230en00440050.pdf).

particularly important when it comes to relations between the Western world and the Arab and Islamic World.<sup>66</sup>

The aims in promoting intercultural dialogue are an effort to contribute to a mutual understanding amongst European Union states and other countries, to explore the benefits of cultural diversity, and to foster an active European citizenship and a sense of European belonging.<sup>67</sup> The European Union cultural diplomacy activities are focuses mainly in the fields of education, sports, culture, youth, and citizenship.

Having twenty-seven member states creates large gaps of understanding amongst the different member states. Apart from the legislative problems that such a vast number of member states creates under the current modus operandi, citizens of the European Union often know too little of the citizens and cultures of other European Union countries. As a result, it seems nearly impossible for the European public to have an appreciation of the large diversity within the Union. The leaders of the European Union have identified the need for bridging these gaps of mutual understanding and knowledge about the other and have acted accordingly by dedicating the 2008 year to intercultural dialogue.

The European Union has followed the call of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) to create a European cultural policy. Hence, during the 2008 year the EU has planned and organized events, such as debates, panel discussions, video competition festivals and conferences all over the continent. A special emphasis was placed on cultural diplomacy in the field of arts. Fr instance, a Belgian event was planned which aims at reflecting the intercultural identities of

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<sup>66</sup> 2008: *Year of Intercultural Dialogue*. (2008). Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/focus\\_page/037-20989-042-02-07-906-20080211FCS20948-11-02-2008-2008/default\\_p001c001\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/focus_page/037-20989-042-02-07-906-20080211FCS20948-11-02-2008-2008/default_p001c001_en.htm).

<sup>67</sup> *Factsheet: The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008*. (2008). Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/fileadmin/downloads/toolbox/EN/editorialkit/EYID\\_FACTSHEET\\_EN.pdf](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/fileadmin/downloads/toolbox/EN/editorialkit/EYID_FACTSHEET_EN.pdf)

German-speaking young Belgians through art.<sup>68</sup> “Beyond Borders”, an Estonian initiative aims at promoting understanding through education.<sup>69</sup> During 2008, Germany and other large member states will host several different projects nationwide that promote intercultural dialogue. In May 2008, a music festival took place in Bucharest, Romania. The aim was to create a dialogue through “music that can dissolve cultural and language boundaries, music that lightens communication and comprehension”.<sup>70</sup> Another successful event of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue took place in Austria in April 2008. During this month, Austria organized a tour which guided people of other European countries through Austria, stopping at every provincial capital. Successful cultural projects were presented, and shows and music performances on the topic of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue were organized.<sup>71</sup>

As intercultural dialogue is a matter of interest beyond the borders of the European Union, the EYID also involves non-member states with third country projects. Such activities are meant to serve the same purposes as the European ones. The Austrian Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, for example, promotes the research and enhances public dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian historians in order to explore the different historical narratives.<sup>72</sup> During a meeting between the President of the European Parliament and religious leaders in Brussels, Pöttering noted: "I firmly believe that the European Union, as well as our neighbors,

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<sup>68</sup> DG EAC-European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008)-National Projects. (2008). Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/353.0.html?&no\\_cache=1&redirect\\_url=my-startpage-eyid.html](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/353.0.html?&no_cache=1&redirect_url=my-startpage-eyid.html).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> DG EAC - European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. (2008). *Caffe Festival – Music as a Liaison of Cultures*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/457.0.html?&L=&tx\\_ttnews\[pS\]=1211308030&tx\\_ttnews\[pointer\]=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=167&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=360&cHash=f6a5d43052](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/457.0.html?&L=&tx_ttnews[pS]=1211308030&tx_ttnews[pointer]=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=167&tx_ttnews[backPid]=360&cHash=f6a5d43052).

<sup>71</sup> DG EAC - European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. (2008). *Dialogue Tour: The Austrian Way to Promote Intercultural Dialogue*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/457.0.html?&L=&tx\\_ttnews\[pS\]=1211308030&tx\\_ttnews\[pointer\]=8&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=134&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=360&cHash=7eaf9f62b9](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/457.0.html?&L=&tx_ttnews[pS]=1211308030&tx_ttnews[pointer]=8&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=134&tx_ttnews[backPid]=360&cHash=7eaf9f62b9).

<sup>72</sup> DG EAC-European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. (2008). *Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation Middle East Project*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/660.0.html?&L=0>.

can benefit greatly from dialogue between religions ... You have a great responsibility in seeking to present an understanding of faith in terms of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation."<sup>73</sup>

Member States have shown creativity and utilize many formats to creatively promote intercultural dialogue within the European Union and among other nations. According to Mr. Paulo Coelho, author of best-selling novel "The Alchemist", "In these difficult moments in which the world is in danger, culture is the base to establish a dialogue". Coelho, a Brazilian, is Ambassador of the European Union for Intercultural Dialogue for the year 2008. Moreover, almost three-quarters of European Union citizens believe that people with a different background (ethnic, religious or national) enrich the cultural life of their country.<sup>74</sup>

Some time will need to pass before we can begin to fully comprehend the impact of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue on its citizens. We can say for certain though, that the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is a step in the right direction. It confirms that cultural diplomacy is at the heart of the European Union's interests and the harmony within the European Union is highly dependent on its success.

## **4. Israel's Cultural Development**

### **4.1 Israeli Culture**

Culture within Israel is vibrant and flourishing. Immigrants from over sixty countries that have arrived in Israel since the establishment of the State have heavily influenced Israel's culture-building. Each of these immigrants brought with them their own language, value system, and

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<sup>73</sup> Ecumenical News International. (2008, May 5). *Religion Needed to Help in Healing, says European Parliament Head*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.eni.ch/featured/article.php?id=1877>.

<sup>74</sup> Eurobarometer. (2007). *Intercultural Dialogue in Europe Summary*, 4. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_217\\_sum\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_217_sum_en.pdf).

political views. A vivid and highly energized culture emerged and is shaping itself over and over again each day, as more and more immigrants immigrate to Israel.

What makes Israeli culture so unique is that neither the State of Israel nor the many immigrants that arrive want to give up their own culture. This task of preserving culture while building a new one is yet to be fully accomplished, however, the results thus far are colorful and interesting.

