Molad the center for the renewal of Israeli democracy

Israeli Hasbara: Myths and Facts

A Report on the Israeli Hasbara Apparatus 2012

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Molad is a think tank dedicated to the core issues of Israeli political and social life. Molad was created earlier this year with the realization that the deterioration of all aspects of life in Israel — from the spike in income inequality to the ongoing failure to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict — will not cease until the political conversation in Israel finally turns to substance: ideological disagreements, competing policy proposals and, above all, a real discussion of the fundamental political question: What is to be done?

For years, Israel's political system has been drained of real content and avoided constructive conversation. The lack of a rooted political culture — one which relies on traditions, norms, and constitutive texts — has rendered the Israeli political arena a place of base power struggles over special, often personal, interests at the expense of the common good and national interest. The Israeli press has done its share to exacerbate this problem by highlighting political gossip instead of covering the real decisions and actions (or inaction) that shape communal life.

Our aim at Molad is to provide reliable, quality content, based on the highest standards of research and analysis coupled with an unflinching commitment to a progressive vision for Israeli society. Fellows and researchers at Molad engage in questions of foreign policy and security, civil equality, the nature of the Israeli political community, sustainable and equitable economic practices, and the rehabilitation of social services. While nonpartisan, Molad takes pride in being a political institution, unafraid of formulating clear positions on the fundamental questions of Israeli social and political life and putting forward concrete policy proposals. Infusing the political discourse with new ideas is a necessary condition for extricating Israeli democracy from a snowballing crisis.

The research presented here is Molad's first long-form publication. Its purpose is to examine the widespread assumption that ascribes Israel's deteriorating international standing to poor public relations — what is termed the "hasbara problem". Repeatedly blaming the "hasbara problem" for Israel's foreign policy failures functions

as an easy excuse that blinds Israelis to the root of the problem. While this claim contained a grain of truth in the past, significant improvements in recent years have made Israel's hasbara apparatus into one of the finest public diplomacy networks in the world. Israeli citizens should be able to finally bid farewell to the notion of the "hasbara problem" and turn their attention to our real problem: The ongoing failure of Israeli defense and foreign policy.

The present enquiry is the first in a series of research and policy papers that deal with Israel's deteriorating international standing. The next paper in the series deals with Israel's standing vis-à-vis its allies in Europe and the United States, and will be published shortly. Until then, we invite our readers to visit our website (www.molad.org) to keep up with our work.

I would like to thank the research staff for this paper, in particular Dr. Shivi Greenfield, Mikhael Manekin, Jesse Rothman, Dahlia Shaham, and Dr. Assaf Sharon.

Avner Inbar - Executive Director, Molad
Jerusalem, December 2012

Executive Summary:

In 2006, the Israel State Comptroller published a scathing report on the Israeli hasbara apparatus. The report evaluated the preparedness and functionality of the national hasbara establishments in Israel in the areas of foreign relations and defense before and during the Second Lebanon War. The apparatus subsequently underwent a comprehensive overhaul, which included the creation of a governmental office dedicated to hasbara. Yet we still continuously hear — from politicians, journalists, and researchers — that Israel lacks an adequate hasbara apparatus. The commonly held belief that Israel has a "hasbara problem", especially when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, is as strong as ever.

This study is the first of its kind in its attempt to comparatively analyze the hasbara apparatus in its present form based on facts, data and international criteria. Public diplomacy may be evaluated based on seven independent criteria. A thorough evaluation of the Israeli hasbara apparatus demonstrates that it satisfactorily, if not exceptionally, fulfills each of these criteria. Further, this study shows that the Israeli hasbara apparatus is an elaborate, well-coordinated, sophisticated mechanism that adjusts to emergency situations and is able to facilitate cooperation between a varied set of players. This study also reveals that Israeli public diplomacy is particularly effective in using new media and informal communication; it has successfully internalized the importance of "soft power".

It is clear from an analysis of the data that the commonly held belief, obsessively reiterated by senior officials, that Israel has a "hasbara problem", is fundamentally incorrect. The success or failure of the hasbara apparatus must be evaluated based on the relevant goals and standards of such an apparatus. This paper shows that, in light of the Israeli hasbara apparatus's efficiency and sophistication as evaluated based on its goals and standards, one cannot attribute Israel's poor international status and image to insufficient and inefficient hasbara. The conclusion of this study is that the "hasbara

problem" is a myth that diverts focus from Israel's real problems which are the results of problematic policy, not flawed hasbara of appropriate policy.

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Introduction

In recent years, Israel's public image has been damaged through a variety of channels. At times, it has been attacked by countries with which Israel has sound diplomatic relations.[1] Public opinion polls show that Israel is perceived in the international community as militaristic, masculine, religious, stiff-necked, dangerous, chauvinist, and frightening,[2] and is constantly identified in the international media with images of conflict.[3] Israel is frequently criticized and condemned by various countries, the UN and its agencies, human rights organizations and other international organizations. In addition to condemnations in the official diplomatic arena in recent years, Israel has been subjected to attack from non-governmental organizations in Europe and North America.[4] Recent surveys illustrate that Israel is increasingly identified as one of the primary threats to world stability[5] and the number of critical voices calling for boycott, divestment, and sanctions of various Israeli bodies and

businesses are ever increasing.[6]

In Israel and parts of the Jewish Diaspora establishment, the primary cause for Israel's poor international image, and by extention its troubles in the diplomatic arena, is understood to be the failure of hasbara, or public diplomacy. The contention is that Israel has not succeeded in effectively and intelligently contending with the anti-Israel public diplomacy apparatus, particularly pro-Palestinian efforts to isolate it in the international community.[8,7] Melanie Phillips, a Jewish senior news analyst for the *British Daily Mail*, a conservative tabloid, summed up the sentiment in an August 2011 interview:

> Israeli hasbara is a joke. An absolute joke. Israel is completely outclassed and out-maneuvered on a battleground it doesn't even understand it is on. It doesn't even have the basics of proper hasbara... Somebody should be putting the truth [about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict] in the public domain, and the government of Israel has not done this for many years.[9]

Hillel Halkin, an American-born Israeli pundit and translator, described the Israeli hasabra approach as one of "sheer incompetence".[10] Others have even spoken of "taking steps against the parties responsible for the hasbara blunder."[11] Again, Israel's foreign relations woes are pinned to poor hasbara. Similarly, *Vanity Fair* described Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "...conviction that, at their core, many problems, both his and Israel's, are really matters of hasbara: Hebrew for public relations."[12]

No one argues that Israel doesn't invest considerable efforts in explaining its policies. However, the argument goes, Israel is not investing enough — certainly not in comparison to countries and bodies working to isolate it and to undermine its positive image. In other words, the common assumption among the Israeli public and its leadership is that sharp international criticism towards the State of Israel continues to stem from a fundamental misunderstanding of Israel's situation. This misunderstanding is the result of multifaceted and effective public relations campaigns by anti-Israel bodies and compounded by flawed Israeli hasbara. The solution to the problem

of international isolation can therefore be found by further perfecting Israel's current hasbara program - developing and implementing a more effective and sophisticated hasbara system. Yet, despite its pervasiveness, this argument has never been thoroughly examined in light of facts and hard data. The purpose of this study is to examine the Israeli "hasbara problem" and how the hasbara apparatus manages it.

"Hasbara", according to the accepted translation, is "public diplomacy."[13] This study compares the Israeli hasbara apparatus to parallel instruments of public diplomacy in the Western world. It demonstrates that, when compared to Western countries, Israel's public diplomacy apparatus adheres to the highest standards. Further, this study shows that when measured against the anti-Israel apparatus it aims to combat, the Israeli apparatus is more elaborate and sophisticated by every measure.