The diversity and quality of artistic expression in Israel is quite remarkable for a country so young and small. The work of Israeli artists has long made an important contribution to the international arts scene. Performances by Israeli theatre groups, orchestras, and dance companies have international acclaim and screenings of new Israeli films have attracted considerable attention at festivals throughout the world. The Israeli film *Beaufort*, for example, was a nominee for the Best Foreign Film Oscar. Contemporary Israeli painting, sculpture and photography have been featured at many international exhibitions and Hebrew literature has been translated to over sixty languages.

Israel's cultural diversity is vividly expressed through Israeli music. An oriental, more eastern kind of music is played by national icons, such as Sarit Hadad, Chaim Moshe, and Ofra Haza. One can view it as a combination of Persian, Arab, Moroccan, Yemenite, and generally Mediterranean styles, reflecting once again the many origins of Israelis. Folk dancing was popular in Israel even before 1948 and is still a popular Israeli activity today.

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has been very successful in building a unique and vibrant culture. The process will never end. On the contrary; with every new immigrant a new cultural facet will be introduced into the everyday life of Israelis. The urgent struggle to survive is no longer a feeling on the streets, as it was during other times in Israeli history. But it is this

feeling, this fear, which has shaped the Israeli people, their personalities, lifestyles, and the activities they enjoy.

Unlike its neighboring countries, Israel is both traditional as well as liberal. Ultra orthodox Rabbis are as normal in the streets of Tel Aviv as gay pride parades. Gay rights in Israel are more developed than in many other western countries in the world. “There is no better place than Israel in the world to be gay”, said Gal Uchovsky, producer and co-author of the popular film “The Bubble”, which depicts the story of a group of straight and gay friends in Tel Aviv.<sup>75</sup> Israel was one of the first countries in the world to accept gay rights in the military.

Israel is also the only Jewish Democratic State in the world, contributing to its specialized and highly unique legal system. Boasting some of the world’s most prominent legal scholars, such as retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Aharon Barak, Israel has designed a sophisticated legal system that caters to the unique needs of Israel’s Jewish and democratic character.

In addition to its vibrant culture, Israel is also a world leader in the fields of science, law, high-tech and others. For instance, in 2007, Dr. Eyal Gur, head of the microsurgery unit at Israel’s Ichilov hospital, was selected by the Newsweek magazine as one of the world’s best micro-surgeons.<sup>76</sup> In the field of high-tech, Israel boasts an exceedingly high number of start-ups companies.<sup>77</sup>

Israeli thus has much to offer in the fields of culture, science, law, the high-tech industry, and many more areas. Exporting this culture and making the world aware of the brilliant minds

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<sup>75</sup> Hazan, J. (2006). *Taking Pride in Israel’s Gay Rights*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enZone=Democracy&enDisplay=view&enPage=BlankPage&enDispWhat=objct&enDispWho=Articles^11379>.

<sup>76</sup> Shir-Rarz, Y. (2007, May 5). The World Salutes Four Israeli Scientists. *Ynetnews*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3395347,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3395347,00.html).

<sup>77</sup> Malach-Pines A., et. Al. (2004) The Making of Israeli High-technology Entrepreneurs: An Explanatory Study. *Journal of Entrepreneurship* 13(1), 29-52.

and scholars within Israel will allow people of the world to view Israel with more respect and admiration.

#### **4.2 Organizations in Israel Promoting Israeli Culture**

Israel's cultural portfolio is currently administered by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports which is based in Jerusalem. The Culture and Arts Administration (CAA) is the dominant division of the Ministry and works alongside the National Council for Culture and Arts, the Council of Museums and the Council of Public Libraries. A Religious Cultural Department which focuses on the development of Jewish culture and an Orthodox Cultural Department that deals mainly with the study of the Torah are also incorporated into the Ministry. These organizations focus mainly on development of culture within Israel, with very minimal international orientation.

A number of governmental agencies have been established by the government to assist in the development of Israeli culture. The Israel Antiquities Authority is responsible for the preservation, restoration and protection of Israel's historical and archaeological sites. The Israel Music Institute disseminates information about and publishes and promotes Israeli music. The Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature has to date translated and published the best of Hebrew literature in over sixty different languages.<sup>78</sup> In addition, numerous other institutions designed to promote Israeli culture exist, including the Jewish National and University Library and the Israel Archives.

The Ministry of Defense places an emphasis on culture as well. It operates several military museums, has its own orchestras and operates a "Sunday of Culture" program for IDF soldiers.

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<sup>78</sup> <http://www.ithl.org.il/aboutus.html> (website of the Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature).

Each municipal government in Israel has its own cultural department. Large municipalities channel subsidies to cultural institutions within their own areas, while major cities such as Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Beersheva run some of the country's leading arts organizations, including cinematheques, theatres, and music conservatories. Such organizations are partly funded by the municipalities and the CAA.<sup>79</sup>

#### **4.3 Governmental Support of the Promotion of Culture**

Despite the impressive infrastructures within Israel that help promote Israeli structure, many proponents of culture in Israel express disapproval with the governmental budget allocated to culture in Israel. In a meeting of the National Council for Culture and Arts on November 13, 2007, the Council declared that the governmental budget for culture presents an obstacle in the way of future development of culture and prevents the cultivation of art and design. In their words, the budget is likely to bring about the breakdown of important cultural centers which are struggling to survive.<sup>80</sup>

According to the government's decision regarding the 2008 budget, the budget for culture in 2008 is 392 million shekel.<sup>81</sup> This budget does not uphold the declaration of UNESCO which was adopted by most western countries, and which states that a country's budget for culture must represent no less than one percent of the entire governmental budget.<sup>82</sup> It is also noteworthy that this budget contradicts the government's decision reached on November 11, 2006,<sup>83</sup> which

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<sup>79</sup> Israeli Arts Directory. (2006). *Cultural Policy and Infrastructure*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.culture.org.il/directory/culturalpolicy.asp>.