No doubt, certain aspects of Israel's public diplomacy are in need of improvement and its hasbara strategy can be made even more effective than it is today.[14] However, the claim that the State of Israel does not treat the issue of hasbara with appropriate seriousness and that the hasbara apparatus is defective and failing is shown here to be plainly false. This study demonstrates that Israel's public diplomacy is elaborate and sophisticated by both professional and academic standards and that it enjoys the support of both official and unofficial bodies throughout the world. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman and former Israeli ambassador to France once stated: "There is no doubt that Israel is one of the leading nations of the world in public diplomacy, both in terms of scope of operation and access to the media as well as in terms of other aspects of public diplomacy, such as scientific and cultural relationships."[15]

Outline

Public Diplomacy – Theory

The notion of "public diplomacy" as a distinct form of diplomatic activity first appeared in the late sixties, at the height of the Cold War. Then, it was part of the American effort to encourage the democratization of the Soviet bloc. The concept was defined as a type of diplomacy that creates "direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments."[16] Twin forces drove the creation of the concept. First, there was a basic acknowledgement that traditional forms of diplomacy were limited. Second, there was conscious recognition of the fact that, in order to advance the goals of American foreign policy, there was a need for a supplementary, in many ways alternative, diplomatic apparatus to simultaneously advance policy goals more effectively and avoid being branded by the public as "propaganda" (i.e. tendentious and ideological).[17] In America, the concept began a fall into disuse after the Cold War. In fact, there was a steady decline of interest in the subject until the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. The liberal West, surprised to discover the large number of groups hostile toward it throughout the globe, revived interest and reengaged with the concept of public diplomacy.[18] This renewed interest was accompanied by a lively discussion regarding public diplomacy's theoretical definition. Many researchers believed the Cold War definition to be insufficiently precise.[19]

1.1 Public Diplomacy

Folded into the concept of "public diplomacy" is the assumption that it is unique to governments. And further, that the primary goal of a government using this type of diplomacy is to influence policy makers. Yet there are those who argue that this assumption does not reflect the manner in which certain nations themselves understand the goal of public diplomacy. In Great Britain, for

example, public diplomacy is said to be a strategy whose goal is to "inform and engage individuals and organizations overseas, in order to improve understanding of, and influence for, the United Kingdom";[20] in the United States it is defined as "basically [comprising] all a nation does to explain itself to the world";[21] and in Germany it is understood to be an approach where countries go about "proclaiming the policies of their home countries to the general public abroad and presenting them in a favorable light".[22] These descriptions contain no reference to government, either as the primary agent executing public diplomacy or as its primary recipient. It is thus clear that governments are not the only bodies engaged in public diplomacy.

1.2 Public Diplomacy: Recent Developments

Public relations research has developed alongside dramatic changes in the ways in which we communicate. In recent decades technological developments in communication have generated new political opportunities. These developments have led researchers to redefine the concept of public diplomacy with an added emphasis on its marketing and media dimensions as well as the necessary cooperation between governmental and non-governmental bodies. Based on a new approach to the concept — referred to in the theoretical literature as "new public diplomacy" — public diplomacy is "the way in which both governments and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions."[23] Jozef Batora, associate professor and director at the Institute of European Studies and International Relations at Comenius University in Bratislava, argues that public diplomacy "comprises all activities by state and non-state actors that contribute to the maintenance and promotion of a country's soft power."[24] The concept of "soft power" refers to a mode of operation in which countries to attract and influence, rather than use force, to accomplish their interests. Joseph Nye, an American

political scientist and former Dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, argues that the soft power of a country, as opposed to its hard power, is measured by its ability "to structure a situation so that other nations develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent one's own nation."[25]

As Eitan Gilboa, a leading researcher on public diplomacy explains, public diplomacy will realize its soft-power objectives if it accomplishes the following goals:

A. Enlists non-governmental bodies alongside governmental ones.

B. Utilizes new media technologies to strengthen the draw of the country and its positive image.

C. Advances short and long-term goals and is able to adjust to changing states of affair.[26]

The new approach to public diplomacy, with "soft power" at its core, reveals a clear transition from a world in which foreign policy is defined by strength, manipulation, and threats to a world in which it is defined by the concepts of image, trust, values and attraction; from channeling diplomatic energy solely towards policy-makers to aiming such efforts at public opinion and narrative builders as well as the general public; from a world where public diplomacy is designed and implemented by governmental and bureaucratic bodies to one in which passes through a network of private, non-governmental organizations who benefit from broad public legitimacy in the target country. Dov Shinar, Professor of Communication Studies at Ben Gurion University, describes it as follows:

> Foreign policy, which in the past had been the exclusive property of diplomats behind closed doors, is going through a process of increased democratization — civilian activists, non-governmental organizations, local governmental offices, private enterprises, academics and other role-players are directly participating in foreign policy and are framing the public discussion of foreign policy in ethical terms.[27]

The table below emphasizes the central differences between the old and new definitions of public diplomacy. It will allow us to evaluate the Israeli hasbara apparatus more precisely:

	Public Diplomacy – Old Definition	Public Diplomacy – New Definition
Conditions	Periods of conflict, tension between states	Periods of peace and conflict
Goals	To achieve political change in target countries by influencing policy makers	Political and economic interest promotion to create a receptive environment and positive reputation of the country among policy makers and the general public abroad
Strategies	Persuasion, manipulation, threats, coercion	Building and maintaining relationships, cooperation, branding
Direction of communication	One-way communication (monologue)	Two-way communication (dialogue)
Message emphasis	Ideologies, interests, dangers	Ideas, values, collaboration, benefits
Target audiences	Policy makers	Policy makers; opinion makers from various arenas (the academy, cultural leaders, etc.); general public
Channels	Traditional mass media (television, print, etc)	Old and new media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc); art and culture
Budget	Sponsored by government	Public and private partnership

(Based on Szondi, 2009)

Public Diplomacy - Practice

2

The theoretical debate reveals that effective public diplomacy requires the following factors:

A. A nation branding strategy.

B. A multi-dimensional communications strategy employing both traditional and digital media.

C. Development and preservation of long-term cooperative relationships with private entities.

D. Advancing relationships of trust and cooperation with the general public in the target country and limiting the use of persuasive rhetoric, threats, manipulation and force.

In order to evaluate the current Israeli hasbara strategies on the basis of such concrete standards, we must first describe the elements of public diplomacy in detail.

The Foreign Policy Centre, a British research institute, noted the disparities between the theory of public diplomacy and its practice. They realized the need to translate certain theoretical concepts into straightforward, applicable principles. To improve Britain's public diplomacy, the Centre prepared a detailed document, summarizing the ideas and key elements in the theoretical literature as used by countries worldwide.[28] Presented below are the document's main points with some elaboration based on the theoretical discussion above. The points are then consolidated into a checklist of criteria required for an effective public diplomacy apparatus.

Evaluating the Israeli and anti-Israel apparatuses based on these components allows for clear answers to the following questions: To what degree can the Israeli hasbara apparatus be described as effective based on objective, professional standards? To what degree is the Israeli hsabara apparatus effective when compared to the anti-Israel hasbara network it combats?

2.1 Evaluating Effective Public Diplomacy: The Foreign Policy Centre[29]

A. Governments do not pay enough attention to the way events that occur within their borders are perceived abroad. The story embedded in a state's public consciousness is not the one reported by its official spokespeople; the media (in both the target country and the country of origin) are the ones who tell the story. This is why it is important for countries to develop sophisticated communication strategies that include cooperation with foreign media in the target country, and not to rely solely on diplomatic representatives in that country.

B. Governments should alter the tone of their public diplomacy to focus on cooperation rather than justification. The focus should be on obtaining public sympathy, not trying to sway the public through pursuasion or intimidation. It is important that the public in the target country develops an understanding of the source country and its populace and learns to identify with its ideology and values. Winning arguments should be seen as less important than inculcating feelings of identification, sympathy and good faith.

C. Governments are not generally good persuasive agencies, especialy in the 21st century, an era characterized by cynicism and suspicion of political motivations. By working through parties and organizations trusted by people in the target country — non-profit organizations, Diaspora populations, businesses and civil society organizations — the source country is more likely to achieve its objectives than by acting as its own spokesman. Governments, therefore, have a distinct interest in private entities taking an active and meaningful role in the design and implementation of their public diplomacy. The government must work through traditional diplomatic channels and simultaneously build a network of organizations in the private, non-governmental sector. The formation of these types of cooperative networks will significantly increase the chances that the general public will positively and sympathetically accept the government's message.

D. Dealing with crises is an integral part of public diplomacy. A county's image can be damaged irreparably as the result of a single

crisis. One example is the severe blow Great Britain's international image took as a result of its poor management of public diplomacy after an outbreak of hoof and mouth disease in 2001. Thus, it is vital to design a country's public diplomacy to allow for instantaneous, effective management of events. Official representatives of the public diplomacy apparatus must respond immediately, uniformly, and coherently to events that may harm the image of the country.

E. Public diplomacy should be focused on those countries most relevant to its interests, not necessarily those easiest to influence. It is important to recognize the difference between relevant and less-relevant countries. This is true when it comes to different populations in the target country as well. Diplomatic policies must focus on opinion makers from the media, culture, academic and political sectors — whether or not they support the policies of the country of origin.

2.2 Essential Components of Effective Public Diplomacy

From the theoretical insights presented above, it follows that the full list of essential elements for an effective public diplomacy apparatus includes the following (for a summary, see the table above):

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1 **Coordination & management of messages**

The apparatus must create a central coordination mechanism to ensure that all bodies involved advance uniform and coherent messages routinely as well as during emergency situations.

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2 **Informal hasbara**

The apparatus must include unofficial representatives — stakeholders or non-profit organizations — alongside the official state hasbara representatives (diplomats, official spokespeople, etc.).

3 Engagement and branding

The apparatus must limit its accusations, justifications, complaints, and threats and focus on cooperation, nation branding, and emphasizing the attractiveness and positive image of the country.

4 Long-term cooperation

The apparatus must include a strategy for building long-term, cooperative relationships with parties from the private sector whose goals are identical or complementary to those of the apparatus.

5 Multi-dimensional media strategies

The apparatus must implement a multi-dimensional media strategy to operate through traditional media (newspapers, television, etc.) as well as digital media (blogs, social networks, forums, Internet surveys, etc.).

6 Dynamism and management of crises

the apparatus must create a dynamic mechanism to manage messaging that is capable of adjusting to changing realities as well as place an emphasis on immediate responses to events which may irreparably damage the country's image.

7 Strategic Targeting

The apparatus must focus on strategic populations — both when it comes to targeting countries for messaging as well targeting stakeholders in the those countries towards whom the messaging will be directed.

These seven criteria will be used as the basis for an objective analysis of the level of efficiency of Israel's public policy in the following chapters.

3 The Israeli Hasbara Apparatus

In a 2006 article, Eitan Gilboa offered a powerful critique of the Israeli hasbara apparatus. He argued that the Israeli government did not see the hasbara apparatus as an essential piece of Israel's foreign policy. As a result, the apparatus was poorly budgeted and rarely made use of its natural partners in the private sector like Jewish Diaspora organizations. It followed that the Israeli government was wasting a significant resource for advancing its goals. According to Gilboa, the government invested negligible effort, if any, in hasbara in the Arab world, leaving the field open to radical anti-Israel organizations. The hasbara apparatus was missing an organized plan for nation branding; its communications strategy lagged behind developments in digital media and it was much less elaborate and sophisticated than its anti-Israel public diplomacy counterpart.[30] Gilboa's claims articulated the widespread belief that often points to flawed hasbara as the source of Israel's negative international image and diplomatic isolation.

Yet, even if this was a valid assessment of Israeli hasbara in 2006, it is not today. There is no question that Israel suffers from a negative public image and problematic diplomatic positioning, but the reasons behind such international disapproval are not tied to its investment in hasbara. In the six years since Gilboa's article, the Israeli hasbara apparatus has undergone massive reform to become one of the most sophisticated and effective public diplomacy apparatuses in the world.

Below is a brief survey of the main characteristics of Israel's public diplomacy apparatus in 2012. They include official and unofficial operations inside and outside Israel, strategies it implements and the primary players who design and implement such strategies in both the public and private sectors. The survey primarily focuses on official data from hasbara authorities as presented on websites or in government documents. Presumably, the operations of the hasbara

authorities are far wider than those reported by its official sources. However, as is demonstrated, the reported operations are sufficient to show that Israel's public diplomacy apparatus in 2012 abides by the highest standards of effective public diplomacy. This is in contrast to the anti-Israel hasbara apparatus, which only partially implements these components, as we will see below.

The observable conclusion is that the common perception that the Israeli hasbara apparatus is ineffective and inferior to the anti-Israel hasbara apparatus is profoundly mistaken. Israel has an elaborate, professional and sophisticated hasbara apparatus, which is not only exceptionally effective, but outpaces its competition.[31]

3.1 Reforming the Apparatus

In 2007, following the State Comptroller Report, there was a distinct shift in way hasbara was handled in Israel. The hasbara apparatus, once evaluated by the Comptroller, was found to be, as Gilboa established, fundamentally flawed. The following are the central problems identified by the Comptroller:[32]

A. The apparatus was comprised of many state hasbara bodies (The Office of the Prime Minister, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Ministry of Defense, Home Front Command, the Israeli Police Force, and the IDF), which operated without clear, organized protocols and with very little cooperation.

B. There was no coordination between internal messaging aimed at Israelis and external messaging aimed at the broader world.

C. No unified media strategy was established for the various bodies. As a result, hasbara messages were not uniform, and at times even contradicted each other.

D. The apparatus was not prepared for emergencies and acted in a purely reactionary capacity.

E. There were no fixed, official briefings for foreign press, and the

briefings that did take place were often improvised and confused.

F. There was a scarcity of hasbara representatives who spoke critical languages such as Arabic and Russian.

G. The hasbara materials were not updated to cope with changing circumstances.

H. A majority of bodies within the hasbara apparatus did not have clear protocols detailing how specific tasks and responsibilities were to be handled i.e. the exact manner in which they were meant to promote Israel's policies was unclear.

According to the Comptroller, the root cause of these problems was the lack of any single governmental body to oversee and direct all hasbara efforts, coordinate their operations, represent their needs to the government and National Security Cabinet, and establish organized and calculated protocols that would allow for appropriate management of changing situations, both routine and emergency.[33]

As a part of the comprehensive reform, Israel's public diplomacy apparatus moved under the auspices of a body in the Prime Minister's Office. This office, dubbed the national hasbara headquarters, combines sophisticated communications strategies which operate both in traditional and new media markets. Its creation reflects a broad recognition of the importance of fortifying a positive image for Israel, maintaining its desirability, and promoting hasbara messaging that emphasizes cooperation and shared values. This new apparatus distinguishes between strategic partners and irrelevant ones. It is primarily based on a cooperative network of a variety of public and civilian bodies in Israel and the word, and it has developed a dynamic approach for immediate crisis management. As will be seen below, the hasbara apparatus fully implements all of the components of an effective public diplomacy apparatus. It is systematic, organized, and among the top public diplomacy mechanisms in the world.

1 3.2 Public Diplomacy Components: Analysis & Evaluation

Coordination and Management of Hasbara Messages

As stated, the chief component of an effective public diplomacy apparatus is coordination and management of a specific hasbara messages. The primary critique in the Comptroller Report, as seen above, touched upon the critical importance of this type of mechanism. The Comptroller maintained that because the Prime Minister's Office is the sole body capable of comprehensive oversight for both internal and external hasbara needs, it is essential that the Prime Minister's Office be the one to establish and manage the coordination mechanism and standardize the overarching hasbara approach. On July 8, 2007, in accordance with the conclusions reached in the report, the government established the national hasbara headquarters in the Prime Minister's Office. The headquarters were to be managed by the "national hasbara staff" whose responsibility it would be to coordinate "all hasbara authorities in the State of Israel and present a reliable, uniform and consistent hasbara policy."

Functionally, the coordination and management of messaging falls under the authority of the "National Hasbara Forum," which includes the chief of the hasbara staff from the Prime Minister's Office, the IDF spokesman, the police spokesman, the hasbara representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a spokesmen from both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense, the media advisors of ministers from those offices as well as from the Government Press Office. The official purpose of the Forum is to establish internal and external hasbara policies and to form official positions, messages and responses, which then become the standard for all hasbara bodies — from official spokespeople for the State of Israel within the country to informal, non-governmental agents throughout the world.[34]

The forum is responsible for formulating hasbara messages, while distinguishing between different types of messages:

A. Internal and external messages (messaging to the Israeli public and to publics abroad)

B. General messages (messaging that reflects the State of Israel's fundamental principles)

C. Basic messages (messaging based on the platform of the current government's administration reflecting foreign and defense policies)

D. Current messages (messaging based on the daily decisions of the prime minister, government, and National Security Cabinet)

Similarly, the Forum is responsible for formulating immediate responses to important events and presenting hasbara policy suggestions to the government in both routine and emergency scenarios.

It is clear that the Forum thoroughly internalized the principle of dynamism i.e. the need to constantly update hasbara messages to correspond with political developments. It makes sure to hold regular meetings with the relevant professional bodies to enhance its existing hasbara strategies and train for changing conditions. To this end, among others, the forum holds a monthly meeting together with the IDF, the settlement operations coordinator, the General Security Services and the police. This meeting allows for status updates and coordination of hasbara messaging to Arab populations. Once every three months the Forum holds a similar meeting with external consultants in media, marketing, and psychology to provide further status updates on hasbara methods in the field, improve existing hasbara strategies, and develop bases for new hasbara initiatives.

Additionally, with the cooperation of other official hasbara bodies (in particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Diplomacy & Diaspora Affairs [hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Public Diplomacy]), the National Hasbara Forum manages the operational aspects of the production and distribution of hasbara messages. Some examples include: building a database of spokespeople and expert presenters who are able to articulate the positions of the government to the media routinely as well as during emergencies; detection and production of written, audio-

visual and electronic hasbara products for diplomatic representatives in the Diaspora, targeted opinion makers, and the general public (in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs); preparation of hasbara materials — editorials, written materials, presentations, film clips and advertisements — and their distribution on websites; creating a reliable and professional hasbara training mechanism (coaching) for Israeli delegations headed to the Diaspora (in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Diplomacy).