<sup>80</sup> Press Release: State of Israel Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, Spokesperson's Office, November 14, 2007, available at: [www.most.gov.il/.../0/2007מועצתהתרבותהודעהלתקשורת2007.doc](http://www.most.gov.il/.../0/2007מועצתהתרבותהודעהלתקשורת2007.doc).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> (11.6.2006 ) "הגדלת תקציב התרבות לשנים 2006-2010" (Decision 122 of the Israeli Government. "Increasing the Cultural Budget for the Years 2006-2010" (11.6.2006).

stipulated that the budget for culture in 2008 would be 445 million shekels. The decrease in the budget is notwithstanding the growth in the national budget of the State of Israel.<sup>84</sup>

A reading of the protocol of a December 2006 Knesset meeting of the Committee of Sports, Culture, and Sports gives a good insight into the status of culture in Israel in comparison to the rest of the world. Chairman of the committee Michael Melchior emphasized that unlike other western countries in the world in which the budget for culture is 1-2% of the national budget, in Israel the budget for culture is a lot less than one thousandth of the governmental budget.<sup>85</sup> Eitan Broshi, Director General of the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport stated that the budget is too minimal to meet the needs in this area. In his words, “There is nothing like the budget of culture that touches each and every one. There is no child or adult...for whom the budget for culture is not a central part of his life...” (translated from Hebrew).<sup>86</sup>

It is important to note that the governmental budget for culture does not include the exportation of culture abroad.<sup>87</sup> Thus, cultural diplomacy activities do not benefit from the funding that the State of Israel allocates to culture in Israel.

## **5. The Israeli Government’s Attitude toward Cultural Diplomacy**

### **5.1 Does the Israeli Government Value Cultural Diplomacy?**

According to Jackie Eldan, Head of Bureau and Senior Deputy Director General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Israel does not fully recognize the importance of cultural diplomacy, which is evident from the minimal budget allocated to cultural

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> פרושוקול ישיבה מס' 106 של ועדת החינוך, התרבות והספורט, הכנסת ה' 17, 3 (19.12.2006)

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 4. --

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

diplomacy activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Eldan noted that the governmental budget allocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for cultural diplomacy is very modest. A mere 13.7 million Israeli shekels are allocated to cultural diplomacy activities. This is approximately fifteen percent of the general activities budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>88</sup>

The department in the Foreign Ministry that deals with cultural diplomacy is the Department of Cultural and Scientific Affairs. Over the past few years this department has expressed frustration over its lack of significance in the Israeli government's eyes. Though representatives of the department often have the desire to expand their cultural diplomacy activities, in most cases they do not have sufficient budgets to do so.

This year Israel celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Israel's preparations for the celebration of this event are a perfect example of how little regard Israel has for exporting its culture abroad. In preparations for the celebratory events, the government allocated one hundred million shekels to a special governmental committee appointed to organize events to mark Israel's milestone anniversary. Yet, despite persistent efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to receive a portion of that funding for the purpose of conducting cultural events abroad for this special occasion, no money was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this purpose. "Over a long period of time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented before the government ideas and plans for cultural activities abroad to celebrate this special time", said Amir Goldstein from the office of the Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni. "...We requested ten percent from the budget for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary events so that we could fund our own events overseas, yet the committee headed by Minister Ruchama Avraham Balila decided not to give us any money" (translated from

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<sup>88</sup> Eldan, J. (2008). Interview with Jackie Eldan, Head of Bureau and Senior Deputy Director General at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, April 29 2008.

Hebrew).<sup>89</sup> Aviv Shir On, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Information and Media at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Committee for Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations confirmed Goldstein's statements. He explained, "The committee headed by the Minister felt it was better to spend the money on events in Israel" (translated from Hebrew).<sup>90</sup>

According to Ofra Ben Yaakov, director of the Arts Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Department of Cultural and Scientific Affairs, the number of invitations sent out for cultural events around the world increased as a result of Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, yet, there was no money to market them, and thus, many of these programs were cancelled. For instance, a design exhibition in Torino, Italy and an Israeli culinary week in Uruguay were cancelled and the scope of the "Israeli season" program in Poland was drastically reduced.<sup>91</sup>

The lack of sufficient funding for cultural activities abroad has created a sense of discomfort and tension between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Israel's other countries. Berlin, for instance, a city which planned a very rich and extensive series of events to celebrate Israel's sixtieth anniversary, expressed disappointment over Israel's minimal contribution to the programs' funding.<sup>92</sup>

Another clear illustration of the Israeli government's disparaging attitude toward cultural diplomacy programs is the current state of affairs in the Israel Youth Exchange Council, an organization under the auspices of the Israeli government. The council was created by a governmental decision thirty-five years ago. It started off as a project for youth exchanges with Germany in order to bridge between the two nations after the Holocaust. Within a few years the

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<sup>89</sup> Tzipi Shochat. March 31, 2008. משרד החוץ אינו מקבל מימון למופעי תרבות בחו"ל לציון 60 שנה לישראל. Retrieved May 19, 2008 from <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/969713.html>.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

activities of the council expanded to include all countries with which the Foreign Ministry had signed an agreement containing a provision for youth exchanges. The Council thus became an executive branch of the Foreign Ministry. Budget-wise, the government decided that the council would be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

The council essentially deals with “matchmaking” between foreign and local Israeli organizations. It helps Israeli organizations that wish to cooperate with a foreign counterpart find an interested foreign organization and vice versa. For instance, a scientist from Greenland recently approached the council and requested that it help him find Israeli teenagers to join him on a unique scientific exhibition. The council also hosts groups on its own. Yet, despite the admirable and impressive efforts and activities of the Israel Youth Exchange Council, the state of affairs in the Council nowadays is dire, according to Ms. Ariella Gill, Project Manager of the Council. Over eight months ago, the Israeli Ministry of Education stopped the flow of money to the Council. The CEO of the council resigned as he could not work under such circumstances.<sup>93</sup> There are only two employees left to manage the council and neither receives any money for their efforts. The activities of the council have drastically decreased over the past year due to the Council’s budget crisis. According to Ms. Gill, more employees are needed in order for the Council to function more effectively. More and more organizations and countries approach the Council each year, and the Council is unable to handle them all.

The dismal situation that the Israeli Youth Exchange Council finds itself in nowadays is an excellent example of the lack of appreciation the Israeli government has for the activities of this organization. This example further illustrates that cultural diplomacy, and in this case, cultural exchanges in particular, are not a priority for the Government of Israel.