2 Informal Hasbara

The second element of an effective public diplomacy apparatus is informal hasbara; the apparatus must include informal hasbara representatives that operate alongside official ones. This principle is derived from the above-mentioned assumption that governments are poor agents of persuasion. Thus, the success of hasbara policies depends on an ability to communicate with bodies and institutions that the target country will trust. This element was similarly well internalized by the Israeli apparatus and it has established organizations in various countries throughout the word whose purpose is to deliver hasbara messages through "indirect channels" without officially identifying themselves as such (i.e. as a part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).[35] This process reflects a deep recognition of the limits of "official" messaging.

Israel has launched a variety of projects in the past few years aimed at enlisting both Israeli citizens and young people (Jews and non-Jews) around the world to advance the hasbara effort. For example, the Ministry of Public Diplomacy is advancing two projects that aim to harness the hasbara potential of the citizens of Israel: First, a project called "We Are All Ambassadors". The aim of this project is to organize Israelis who speak foreign languages and have them work with the foreign media during special events and emergency situations. The second project is called "Presenting Israel" and is, in effect, a website (www.masbirim.gov.il) intended to enhance the hasbara capabilities of citizens of Israel traveling abroad and to help refine their rhetorical skills.

Other, more specific projects also reflect the internalization of the principle of informal hasbara. Examples include: the Ministry of Public Diplomacy's project to enlist volunteers to present Israeli points of view on European news sites and Internet surveys (successfully employed during Operation Cast Lead[36]); the "Israel Online for You"[37] project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the "Ort" network of schools, whose goal is to encourage Israeli high school students to use social networking to promote Israeli hasbara messages among their peers throughout the world.[38]

In this context, hasbara also reaches the institutions of higher education: a group of Israeli academics are sent by the State of Israel to campuses around the world to lecture on Israel; student delegations are frequently sent to campuses to run hasbara activities for Jewish and non-Jewish students (this requires the coordination of the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Jewish Agency and Hillel). These student delegations often have different goals: some attempt to advance the positive image of Israel in general (the Ministry of Public Diplomacy's "Faces of Israel" project is one such example; its stated goal is to represent the diverse faces of Israel[39]), while others support the local hasbara efforts of Jewish students at events deemed "anti-Israel" (like "Israel apartheid week" [40]).

In addition to these projects, Israel invests no small number of resources in cultivating hasbara agents among Jewish students in the Diaspora itself. The official hasbara bodies of Israel are responsible for the following projects: the organization and production of Israeli cultural events on campuses in the United States with the goal of strengthening Israeli identity among Jewish students or their connection to Israel (Ministry of Public Diplomacy); flying American students to Israel under the auspices of education programs such as Taglit-Birthright and "MASA" programs during which they participate in hasbara workshops (Jewish Agency); empowering Jewish students on campuses with rhetorical skills for hasbara and new media (Ministry of Public Diplomacy); amending curricula which relate to Israel on campuses throughout the world, to emphasize "Israel's heritage and the long standing connection of the Jewish people with the land of Israel"

(Ministry of Public Diplomacy)[41]; bringing Jewish high school students from the Diaspora to train them in hasbara and prepare them for "going out onto campuses where they will fight against the phenomenon of the delegitimization of Israel" (Ministry of Public Diplomacy)[42]; sending IDF officer delegations abroad for hasbara trips, including meetings with local Jewish communities and symposia for target audiences (Ministry of Public Diplomacy)[43]. Based on the above data, it can be estimated that Israel's informal hasbara apparatus includes hundreds of Israelis and non-Israelis working to advance Israel's hasbara goals in public opinion centers both in the United States and throughout the world.[44]

3 Cooperation and Branding

The third element of an effective public diplomacy apparatus is cooperation and branding. The apparatus must limit its accusations, justifications, complaints, and threats and instead emphasize cooperation and nation branding. Branding primarily involves bolstering the attractiveness and positive image of the country. The Israeli apparatus of 2012 is characterized by an emphasis on cooperation and branding, as noted by Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Lieberman in his introduction to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs document entitled "Work Plan for 2011":

> Together with the daily management of terror threats and unconventional warfare, there is a need to direct resources and renew consideration for the fight over world opinion and against delegitimization. The entrance of new agents in the arena, increased use of new media and the increasing power of non-governmental organization set complex challenges before traditional diplomacy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the ministry responsible for Israeli diplomacy and hasbara, must adapt to the new reality and prepare to provide an appropriate response to the challenges that accompany it.[45]

This approach is most clearly expressed though the government's massive investment in what's called "Israel branding" around the

world. In 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to increase the marketing budget intended for Israel branding. The full marketing budget went from 40 million NIS, of which previously only 10 million were designated for marketing and hasbara, to an unprecedented 100 million NIS, all of which was designated for marketing and hasbara.[46] The goal of the project, as stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is to coordinate the models and methods of marketing and hasbara in the public sector with those in the private sector. Inspired by the private sector, it was determined that the branding project would focus on the Internet, especially social networks, and concentrate on six areas of Israeli advancement: the environment (with an emphasis on desert agriculture); science and technology (medicine, Internet, and high-tech); arts and culture; diverse population and traditions; lifestyles and leisure culture; and "tikkun olam" (supporting populations with special needs).[47]

In addition to the Israel branding project, state hasbara bodies are involved in various other ventures with the stated goal of enhancing Israel's positive image in the world and aiding others in identifying with its values. For example, the Minsitry of Public Diplomacy organizes a yearly seminar, in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzeliya, for members of the media and senior journalists from Europe to develop personal, intimate relationships that encourage a more positive attitude towards Israel's foreign and domestic policies.[48] Similar projects involving Ministry of Public Diplomacy are done in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations in Israel and abroad. For example, the Ministry of Public Diplomacy is involved in the production of the yearly "Celebrating Israel" Salute to Israel Parade down New York's Fifth Avenue (the parade is sponsored by the Mayor of New York and made possible through a partnership with supporters of Israel and the Jewish Community Relations Council)[49]; the production of the exhibition "These are the Journeys of the Children of Israel", which travels through cities in Germany presenting contemporary Israeli art accompanied by a lecture on Israeli art, Judaism and the history of Am Israel (the "Nation of Israel"). This project is done in cooperation

with the non-profit organization "Kehilot Koltot"[50]; the organization and production of Israeli hasbara stalls at book fairs in Russia, Germany and various cities in the European Union (in cooperation with the "Nativ" Liaison Bureau and the "Bridges to Culture" publishing house).[51] In addition to these projects, official diplomatic representative of Israel organizes hasbara-focused events in the countries in which they operate. A partial survey of the events of this type that took place in Denmark in 2007 demonstrates their nature:[52]

> **Music:** A visit by the philharmonic with conductor Zubin Mehta and the participation of an Israeli-Arab soloist.

> **Dance:** A performance by the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company and concert by the band Bat-Sheva together with the local opera.

> **Film:** Screening Israeli films (such as "The Band's Visit") at the international film festival in Copenhagen, as well as at the children's film festival and the gay and lesbian film festival.

> **Museum:** Hosting two Israeli collections in the Copenhagen Women's Museum.

> **Design:** Hosting the Chair of the Animation Department at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design to celebrate the release of his book, "The Secrets of Clay".

> **Special Programs:** Planning a special day of broadcasts on Danish television for Israeli Independence Day. Broadcasts included screening the mini-series "Pillar of Fire," which narrates the rise of Zionism from the late 19th century, and a series of documentary films on Israel produced by a famous Danish member of the media. Other special programs include the production of special articles and interviews in the Danish newspapers and the production of an album including selections from Israeli literature in Danish narration.

> **Miscellaneous**: Organizing a large, cultural reunion party for thousands of Danes who volunteered on kibbutzim.

4 Long–Term Cooperation

The fourth element of an effective public diplomacy apparatus is long-term cooperation: the apparatus must include a strategy for building long-term cooperation with private sector partners whose aims are identical or complementary to those of the apparatus. As of 2006, according to Gilboa, the Israeli apparatus largely ignored the inherent potential in enlisting Jews in the Diaspora to advance Israeli interests. Here, too, the Israeli apparatus has reconsidered its position. One of the major decisions made following the Comptroller's Report had to do with strengthening ties with the Jewish Diaspora – both on the organizational and communal level. In light of this, the National Hasbara Forum established a bi-monthly roundtable with representatives from various Jewish organizations in the Diaspora with the goal of fostering cooperation and advancing Israeli hasbara goals. The working assumption is that these organizations have access to key resources and players that the state is denied, and thus have an ability to advance Israeli interests reaching beyond the power of the state.

Similar logic guides the Israeli government's investment in improving the relationship with Jewish communities throughout the world. In recent years, the Ministry of Public Diplomacy has organized dozens of seminars in critical Jewish communities – Austria, Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Columbia, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, and Costa Rica – with the aim of recruiting them to the hasbara effort. Another example is a project called "Developing Zionist Leadership in the Diaspora", intended to train young Jews from around the world to be Zionist leaders in their communities (with the cooperation of the World Zionist Organization).[53] In addition to these projects, whose purpose is to create and maintain a strong network of connections specifically with organizations and Jewish communities in the Diaspora, Israel's public diplomacy apparatus is actively involved in the internal operations of Jewish organizations. Among other things, it supports the production of hasbara materials, supplies those materials to state

hasbara spokespeople, and helps shape unique hasbara programs to fit the needs of different organizations (these relationships are handled by the hasbara headquarters in the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the "Nativ" liaison bureau, the Jewish Agency, the American Joint Distribution Committee and additional Jewish organizations).

The hasbara apparatus also seeks to promote cooperation with non-governmental organizations in Israel capable of advancing hasbara interests irrespective of whether their original purposes was hasbara-oriented. One example is the cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Israel Internet Association, and the JDC-ESHEL in enlisting retirees and computer science students for the hasbara effort. The concept is that the retirees translate official hasbara materials into a variety of foreign languages and the computer science students create websites to present the material. Another example is the interactive hasbara campaign of the Ministry of Public Diplomacy. The campaign is based on a network of partners and thousands of volunteers throughout the world who are enlisted in moments of crisis to reinforce the official Israeli hasbara effort through digital media. There is a similar effort in a cooperative campaign between pro-Israeli lawyers in the Diaspora to protect Israeli interests in courts of law the world over. As was recently revealed, senior Israeli officials have been training such Israel-friendly lawyers for some time in an effort to deal with delegitimization claims against Israel, such as appeals to arrest senior Israeli officials allegedly involved in war crimes.[54]

5 Multi-Dimensional Communications Strategy

The fifth element of an effective public diplomacy apparatus is the development and implementation of a multi-dimensional communications strategy, one capable of operating simultaneously in both traditional and new media channels. Analogous to the principle of message coordination, a multi-dimensional

communications strategy reflects one of the major reforms of the public diplomacy apparatus in recent years. Following the Comptroller's Report, the Israeli apparatus developed a new, sophisticated three-tier communications strategy, which repairs the flaws presented in the report and Gilboa's 2006 article. They consist of the following:

> A significant improvement in the mechanism of coordination and daily communication with the foreign media in Israel and overseas. One of the lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War was that there existed a need for a clear division of responsibility between the internal and external hasbara apparatus — i.e. what is now divided into the national hasbara headquarters and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — in order to provide regular, official briefings to local and foreign media in Israel (hasbara staff), foreign media in the Diaspora (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Arabic foreign media (hasbara staff). Similarly, distinct realms of responsibility were delineated for personnel acting as media spokespeople (hasbara staff) and those managing daily communication with foreign media (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

> Extensive development of channels of communication with the Arab-Muslim world. Notable examples include directing official spokesmen to central Arabic language media outlets (Al Jazeera, Al Arabia, Russia Today (RT), and France 24); upgrading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website in Arabic and the creation of a Farsi website; expanding the broadcast range for the Kol Yisrael radio station in Arabic; increasing the broadcast range for Israeli television in Arabic and expanding the hours for Arabic television programming in Israel.

> Broad and organized utilization of new media technology, and increased presence on social networks. The following official hasbara bodies in Israel have Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flikr accounts: the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and the IDF Spokesman's

unit. In addition to the official Facebook account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, some one hundred embassies and diplomatic representatives throughout the world also maintain Facebook pages in their operative languages and many diplomats also write personal blogs.[55] In addition to the accounts and websites managed by official hasbara bodies, unofficial bodies also operate websites and Jewish communities around the globe promote Israeli hasbara messaging. One striking example is "Israel21c.org", a website operated by a Jewish American non-profit organization. The website is designed to promote a positive image of Israel by assembling, editing, and organizing information about Israel into categories of culture, technology, democracy, health and personal profiles.

> The Israeli hasbara apparatus does not only use new media to deepen its audience's knowledge of Israel and to disseminate responses to newsworthy happenings. One of the primary elements of the Israeli new media strategy is an initiative to undermine the anti-Israel agenda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs employs an official, round-the-clock staff to write pro-Israeli responses on blogs, social networks, and in the comments sections of European and American news sites, and to actively participate in discussions and surveys that pertain to Israel.[56] The Ministry of Public Diplomacy has a virtual "situation room" that employs thousands of hasbara volunteers in online communication, which it successfully put into effect during the Marmara Flotilla incident.[57] The hasbara apparatus also uses social networking to directly target anti-Israel campaigns and their manifestation on the Internet. The campaigns by the Ministry of Public Diplomacy for the removal of the "third intifada" application from the Apple store as well as their campaign to take down the Facebook page calling for an intifada are two such examples.[58]

6 Dynamism and management of crises

The sixth element of an effective public diplomacy apparatus is dynamism. The apparatus must create a mechanism for message management which ensures that messages are coordinated through unpredictable situations, and emphasizes instantaneous responses to any event likely to damage the country's image. This principle of dynamism was the centerpiece of the 2006 State Comptroller Report; it contained a harsh criticism of the Israeli hasbara apparatus for its failure to implement orderly, pre-planned protocols that would enable controlled management of emergency situations. The new national hasbara apparatus, established in the wake of the Report, internalized this critique and developed a mechanism which included the establishment of organized divisions of labor, aimed specifically at handling crisis situations to reliably present official briefings to both local and foreign press in Israel and abroad. Similarly, the government's decision included setting times for the National Hasbara Forum in the Office of the Prime Minister to hold a monthly meeting together with representatives from the IDF, the COGAT (Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories), the General Security Service, and the police, in order to keep hasbara messaging up to date with developments in the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian arenas. Another meeting was set, once every three months, to include external advisors and experts from the fields of communications, marketing, psychology and economics. Today, this meeting is devoted to updating and elaborating hasbara messages in light of both local and international developments.

An additional example of the manner in which Israel successfully implements the principle of dynamism is the field of "Internet monitoring", operated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which includes a professional staff to continuously track blogs, the BBC website and various Arabic websites in order to identify potential crises as early as possible.[59] Once identified, the "situation room" set up by the Ministry of Public Diplomacy proceeds to manage the hasbara crises in real time, dispatching thousands of volunteers throughout the world. During the Marama Flotilla incident, for

example, this apparatus activated hundreds of bloggers and individuals to write talkbacks and thousands more in social networks to combat the waves of criticism against Israel.[60]

7 Strategic Targeting

The seventh element of effective public diplomacy is strategic targeting. To effectively accomplish this, the apparatus must focus solely on strategic populations in deciding which specific countries and political actors to target for hasbara messaging. Careful examination of the Israeli apparatus reveals that this lesson, too, was implemented with great efficacy. Prior to the Comptroller's Report, the Israeli apparatus was characterized by a lack of focus and a tendency to "fire in all directions". Since the publication of the Report and the establishment of the national hasbara headquarters in the Office of the Prime Minister, targeted operations have become a top priority. The current apparatus identifies relevant audiences, separating them from irrelevant ones, and directly delivers hasbara messages to these influential groups. There is a variety of examples of the ways in which the Israeli apparatus implements this strategic principle; we will cite only a few of them here.

One clear example is the demand made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that its diplomatic representatives throughout the world aim their hasbara messaging at "senior groups" in their countries of operation. Aside from senior political leaders — Presidents and/ or Prime Ministers and members of the cabinet, the Foreign Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament — this call includes all senior offices. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs determined that the designation of "senior office" can be applied to the following: the ten most prominent members of parliament in both the coalition and opposition, the heads of the five most important non-governmental organizations (economic or social) and the ten most influential political reporters.[61]

Projects of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public

Diplomacy also directly target business, academic, and media elite abroad. They do this primarily though periodic lecture tours for official and unofficial representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (academics, officers, social activists) as well as for students of public policy and business administration on the most prestigious campuses in the United States. Other examples include: hosting target countries' most notable journalists and media personalities — senior radio and television hosts — for weeklong visits to Israel; hosting prestigious foreign professors who lecture on Israel; and organizing a yearlong seminar for research on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for young, non-Jewish intellectual elites in Europe (in cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya).

Though the survey above is not exhaustive and is based almost entirely on official data, it clearly demonstrates that the manner in which the Israeli hasbara apparatus implements its messaging is comprehensive and organized and that it factors in the following relevant elements of an effective public diplomacy apparatus:

A. Establishment and operation of an effective mechanism for coordination, management and distribution of hasbara messages; the apparatus harnesses the strengths of key individuals from Israel and abroad for advancement of hasbara messages based on an internalization of the significance of informal hasbara.

B. Advancements in cooperation and nation branding, including emphasizing the attraction and positive image of the country instead using accusations, justifications, complaints and threats.