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<sup>93</sup> Gill, A. (2008). Personal Communication by telephone with Ariella Gill, Project Manager at the Israeli Youth Exchange Council . May 14, 2008.

Another example which illustrates the Israeli government's attitude toward cultural diplomacy is the Hapoel Ra'anana Youth Exchange Commission (YEC). Most, if not all, of the YEC programs have been with German students. There is no governmental funding for the commission's activities. When Israelis travel to Germany, the funding for the program comes partially from the participants themselves, who pay for their flights' costs plus an additional very symbolic fee of \$100 to subsidize future programs. The remainder of the funding is provided by the German government, which provides funding of approximately eighty euros per participant. When German students are hosted in Israel, the German government helps fund the costs of the visit, with no assistance from the Government of Israel.<sup>94</sup>

Moreover, in a personal interview with Dr. Avishai Yaa'r, Head of the Cultural, Youth and Leisure Wing at the municipality of the city of Ra'anana, member of the Israel UNESCO Committee, and Chairman of the International Music Council in Israel,<sup>95</sup> Dr. Ya'ar shed light on the lack of appreciation for cultural diplomacy programs within the Israeli government. According to Dr. Ya'ar, the Foreign Ministry, specifically, the Department of Culture and Scientific Affairs, has given very little aid over the past few years to artists that want to perform abroad. For the most part, when the Foreign Ministry does provide some sort of funding for artists to perform abroad, the programs are not initiated by the Foreign Ministry, but rather by the artists themselves.

A number of years ago, Dubi Lenz, a well-known IDF Radio broadcaster, initiated a music festival designed to display the best Israeli musicians to European festival managers of some of the most prominent and successful festivals in Europe. The festival had a wonderful

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<sup>94</sup> This is based on the personal knowledge of Assaf Irony, one of the authors of this paper, who currently serves as one of the driving forces behind the Hapoel Ra'anana Youth Exchange Commission.

<sup>95</sup> Yaa'r, A. (2008). Interview with Dr. Avishay Yaa'r, Head of the Cultural, Youth and Leisure Wing at the municipality of the city of Ra'anana, member of the Israel UNESCO Committee, and Chairman of the International Music Council in Israel. May 15, 2008.

turnout; many arrived from Europe to see the Israeli musicians perform. After the festival, the European managers laid out a long list of Israeli musicians that impressed them and asked that these musicians perform in Europe. Sadly, the Foreign Ministry's Department of Culture and Scientific Affairs did not offer any sort of funding to send the artists abroad, and all of the European agents subsequently backed down.<sup>96</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' lack of ability to promote cultural diplomacy activities is a direct result of the miniscule budget allocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a personal interview with Israeli diplomat and Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Amir Ofek, Ofek explained, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to think eighty times about every flight ticket it purchases".<sup>97</sup>

Ofek relayed that most cultural exchange programs in Israel are carried out through the funding of universities themselves, without governmental subsidies or involvement. He explained that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can make the connection between the universities, but other than that does not get involved in these programs. He explained that the Ministry is not concerned with student exchanges, but "with culture in the strict sense of the word".

Ofek further explained that rather than initiating cultural diplomacy programs, such as sending delegations of Israeli artists abroad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes advantage of existing programs and helps them mainly in a logistical sense, rather than initiating programs on its own. Because of its tight budget, the Ministry tries to find local sources of funding for Israeli performers abroad. "If there is a program that costs a lot of money and there is no local funding for it abroad, the Ministry would not be able to do it. For every ten potential projects there is funding for two," explained Ofek.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ofek, A. (2008), Personal Communication by telephone with Amir Ofek, Diplomat at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. May 16, 2008.

As a result of the small budget for cultural diplomacy activities, the Ministry must prioritize. If there is a planned delegation of Israelis to Denmark and a delegation to Turkey, the Ministry will decide which country is more important to Israel at the time, and will accordingly allocate its money to the delegation to that country, Ofek stated.

After hearing such dismal reports from numerous Israeli diplomats about the status of cultural diplomacy programs in Israel there can be no doubt that such programs are not a priority or of any significant importance for the State of Israel. The insufficient governmental budget for Cultural Diplomacy activities is indicative of the Israeli government's a lack of appreciation for and regard of the value of cultural diplomacy.

## **5.2 Reasons for the Inferior Status of Cultural Diplomacy in Israel**

Ever since its establishment, the State of Israel has faced existential threats. As such, Israel's foreign relations strategy has been developed with this reality as a backdrop. This reality shapes the entire Israeli political structure. As a result of Israel's constant security threats, Israel's top political positions have almost always been filled by top figures from the military or the intelligence forces. Most of the country's prime ministers have had impressive military careers and former IDF Chiefs of Staff generally become political figures. Many Israeli Prime Ministers, such as Ben Gurion and Rabin, served simultaneously as Ministers of Defense. Over the course of Israel's history, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has had a minimal amount of influence in forming Israel's foreign affairs, succumbing to the overwhelming influence of the Ministry of Defense. This pattern of affairs began as early as 1948 when David Ben-Gurion served as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, and Moshe Sharett filled the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs. The two were fierce rivals and had strong disagreements on matters related to Israel's

foreign affairs. Sharett's persistent efforts to increase the influence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel's decision-making process resulted in Ben-Gurion's decision to fire him.<sup>98</sup>

A 2007 memorandum of the Reut Institute<sup>99</sup> presented to the Winograd Inquiry Commission<sup>100</sup> focused on the need for change in the structure and status of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel.<sup>101</sup> The memorandum called for a reform in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noting that the government does not regard the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a leader in forming Israel's foreign policy.<sup>102</sup> The memorandum made note of the fact that the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is one billion shekels, which is a mere two percent of the budget allocated to the Israel Defense Forces. The memorandum further criticized the fact that the salary of those in the Foreign Service is far lower than those working for the security forces.<sup>103</sup> The memorandum recommended that the government reexamine the distribution of resources between the security forces and the Foreign Service.<sup>104</sup>

According to Mr. Jackie Eldan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during more peaceful times in Israel the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a larger cultural diplomacy budget. Yet, during difficult times the budget was sharply decreased and transferred to the Ministry of Defense. Thus, the State of Israel has always preferred to invest in its Ministry of Defense at the expense of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Another factor which can explain the Israeli government's indifference toward cultural diplomacy programs is Israel's pragmatic approach to its foreign affairs. Israel's foreign relations

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<sup>98</sup> משה יגר, נייר עמדה מס' 160 "הערות על שירות החוץ הישראלי" (מרכז אריאלי למחקרי מדיניות, יוני 2005), 48.