C. Managing a network of long-term partnerships with private organizations in Israel and the Jewish Diaspora capable of advancing hasbara goals; developing and implementing a multi-dimensional media strategy that simultaneously operates through traditional and digital media channels with an emphasis on social network initiatives.

D. Creating an effective management system, both dynamic and static, which ensures the coordination of hasbara messages in

changing situations, focusing on immediate responses to events that can irreparably damage the country's image.

E. Identification of strategic audiences and direct delivery of hasbara messages to influential groups, with an eye towards Israeli interests.

It is clear that the widespread argument Gilboa made in 2006 — that the Israeli hasbara apparatus is fundamentally flawed — is no longer valid. In recent years the Israeli hasbara apparatus has undergone comprehensive reform and systematically implemented the relevant elements to make it an exceptionally effective public diplomacy apparatus. Furthermore, as we will see below, even if there is room for improvement in certain areas, the Israeli apparatus is far more effective than the anti-Israel public diplomacy apparatus it seeks to combat.

4 Anti-Israel Public Diplomacy

> The Arab-Hamas propaganda network won the media battle
> by a landslide. One of the principle causes for the failure of
> the Israeli hasbara apparatus is that there is no body which
> centralizes all of the various hasbara bodies and runs them
> properly as a "hasbara punch" against the pro-Palestinian
> propaganda network.[62]

In Israel, it is conventional wisdom that the Israeli hasbara apparatus
is inferior to its counter-network, which is perceived to be far more
sophisticated and elaborate. This chapter examines the extent to
which this perception is accurate. In order to compare the Israeli
public diplomacy apparatus to anti-Israel public diplomacy we must
define the concept "anti-Israel" and identify those organizations
or hasbara bodies considered to be part of the anti-Israel public
diplomacy network.

4.1 Identifying Anti-Israelism

For the purposes of this study we suggest using a definition of "anti-
Israel" based on the Reut Institute's delegitimzation thesis. Based on
this definition — which is employed by the Israeli hasbara authorities
in defining their function — an act or statement is "anti-Israel" to the
extent to which it contributes to the delegitimization of Israel in the
world. Delegitimization has three central characteristics:

A. Denying Israel's right to exist.

B. Employing double standards regarding Israel in contrast to other
nations (for example, focusing on human rights violations in Israel
while ignoring similar violations in China, Russia, or Syria).

C. Demonizing Israel (for example, defining Israel's policies
using morally charged concepts such as "apartheid" and "ethnic
cleansing").

Reservations and Clarifications

The above definition cannot be presupposed and poses a number of problems. The specific properties of demonization, double standards, and objection to Israel's right to exist all remain vague, lacking clear criteria. This, in turn, increases the temptation to identify all criticism of Israel as part of the worldwide process of delegitimization and, consequently, to define all such criticism as anti-Israel on principle. Based on this definition, almost every human rights organization operating in Israel — even those which explicitly identify as Israeli patriots — are likely to be considered part of the delegitimization campaign and therefore "anti-Israel". The problem is clear: the above definition allows the government to dismiss any criticism of its policies — even the most valid — on the grounds that such criticism is part of the worldwide delegitimization campaign against Israel.

Despite the fact that it is undoubtedly problematic, the present study will persist in using this definition for two central reasons:

A. As the most expansive definition of "anti-Israel," this definition allows us to measure the claims under investigation by the most exacting standards. If it can be demonstrated that the Israeli hasbara apparatus is more effective than its "anti-Israel" counterpart based on such an expansive definition, it will certainly substantiate the same claim based on any other more lenient definition of the term.

B. Our goal is to evaluate the validity of the widespread assertion among the Israeli public that the Israeli hasbara apparatus is inferior to the anti-Israel apparatus it opposes. This assertion is most often formulated in terms of delegitimization. Using the expansive definition of anti-Israelism by way of the definition of delegitimization allows us to refute this assertion on its own terms.

Therefore, in the following pages "anti-Israelism" is defined as the aim to contribute to the delegitimization of Israel in the world. We will consider the anti-Israel public diplomacy network as one which includes all bodies and organizations that promote claims which are likely to be interpreted as delegitimization, i.e. questioning Israel's

right to exist, employing double standards, or empowering those who would demonize her in the world.

Below we will show that this "network", despite its many activists in Israel, is qualitatively inferior to the Israeli apparatus when judged according to each of the seven required criteria presented above for an effective hasbara apparatus. As we will see, the anti-Israel strategy neglects many of the relevant elements, and those it does implement cannot be said to form a coherent strategy.

4.2 Anti-Israel Public Diplomacy:Evaluation

1 Coordination & Management of Hasbara Messages

The anti-Israel public diplomacy network fails by any measure when it comes to implementing a single mechanism to manage and coordinate its messages. It is difficult to speak of anti-Israel organizations (based on the above definition) as part of one network; the majority of them operate in complete isolation from one other, and often are in absolute ideological contradiction. There is no single body responsible for the coordination of messaging between the various bodies or for the creation of a unified, common agenda equivalent to the role played by the National Hasbara Forum within the Israeli public diplomacy apparatus. Natural candidates for such a position might be anti-Israel "state" (or semi-state) hasbara bodies such as the Iranian government, the Palestinian Authority, or the Hamas movement. Yet none of these bodies has actively established (or even designed) an Israel-critical agenda, nor are they able to claim authority — including the moral authority — to do so. The management of these bodies reflects, more than anything else, the total failure of what might be called the "anti-Israel hasbara network" to unite the organizations operating in the field around unified and coherent messages. Certain bodies and organizations, such as the British Palestine Solidarity Campaign,

may be considered key organizations involved in designing an anti-Israel narrative. However, the role of these organizations is, at most, symbolic and not organizational. Even though certain organizations hold more weight than others, they are not universally recognized as the ultimate, or even preferred, authority. As a result, the anti-Israel public diplomacy network lacks coherent ideas and messages. Thus, certain anti-Israel organizations deny the right of Israel to exits while other organizations recognize that right; some recommend a bi-national state while others aspire to a two-state solution; certain organizations justify the use of violence as part of the struggle against occupation, yet others categorically reject violence on principle; certain organizations advance a boycott effort against Israel and others are against any and all boycott. Thus, we can conclude that the anti-Israel network includes many disparate organizations functioning without clear protocols and with little cooperation. It can be said that there is no coordination of various objectives, no unified communications strategy, and consequently, no unified — indeed, often completely inconsistent — hasbara messaging.[63]

2 Informal hasbara

It would seem that in the domain of informal hasbara, anti-Israel public diplomacy network is very effective as it is almost entirely managed by informal bodies like Palestinian Diaspora and pro-Palestinian volunteer organizations. Yet, while this network implements informal elements of hasbara relatively thoroughly, it incompletely — if at all — implements the complementary components of formal hasbara. Among the dozens of anti-Israel bodies and organizations there is not a single body recognized by the international community as the official representative of the anti-Israel community (like the diplomatic representatives of Israel in the Israeli hasbara apparatus). There are those who argue that the human rights community in Israel should be seen as the official body of anti-Israel policies. This is a result of the fact that international authorities such as the European Union relate to them as the official

representatives of the pro-Palestinian agenda and grant their reports special status, higher than that granted standard civilian organizations. But an evaluation of these organizations reveals that each has a different agenda and neither official nor unofficial common cause — delegitimization-focused or otherwise — which could lead one to consider them part of a single, official body. As stated earlier, these organizations disagree on central issues: the desired political solution — one or two states; the boycott of Israel; advancement of a legal or civic struggle; self-definition — anti-Israel and anti-Zionist alongside Israeli and Zionist. It is impossible to extract a coherent message that could be considered the "official" message of the anti-Israel network. As this is the case, our primary conclusion stands: In the area of informal public diplomacy the anti-Israel network is fairly well-developed, but when it comes to official hasbara — i.e. an ability to express a message which can be identified by the international community as an official expression of the anti-Israel agenda — it is sorely lacking. This weakness severely hinders the anti-Israel network's ability to propel processes through traditional diplomatic channels and thus its ability to achieve its intended results.

3   Cooperation and Branding

The anti-Israel public diplomacy network only partially implements the element of cooperation and branding, if at all. The Israeli apparatus is based on a "positive agenda" strategy, including an emphasis on the cultural, spiritual, and economic contribution of Israel to the world and focuses on collaboration with potential partners in political, business, and cultural communities. In contrast, the anti-Israel network is based on a negative, critical strategy focused on accusations, justifications, complaints and threats with minimal cooperation and few attempts to cultivate a positive image among the general public. Even when the anti-Israel network does engage in branding, their efforts are directed at branding Israel as the aggressor or as a country systematically violating human rights.

Although it is difficult to evaluate the influence of these efforts on Israel's image, it can be determined, with a large degree of certainty, that their success is partial at most. Two examples include "Israel Apartheid Week" on campuses abroad and the "lawfare" strategy. Both are intended to brand Israel as an apartheid state which continually and systematically engages in crimes against humanity. Despite the energy and effort invested in these two projects, they have achieved only partial success. Contrary to the way it is reported in Israel, Israel Apartheid Week is a marginal episode in the lives of students in the United States and has little influence on campus discourse. Last year, only a few hundred students participated in Apartheid Week nationally, and they attracted only minimal coverage by local media outlets. In contrast, there was extensive coverage of events organized by pro-Israel groups during "Israel Peace Week" by both local and foreign media outlets, and events were well-attended.[64] Moreover, the "lawfare" strategy, intended to brand Israel as a criminal state by bringing lawsuits against senior Israeli officials in European courts and charging them with war crimes, has failed. A report published by the Reut Institute in 2011 demonstrates how this strategy has lost much of its effectiveness, a direct result of pro-Israel bodies lobbying European governments — such as Great Britain and Spain — to change the law to make it harder to bring senior Israeli officials to court in Europe.[65]

The failure of the anti-Israel branding strategy is visibly reflected in the recent series of surveys presented and analyzed by David Bernstein of The David Project. These surveys demonstrate that Israel enjoys widespread sympathy in the United States, much more so than Palestinians in general and anti-Israel organizations in particular. More than 70% of American citizens have positive feelings towards Israel — in contrast to 19% who feel similarly towards Palestinians. A third of the student population in the United States believes that Israel and America have shared values, yet only 1% believes Palestinians and Americans share the same values.[66] Similar findings can be found in surveys conducted in Europe. Among Europeans, however, the gaps between Israel's image and that of the Palestinians

are smaller than those found in the United States. Nevertheless, the results clearly testify to the failure of the anti-Israel network to create a positive image for itself and a negative image for Israel in both the general public and the international community. The data indicate that the the anti-Israel public diplomacy network does not effectively implement the principles of cooperation and branding.

4   Long-Term Partnerships

One of the defining characteristics of the anti-Israel hasbara network is that it is based, both financially (funding sources) and operationally (hasbara agents), on a network of partners from the private sector. However, in this context as well the anti-Israel network is inferior to its Israeli counterpart as the private parties it enlists are relatively marginal to the cultural, academic, or business worlds in which they function, certainly in comparison to pro-Israel players. Anti-Israel hasbara funding comes almost entirely from private individuals and small businesses, and apart from a few of artists and writers, it is difficult to find notable public figures that openly endorse an anti-Israel agenda. There are notable public figures that take critical stances towards Israel, such as Noam Chomsky and Desmond Tutu (considered by some in the Israeli hasbara community to advance an anti-Israel agenda), but their public weight is negligible compared to the capabilities of those who support Isreal in the academic, law, business, and cultural communities.[67]

5   Multi-Dimensional Media Strategy

All agree that the anti-Israel public diplomacy network has a communications strategy that employs the skilled and methodical use of new media channels to promote anti-Israel campaigns. A large number of the anti-Israel hasbara organizations — such as The Electronic Intifada or The Palestine Monitor — treat new media as the central arena for the fight against Israel. Other organizations seek to exploit new media to mobilize activists and share information

with other bodies. Even organizations that do not focus on media in general exhibit impressive new media strategies including blogs, Internet forums, petitions, and Facebook and Twitter accounts. Despite the developed communications strategy of the anti-Israel network, it exhibits only a fraction of the sophistication and intricacy that characterize Israel's media strategy. The anti-Israel media strategy almost completely neglects traditional, official media — print newspapers, television and radio. With the exception of the Palestinian Authority, there is no anti-Israel hasbara organization or body which offers regular briefings to local and foreign media representatives, produces radio or television programs to advance their agenda, issues routine or emergency statements to the media, or regularly sends representatives to the traditional media forums (television panels, op-ed pages). In this way the anti-Israel hasbara network ignores the key insights of the current theoretical discussion of public diplomacy. This is especially true in light of the fact that the story engrained in the public's consciousness is not the one told by political activists, but the one told and analyzed by journalists and radio and television hosts.

6   Dynamism and Management of Crises

As was demonstrated above, it is difficult to speak of the anti-Israel public diplomacy network in terms of dynamic message management and effective treatment of changing situations. This is primarily true because there is no unified anti-Israel message to speak of during either routine or emergency situations (indeed, what constitutes an "emergency situation" in this context can be disputed). Furthermore, the messages of any given hasbara body are constantly at odds with opposing messages coming from other bodies. A clear example of this confusion is the heated debate over the BDS movement; both sides of the debate blame the other for delivering devastating blows to the objectives of the Palestinian struggle.[68]

7 Strategic Targeting

The anti-Israel network has a strategic focus when it comes to investing its hasbara efforts in particular countries and specific individuals and organizations. Nevertheless, as with previous elements, when compared to Israel's hasbara apparatus, it becomes evident that the anti-Israel network's strategic targeting is implemented only in part. First, as seen above, the Israeli apparatus seeks to recruit stakeholders that do not necessarily identify ideologically with it, while the anti-Israel network focuses on stakeholders with whom it shares a clear ideological affinity. The anti-Israel network invests heavily in radical left-wing activists and in the Palestinian Diaspora while almost completely ignoring strategic parties who may not identify with it ideologically — journalists, television hosts, artists, or notable intellectuals from the political center. This is in spite of the fact that these are the personalities liable to help legitimize the anti-Israel network and its goals within the general public, as Israel demonstrates.

Second, when these parties are recruited to the anti-Israel hasbara effort, they are only partially involved. Take, for example, one of the most common methods employed by the anti-Israel network to advance its agenda: anti-Israel organizations attempt to enlist opinion makers from academic, business, and cultural communities to boycott Israel. Such boycotts can occur through the active refusal to participate in academic conferences in Israel, refraining from inviting Israeli academics to conferences abroad, and refusing to appear before Israeli audiences (see the various campaigns of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel). In most cases, the network enlists opinion makers through intimidation, whether implicitly or explicitly, with negative campaigns via social networks or the threat of damage to an academic career. Even if this method of intimidation has resulted in some success, its ability to advance the network's objectives is limited. It also reflects the failure of the network to internalize the benefits of a "soft power" strategy — one that the Israeli apparatus, on the other hand, has incorporated well.

Despite the fact that the anti-Israel network demonstrates an awareness of the importance of strategic targeting, the strategies it functionally implements are non-comprehensive and unproductive, certainly when compared to those implemented by Israel. Even without a complete sketch of the inner workings of all bodies that are considered to be anti-Israel, it is clear that the notion that the Israeli hasbara apparatus is inferior to its anti-Israel counterpart is demonstrably false. In fact, it seems that the opposite is true: Based on all professional parameters used to evaluate public diplomacy, the anti-Israel's public diplomacy network can be said to be significantly inferior to Israel's. In contrast to the Israeli apparatus, anti-Israel hasbara is lacking in several respects:

A. It fails to create a mechanism for the coordination, management and distribution of hasbara messages; it fails to take advantage of possible partnerships with private sector parties; it fails to understand the importance of formal hasbara alongside informal hasbara.

B. It focuses on accusations, justifications, complaints and threats instead of partnerships, nation branding and enhancement of a positive image.

C. Although it has implemented a rich (though uncoordinated) new media strategy, it makes inadequate use of traditional media.

D. It fails to create a dynamic mechanism for managing hasbara messages in light of changing situations, including situations likely to cause irreparable damage to its objectives.

E. Its implementation of strategic targeting is a limited when it comes to advancing the goals of the network.

5 Summary and Conclusions

If Israel suffers from diplomatic isolation and a negative image internationally, the reason is not to be found in the failure of its hasbara. This study proves the baselessness of the claim that Israel suffers from a "hasbara problem". The argument that Israel's public diplomacy apparatus does not meet reasonable standards of quality and professionalism and that it is significantly inferior to the anti-Israel hasbara network is not supported by the existing data.

The Israeli hasbara apparatus is large, sophisticated, and quite deserving of its nickname, coined by the Executive Director of the Ministry of Public Diplomacy: an "Empire."[69] It is difficult to find any nation, even those embroiled in in long-term conflict situations, that trains civilians to take part in hasbara messaging for its policies while abroad, or that sends groups of young citizens to advocate its position on campuses worldwide. It is no less difficult to find other nations that enjoy such well-developed, global support on institutional, communal, and private levels, especially in North America and Europe. In light of this, sweeping criticisms of the Israeli hasbara apparatus are spurious; Israel's "hasbara problem" is nothing more than a myth.

The mythic elements of these criticisms become even clearer when one compares the Israeli hasbara apparatus to its anti-Israel counterpart: according to the most expansive definitions of "anti-Israel", the anti-Israel hasbara effort cannot be said to be on par with Israel's hasbara apparatus.