<sup>99</sup> The Reut Institute is a non-for-profit foundation designed to prove real-term long term strategic decision-support to the Government of Israel.

<sup>100</sup> The Commission of Inquiry into the Events of Military Engagement in Lebanon 2006, commonly referred to as the Winograd Inquiry Commission, is an Israeli government-appointed commission of inquiry into the events of the Lebanon War in 2006.

<sup>101</sup> "ארגון מחדש של מדיניות החוץ בתפיסת הביטחון הלאומי" (מזכר של מכון ראות, יולי 2007).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

have been described by many scholars as being characterized by a preference for short-term, non-hypothetical goals.<sup>105</sup> The very nature of cultural diplomacy is that it is a long-term investment, with few concrete, tangible benefits. Thus, its benefits are precisely the sort that Israel has proven to disregard and place little emphasis on.

Further, Israeli decision-making in most fields is characterized by a prejudice against long-term planning. This is especially true regarding Israel's foreign affairs. Instead of initiating programs, Israel's foreign affairs strategy is responsive in nature, and designed to "extinguish fires".<sup>106</sup> Thus, cultural diplomacy programs, which are characterized by their initiative nature and long-term goals, stand in stark contrast to Israel's foreign affairs strategy.

Moreover, as Amir Ofek from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained, "because culture is not something that recruits money, it is hard to convince people about its advantages". Ofek continued, "One has to convince people that culture is important. Some feel that it is more important to focus on political content and not culture because, as they see it, culture won't change people's minds about the political situation in Israel".<sup>107</sup>

All of the above are contributory factors to the government's lack of desire to support and promote cultural diplomacy programs in Israel. Chapter six will illustrate why it is so necessary for the government to place more of an emphasis on promoting Israel's public image in the world.

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<sup>105</sup> אהרון קליימן "המשכיות ותמורה בדילומטיה הישראלית" דיפלומטיה בצל עימות 45 (בנימין נויברגר עורך, תשמ"ד)

<sup>106</sup> לוואיס בראונשטיין "היעדר תכנון בקבלת החלטות במדיניות החוץ" דיפלומטיה בצל עימות 99 (בנימין נויברגר עורך, תשמ"ד)

<sup>107</sup> Ofek, A. (2008). Personal Communication by telephone with Amir Ofek, Diplomat at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, May 16, 2008.

### 5.3 A History of Cultural Diplomacy in Israel

Though Israel nowadays seems to be neglecting the benefits of cultural diplomacy, it is important to remember that in its early days, when its budget was scarce and the State of Israel struggled to survive, the Government of Israel placed a special importance on one aspect of cultural diplomacy; transferring its knowledge in various areas to other countries. In the early 1950's, Israel was approached by leaders from third world countries that were taking their first steps towards independence after years of colonial rule. These countries were facing many challenges and viewed the young state of Israel as a success story. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion understood that sending Israeli agriculture experts, army experts, and educators to these countries would gain sympathy for Israel within those countries. Although funds were scarce, Ben Gurion was determined to follow this path of action, and Israeli experts made their way to Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America. In 1958 the Mashav-Israel Center for International Cooperation was established. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, many Israeli experts were sent to foreign countries and many foreigners came to Israel to receive training in various fields. During the 1959 fiscal year, out of a total Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget of five million Israeli Pounds, 1.7 million were allocated to MASHAV.<sup>108</sup>

Yet, today MASHAV is not as influential as it was during the 1950's and 1960's. After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, most of the African countries that once received aid from Israel chose to side with the Arab world and severed their diplomatic relations with Israel. Following that crisis, MASHAV's budget and programs were reduced significantly and have never recovered to their former glory.<sup>109</sup> Since then, governmental support of cultural diplomacy programs has been minimal.

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<sup>108</sup> חנן עינור "שלושים שנות סיוע בינלאומי" משרד החוץ 50 השנים הראשונות 961 (יגר משה, גוברין יוסף, עודד אריה עורכים 2002)

<sup>109</sup> יגר, op cit. 46, p. 98.

## **6. Cultural Diplomacy as a Means to Improve Israel's Faltering Public Image**

### **6.1 Israel's Public Image in the United States**

Israel and the United States have always been allies and close friends. During the Cold War, Israel was the U.S.'s strongest ally in the Middle East, and continues to remain so today. The Jewish community in the United States, though comprising only about 1% of the entire U.S population, is very influential and powerful, both economically and politically.

Yet, despite these factors, Israel's public image in the United States still suffers. Given the United States' status as the most powerful nation in the world, having a positive public image amongst the American public is of utmost importance to Israel. Seeking to improve Israel's image amongst the average American seem to be a growing concern and focus within the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Israel's relatively recent "branding" efforts, which attempt to sell Israel as a fun, vibrant country to the average American, are an illustration of this goal.

Over the last eight years, following the second Intifada, Israel has been portrayed in a very negative light by the American media. Further, students are often indoctrinated with anti-Israel views during their university studies. In 2005, The Israel Project Association (TIP) of Washington D.C., through the Luntz-Maslansky Research Institute, conducted a study involving focus groups among 150 non-Jewish graduates of prominent universities in the U.S. The study showed that the young, educated elite pose the main threat to Israel in the United States. The study revealed that often elite opinion leaders formulate pro-Palestinian opinions during their

university studies. These opinions are formulated despite a lack of factual knowledge of the history of the Middle East and are based on specious knowledge which has no basis in reality.<sup>110</sup>

## 6.2 Israel's Public Image in Europe

In many ways Israel views itself as very close to Europe, especially from a cultural point of view. Many Jews immigrated to Israel from Europe and brought the European traditions and culture to Israel. Israel and Europe share a common cultural and social heritage, with similar values and interests in all spheres.<sup>111</sup>

Yet, despite all of the above, today European sentiments towards Israel are very critical, mainly due to the Arab-Israeli conflict and European sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Europe is considered to be one of the hardest, if not the hardest, challenge to Israeli advocates.<sup>112</sup>

In 2003, a poll commissioned by the European Commission found that over half of Europeans think Israel poses “the biggest threat to world peace”.<sup>113</sup> Further, Israel encounters serious media problems in Europe. Many European media outlets have adopted extreme anti-Israel positions. Mr. Trevor Asserson, a senior British litigation lawyer, has undertaken one of the most in-depth media analyses ever conducted, focusing on the media biases of the BBC. His analysis points to many breaches of its government charter, biases, as well as double standards employed when reporting on the Middle East conflict.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Luntz, F. (2005), *How the next generation views Israel, America 2020*, Luntz-Maslansky. (2005). *The Israel Project, June*. Retrieved from Hassman, R. (2004). *The Israel Brand: Nation Marketing under Constant Conflict*.

<sup>111</sup> Dachs, G. & Peters J. (2004). Israel and Europe, The Troubled Relationships: Between Perceptions and Reality. *The European Center for the Study of European Politics and Reality*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://hsf.bgu.ac.il/europe/uploadDocs/iepnpgdjp.pdf>.

<sup>112</sup> Eliaz, R. (2008). Interview with Ra'anana Eliaz, Associate Director of Stand With Us International. Herzliya, May 19, 2008.

<sup>113</sup> Eurobarometer 151. (2003). *Iraq and Peace in the World*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl151oniraq\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl151oniraq_en.pdf).

<sup>114</sup> Gerstenfeld, M. (2006). Israel and Europe: An Expanding Abyss?. *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.jpca.org/israel-europe/ier-gerstenfeld-05.htm>.

The harsh anti-Israel sentiment in Europe stems not just from the media, but from politicians, academics and NGOs as well.<sup>115</sup> The recent academic boycott of Israel in Britain is a clear illustration of the rising anti-Israel attitudes in Europe.

Israelis view the European sympathy for the Palestinian cause, the European criticisms of Israeli policies, and the negative portrayal of Israel by the European media as significant contributory factors to the sharp increase in anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe over the past few years.<sup>116</sup>

Dachs & Peters, in their work, “Israel and Europe, The Troubled Relationship: Between Perceptions and Reality”, remark that “Israelis and Europeans talk of possessing a common heritage, a common set of values and shared strategic interests. But there is need to discover exactly what those shared values comprise beyond simple generalizations such as a commitment to democracy, the rule of law and the development of civil society”.<sup>117</sup>

### **6.3 Israel’s Public Image Ranking in the Anholt Nation Brands Index (NBI)**

The Anholt Nations Brand Index (NBI) is an index that measures the public image of many nations around the world. The index is authored by British government advisor Simon Anholt, recognized as the world’s leading authority on the branding of countries, regions and cities. The Q3 2006 Anholt Nations Brand Index was conducted between July 27<sup>th</sup> and August 18<sup>th</sup> and powered by global market intelligence solutions provider GMI (Global Market Insite, Inc.) A 200-1000 representative sample based on age, gender, and where applicable, geographical region, race, and ethnicity was collected in thirty-five countries. In total, 25,903 online consumers were polled about their perceptions of the thirty-five countries across six areas:

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Dachs, G. & Peters J., op. cit., p.5.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p. 11-12

investment and immigration, exports, culture and heritage, people, governance, and tourism. The countries polled for the study were: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The results of the index are dire for Israel; Israel ranked at the very bottom of the survey.<sup>118</sup> “Israel’s brand is by a considerable margin the most negative we have ever measured in the NBI, and comes bottom of the ranking on almost every question”, stated Simon Anholt, the author of the report.<sup>119</sup> Note-worthy is the fact that of the thirty-five countries involved in the survey, there is nowhere that respondents would like to visit less than Israel. Israel’s people were voted the most unwelcoming in the world, and Americans ranked Israel just slightly over China in terms of its conduct in the areas of international peace and security.<sup>120</sup>

#### **6.4 Israel’s Public Image in the Middle East**

The period of the Oslo Accords was a time of great optimism throughout Israel and the world, graced by the prospect that peace between Israelis and Arabs might finally become a reality. A decade later, hopes for peace between Israel and the Middle East have faded dramatically, as has Israel’s public image in the Middle East.

A new survey of public opinion which included 4000 respondents in six Arab states was conducted by The Electronic Intifada, the leading Palestinian portal for information about the

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<sup>118</sup> Anholt.(2006) *Global Survey Confirms Israel is the worst Brand in the World.*, Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [www.nationbrandindex.com/nbi\\_q306-usa-press-release.phtml](http://www.nationbrandindex.com/nbi_q306-usa-press-release.phtml).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The survey found that the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon inflamed anti-Israel and anti-West sentiments among the Arab world. Ninety-five percent of those polled also identified Israel as posing “their biggest threat”.<sup>121</sup>

The Brookings Institute at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy also surveyed over 4000 people living in Egypt, Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, The United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Lebanon. Their findings reveal that since the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon, those surveyed have a more positive view of Hezbollah, and Hassan Nasrallah was identified as the most popular and admired leader in the Arab world. Seventy-three percent of those surveyed said that they accept a two-state solution in Israel, but fifty-two percent believe that Israel will not accept such a solution peacefully. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed believe that peace will never exist between Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>122</sup> These statistics are extremely damaging for Israel’s image as a peace-seeking country.

The current reality of Iran’s nuclear aspirations, the constant threats of Palestinian and Islamic Jihad terror, and Hamas’s continuous rocket attacks on Israel’s Western Negev are only a few of the many dangers Israel currently faces. Now, more than ever, a positive representation of Israel’s public image in the Middle East is of utmost importance.

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<sup>121</sup> Lobe, J. (2008, April 15) Poll: Israel, US greatest threats to Middle East. *The Electronic Intifada*, Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9458.shtml>.

<sup>122</sup> Indyk, S. M. (2008). *Views from the Middle East: Public Opinion in the Arab World* . Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/~//media/Files/events/2008/0414\\_middle\\_east/0414\\_middle\\_east\\_telhami.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/~//media/Files/events/2008/0414_middle_east/0414_middle_east_telhami.pdf)

## **7. Existing Programs that Promote Israeli Culture Throughout the World**

### **7.1 An Outline of Governmentally-Sponsored Cultural Diplomacy Programs**

An extensive internet search powered by the Google search engine revealed that almost all Israeli cultural diplomacy programs publicized over the internet are mainly funded by private organizations. However, there are a number of cultural diplomacy programs that the government contributes funding to.

One example of a program located through the search engine that is funded in part by the Israeli government is the BI Arts – British Israeli Arts Training Scheme. This program offers opportunities for exchange and development for professional UK and Israeli artists, and is funded by the British Council, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Israeli Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport.<sup>123</sup>

Another organization involved in cultural diplomacy that is funded by the Government of Israel is the New Israeli Foundation for Cinema and Television. This foundation encourages and promotes the making of documentary, experimental, feature, and short films in Israel, which are screened in Israel, around the world, and at major film festivals.<sup>124</sup>

Another major cultural diplomacy initiative that is funded in part by the Israeli government is Taglit-Birthright Israel. This unique program offers group trips to Israel for Jews worldwide between the ages of 18 and 26. It is funded by the Government of Israel, private philanthropists, Jewish communities around the world, Keren Hayesod, and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

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<sup>123</sup> British Council. (2008). *BI ARTS*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.britishcouncil.org/israel-arts-culture-bi-arts.htm>

<sup>124</sup> The New Foundation For Cinema & T.V.. (2008). *About Us*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.nfct.org.il/english/nfct/About.htm>.

Another cultural diplomacy activity funded in part by the government is the Israel Festival which offers international and Israeli performances in Jerusalem and all over Israel for a few weeks each spring. The festival is funded by the the Israeli Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, the Municipality of Jerusalem, the Jerusalem foundations, the Pais Lotttery, the Israel Broadcasting Authority, IDF Radio, and other commercial foundations.<sup>125</sup>

A final example of a cultural diplomacy program funded in part by the Government of Israel is the Red Sea Jazz Festival in Eilat. International and Israeli jazz artists perform in this festival each year in late August. The festival is funded by the Municipality of the City of Eilat, the Government Ministries of Culture and Tourism,, the Eilat Hotel Association, and various business sponsors.<sup>126</sup>

## **7.2 Cultural Diplomacy Programs as Private Initiatives**

Though the Government of Israel does fund some cultural diplomacy programs, the vast majority of programs which expose Israel's culture to the world are either private initiatives in Israel or abroad or initiatives of foreign countries. Even programs that are organized with the logistic help of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs are usually funded privately. In this section of the paper we will outline a few such private initiatives.

Funded through ticket sales and organized with the support of the Consulate General of Israel in Philadelphia, the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Philadelphia and many private bodies, the Israeli Film Festival of Greater Philadelphia will take place for the twelfth time in

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<sup>125</sup> Israel Festival. (2008). *Israel Festival, Jerusalem*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.israel-festival.org.il/2008/home\\_eng.html](http://www.israel-festival.org.il/2008/home_eng.html).

<sup>126</sup> Red Sea Jazz Festival. (2008). *About Us*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.redseajazzeilat.com/index2.php?id=3&lang=ENG>.

2008. The aim of the festival is to shed light on Israeli culture and society by screening Israeli films.<sup>127</sup>

Combining athletic training and exploring Israel is what Israel Sport Exchange (ISE) offers to North American Jewish teenagers. The program provides professional tennis training in the mornings and trips throughout Israel in the afternoons. In 2008 this program will last for two weeks and cost three thousand dollars.

Cultural diplomacy for Israel is also taking place on the internet. Israel 21c is a non-for-profit organization, based in Los Angeles, which targets the American audience through the internet. It has identified that images that people have in mind about Israel and Israelis are often prejudiced and do not reflect reality. Through videos and other multimedia platforms, Israel 21c exposes the American people to Israelis, their culture and institutions, and a reality which is not focused on the current political conflicts.<sup>128</sup>

An exchange program for engineering students, faculty and researchers from the University of California, Irvine, the Israel Institute of Technology (the Technion), and Tel Aviv University is slated to begin in the 2008/2009 academic year. The exchange program was established through a two million dollar philanthropic endowment in 2007. The aim is to promote cooperation between experts from Israel and UC Irvine and to “infuse new energy into the innovative research being conducted at The Henry Samueli School of Engineering, while developing and fostering valuable relationships in global engineering science.”<sup>129</sup>

Many other cultural exchange programs are initiated and managed under the auspices of Israeli and overseas universities and secondary schools, with little or no governmental funding.

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<sup>127</sup> The Israeli Film Festival of Greater Philadelphia. (2008). About *The Israeli Film Festival of Philadelphia*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.iffphila.com>.

<sup>128</sup> 21c. (2008). *About Israel 21c*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from <http://www.israel21c.net>.

<sup>129</sup> University of California. (2008). *UC Irvine-Israeli university engineering exchange program established*. Retrieved May 21, 2008 from [http://www.today.uci.edu/news/release\\_detail.asp?key=1680](http://www.today.uci.edu/news/release_detail.asp?key=1680).

As Amir Ofek of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained, the Government of Israel as a rule does not finance cultural exchange programs.<sup>130</sup>

### **7.3 Cultural Diplomacy Programs between Israel and its Neighboring Arab Countries**

Israeli cultural diplomacy efforts with countries in the Middle East are met with an array of unique challenges that cultural diplomacy initiatives with western countries do not encounter. A terrorist attack in Israel followed by an Israeli retaliation can freeze existing cultural diplomacy activities between Israel and its neighbors. The last two Intifadas to a large extent paralyzed communications between Israel and its neighboring states. According to Dan Haezrachy, Director of the Middle East Projects Department in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, official government-sponsored large-scale cultural diplomacy programs do not exist between Israel and its neighboring Arab countries. However, there is some small-scale cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians and Jordanians, a smaller amount of cooperation between Israel and Egypt and clandestine cooperation with a few other Arab and Muslim states.<sup>131</sup>

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs relates differently to people-to-people exchanges with Middle Eastern countries than it does with its western counterparts. While most of the exchanges with western countries involve non-governmental organizations and non-profit organizations, exchanges in the Middle East often need governmental approval. Almost every cultural diplomacy activity between Israel and the Middle East is also a political activity. Exchanges that do occur with no governmental involvement are small in scale and secretive. In the Middle East, organizations usually do not dare to independently participate in cultural

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<sup>130</sup> Ofek, A. (2008). Personal Communication by telephone with Amir Ofek, Diplomat at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, May 16, 2008.

<sup>131</sup> Haezrachy, D. (2008). Personal Communication by e-mail with Dan Haezrachy, Director of the Middle East Projects Department in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jerusalem, May 19, 2008.

diplomacy initiatives in Israel without their government's approval. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not contribute to the budget for people-to-people activities between Israel and Middle Eastern countries. Rather, most activities are funded by non-governmental organizations, with the Israeli government acting merely as a mediator.<sup>132</sup>

Though some of these programs do not receive media coverage due to hesitations of the Palestinians and other Arab countries, there have been a series of cultural diplomacy activities between Israel and its neighboring countries since the Oslo Accords. In most cases these programs take place in third-party countries because of political and security reasons and because of the need for both parties to detach themselves from their daily troubles and peer pressure.

There are one hundred twenty activities run by NGOs that involve both Palestinians and Israelis, such as meetings between bereaved families, educational programs for youth, and more. One example of a (non-governmental) diplomacy program between Israel and its neighbors in the past year is an August 2007 meeting of Palestinian, Arab, and Israeli students in Berlin with the aim to "break the cycle of hostility". Another example of such a program is a series of seminars for young Israelis and Palestinians who are members of political parties and activities and are considered to be future leaders. Finally, a third example of such a cultural diplomacy program is a program in which Jordanians participate in marathons in Israel, while at the same time tour Israel and meet with other Israeli youth.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

## **8. Conclusions**

This paper has demonstrated the many far-reaching and powerful benefits of cultural diplomacy and its increasing popularity as a diplomacy tool both in Europe and the United States. The paper has shown that cultural diplomacy has the power and potential to change world public opinion about Israel. At the same time, the paper has illustrated that the level of governmental support for these programs in Israel is minimal and insufficient. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' miniscule budget for cultural diplomacy prevents the Ministry from initiating or supporting cultural diplomacy on a large-scale.

While the paper has illustrated that the preservation and development of culture is not fully appreciated nor substantially funded by the Government of Israel, it has also shown that many infrastructures exist within the country whose aims are to preserve and cultivate Israeli culture. It has shown how diverse and unique Israeli culture is and how appealing it is throughout the world. Thus, Israeli culture is ripe to be exported abroad, and can be used as an important tool in promoting Israel's public image in the world.

It is unfortunate that Israel continues to neglect one of the most powerful tools at its disposal: the burgeoning Israeli culture. The fact that Israel faces serious security threats is not a reason to neglect cultural diplomacy programs; on the contrary, the more serious the threats that Israel faces, the more important it is that Israel win its public relations war. This paper has shown the great challenges Israel's public image faces around the world. Cultural diplomacy can help ease those challenges and give Israel a more positive name in the world. The more world support Israel has, the stronger a country it will be.

## **9. Recommendations**

In light of this paper's findings, we recommend that the Government of Israel rethink the value of diplomatic efforts, and in particular, cultural diplomacy. The budget for cultural diplomacy should be significantly increased to satisfy the growing need for the employment of cultural diplomacy as a means to promote a more positive public image of Israel around the world.

Instead of relying on private entities and the governments of other countries to promote Israeli culture and bring foreigners to Israel, we recommend that the Israeli government initiate its own cultural diplomacy programs. Cultural diplomacy is an important tool in securing the safety and prosperity of the State of Israel, one that should not be dependent on the initiatives of private entities and foreign governments.

As one of the strengths of cultural diplomacy programs is that their participants are usually private individuals detached from any official government position or identity, we recommend that Israel support these programs, but not imbue them with overt political agendas or affiliations. We further recommend that a substantial amount of the Israeli Government's financial support for cultural diplomacy programs be channeled to non-governmental organizations promoting cultural diplomacy activities.

Given the important role student exchange programs play in cultural diplomacy, as illustrated in this paper, we strongly recommend that the Israeli government initiate new student exchange programs and support existing student exchange programs between Israel and other countries. This is especially important in order to ensure that the full spectrum of Israeli culture is represented abroad. Today's state of affairs in which the government provides no funding for

these programs creates a situation in which usually only privileged students can afford the costs of these programs, thus limiting the exposure of the world to the elite of Israeli society, rather than the full range of Israeli people and society.

One alarming finding of this paper is the fact that youth exchange programs with Germany are unilaterally funded by the government of Germany. Germany is one of Israel's most important allies, and we believe that continuing this unilateral funding of cultural diplomacy programs may have negative impacts on the close ties between the German and Israeli governments. Cultural diplomacy is a two-way street, and allowing Germany to bear the full burden of cultural diplomacy programs which benefit Israel is not in the spirit of the goals of cultural diplomacy. Thus, if Israel wants to continue to maintain good relations with this important country and project a greater sense of respect for German students visiting Israel, it is important that Israel contribute an equal share of funding to these programs.

We recommend that the Government of Israel expand its cultural diplomacy programs with its neighboring Arab countries, but do so with caution. In pursuing cultural diplomacy programs with these countries, the government must acknowledge the unique cultures and political realities of these countries, and must take these into consideration when deciding which aspects of Israeli culture to expose to these societies. The transmission of vulgar and immoral pop-culture to these conservative countries, for instance, will assuredly have the opposite effect the Israeli Government is trying to achieve, as the governments of these countries will reject and take offense in all such cultural content.

Due to our findings that Israel's foreign policy is characterized by a lack of strategic planning, which manifests itself in the context of cultural diplomacy, we recommend that a governmental committee be established that will be in charge of developing a strategy for using

cultural diplomacy to target overseas audiences. This committee should include natives of other countries who are familiar with the cultures of other countries, and can predict what aspects of Israeli culture will be most appealing to them.

We hope that the Israeli government will seriously consider the findings of this paper and implement the recommendations contained herein, in order to ensure a brighter future for the State of Israel.

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