The above investigation repudiates the statements of senior Israeli officials like Minister of Public Diplomacy Yuli Edelstein ("...the main enemy that we are facing is ignorance. I think that it's ignorance, basically, all around the world that allows small, well-organized and well-funded groups to so easily sell all these apartheid lies or starvation crisis lies... ")[70] and Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon ("we have to understand, first of all, and identify the problem that we are facing

a very dedicated enemy who is also very sophisticated and who is now also using technology: Internet, Facebook and many many other things; using NGOs in a very sophisticated way and a large network... there is a dedicated campaign against us by a whole network...").[71] In light of the above analysis, these statements are purely hysterical. Yet, instead of focusing on the connection between Israeli governmental policies and Israel's image, the myth of the "hasbara problem" has developed.

A great deal of airtime is dedicated to the strength of an "anti-Israel network" on the one hand, while Israeli hasbara is criticized as insufficient on the other. But this angling diverts public attention from the causal relationship between the deterioration of Israel's image and international standing and the policies of its government. Further, it prevents serious and responsible engagement with the implications of its policies for one Israel's most vital interests: protecting its international status. Matthew Gould, the British Ambassador to Israel and a true friend of Israel, recently put it this way:

> Anyone who cares about Israel's standing in the world should be concerned about the erosion of popular support. The problem is not hasbara. The British public may not be experts but they are not stupid and they see a stream of announcement about new building in settlements, they read stories about what's going on in the West Bank and Gaza, they read about the restrictions in Gaza. The substance of what's going on is really what's driving this.[72]

Notes

1 • Shinar, D. (ed.) *Ne'eman Document: Israel Public Diplomacy*, (Jerusalem: Shmuel Ne'eman Institute, 2009) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2 • "Israel's brand image in the US," Report presented to the Israeli Foreign Ministry by Brand Israel Group (BIG), July, 2005. See also: Rosenblatt, G. "Marketing a New Image", New York Jewish Week, 21.01.05, available at:
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3 • In the report, the Comptroller refers to studies compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which were published in the Ministry assessment report. The Ministry refused to share the assessment report and our research is based on the Comptroller report. See State Comptroller, Annual Report 61B, 2010, ch. 5, pp. 981, available at:
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4%F2%E9%EC%E5%FA%20%E4%EE%F9%F8%E3%20%E1%FA%E7%E5%EE%E9%20%
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5 • BBC World Service Poll, 10.05.12, available at:
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6 • Ibid. State Comptroller Report (2010), p. 891. [See footnote 3].

7 • Naor, Aryeh (2009) "Israel in the Third Millennium: The Fundamentals of Public Diplomacy,"
in D. Sinar (ed.) *Ne'eman Document: Israel Public Diplomacy* (Jerusalem: Shmuel Ne'eman Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs), pp 35-58.

8 • A clear example of this approach is found in the consensus in the Israeli media identifying flawed Israeli hasbara as the sole source of the harsh international critique of Israel following the Second Lebanon War. See Eloni-Sadovnick. "Intelligence Failure, Stammering Hasbara" *Ynet*, 16.07.2006 (Hebrew); Sigan, L. "Smart Bombs, Hasbara Apparatus Less So." *Globes*, 17.07.2006 (Hebrew); Mazal, T. "Taking a Hit for Europe – and From It" *Ynet* 26.07.2007 (Hebrew). Sigan, L. "The Israel Brand Eeturns to Its Natural Place" *Globes* 31.07.2006 (Hebrew); Avigad, D. "American Blogger: The Whole Roof, Absence of Casualties, Time Gaps and Rigor Mortis" Globes 3.8.2006 (Hebrew); Bain. "When Deciding on War You Have to Think About CNN" Globes, 3.8.2006 (Hebrew); Shoval, Z. "Insufficient Hasbara" *Ynet*, 1.9.2006 (Hebrew).

9 • For the complete interview see:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRx9adMg-z8&feature=relmfu

10 • Halkin, Hillel. "Israel's Media Problem," Commentary, February, 2006, available at
http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/israel%E2%80%99s-media-problem/; For similar statements
by Israeli media see quotation by Lapid, Y. and Canetti, N. (Ed. Army Radio), available at:
http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/387/329.html and http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/356/899.html

11 • Dehoah, J. (2007). "Predictable Hasbara Failure," Sikur Memukad 28.03.2007 (Hebrew), available at:
http://www.sikurmemukad.com/sikurim/muslimworld/communicating.html

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13 • This is the translation used by the Israeli government. See, for example, "The Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs." From this point on we will use the terms "hasbara" and "public diplomacy" as synonyms. This approach is supported by numerous Israeli researchers who note that

there is no differences between the terms aside from the politically correctness of "public diplomacy" when compared to "hasbara". See above: Shinar, 2009, p 23.

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15 • Interview with Daniel Sheck, 11.6.2012.

16 • Malone, Gifford. "Managing Public Diplomacy", The Washington Quarterly, no. 8, (Summer, 1985), p. 199.

17 • Kemming, Jan Dirk. *Nation Brand Management in Political Contexts: Public Diplomacy for Turkey's EU* Accession (Doctoral Dissertation, 2009); Cull, Nicholas. Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past, (USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2005).

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20 • Ibid. Szondi, 2008, p 9. [see footnote 18]

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22 • Spiegel, Albert. Public Diplomacy – the German View. Speech by Head of the Federal Foreign Office Directorate-General for Cultural Relations and Education Policy, at the British Council Staff Conference, 18-19.03.02, available at:
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23 • Ba'tora, Jozef. "Public Diplomacy in Small and Medium-Sized States: Norway and Canada", *Discussion Paper in Diplomacy 97*, 2005, (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, *'Clingendael'*) available at http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050300_cli_paper_dip_issue97.pdf; B. H. Signitzer and T. Coombs, Public Relations and Public Diplomacy: Conceptual Convergence. Public Relations Review, 18.2.92, pp. 137–147.

24 • Ibid. Ba'tora, 2005, p 4.

25 • Nye, Joseph S. Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, *1990), 191.*

26 • Ibid. Gilboa, 2008. [See footnote 19]

27 • Ibid. Shinar, 2009, p. 27.

28 • Leonard, M., Stead, C., & Smewing, C. *Public Diplomacy.* London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002.

29 • Ibid. p. 6.

30 • Gilboa, Eytan. "Public Diplomacy: The Missing Component in Israel's Foreign Policy." Israel Affairs, Vol. 12, No. 4, October 2006, pp. 715-747.

31 • Were the survey to include all activities of the apparatus, both reported and unreported, this conclusion would only be strengthened. See, for example, Shlomo Tzana [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Presents: How to Manage the Phenomenon of Delegitimization. *Yisrael Hayom* 19.6.2012 (Hebrew)]. He reveals the central strategy of the Israeli hasbara apparatus, which until then had remained "covert". The strategy is not reported in any official source of the hasbara apparatus and we assume that there are many examples of "covert" operations which serve to strengthen the claims of this study.

Notes

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=9216&parentcid=9216&bctype=2&startpage=10&direction=1&sw=1280&hw=730&cn=%F4%F8%F7%20
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43 • Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs (2010). "Hasbara Campaign for New England, USA:
Marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day in April 2010, available at:
http://www.hasbara.gov.il/PublicDiplomacy/Campaign/Pages/usa.aspx

44 • The number is in the hundreds. Despite the difficulty of precisely evaluating the number of unofficial
hasbara representatives used by the Israeli hasbara apparatus, the fact that The Jewish Agency alone
sends 350 young Israelis yearly on delegations whose purpose is to strengthen the Jewish-Zionist identity
of Jews throughout the world (see: http://shlichut.org.il/) is sufficient to demonstrate that the number of
unofficial hasbara representatives is high.

45 • Foreign Ministry. "Work Program Manual", Policy Planning Division, Prime Minister's Office, Government
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Foreign Diplomats and Young People from Around the World (non-Jews), available at:
http://www.hasbara.gov.il/PublicDiplomacy/Campaign/Pages/seminar.aspx

49 • Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs (2012). "These Are the Journeys of the Children of Israel" available at:
http://www.hasbara.gov.il/PublicDiplomacy/Campaign/Pages/CelebratingIsrael.aspx

The Salute to Israel parade has been a tradition in New York since 1964, and is much older than the Israeli hasbara apparatus. Nevertheless, in recent years the parade has become, according to the Jewish organizers responsible for its production, a key and almost official component of Israel's "soft" hasbara policies.
See: http://celebrateisraelny.org/parade/about-the-parade/

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http://www.hasbara.gov.il/Diaspora/Projects/Pages/tzfutzot.aspx

54 • See above Tzana, S. "The Foreign Ministry Presents: This is How We Deal With Delegitimization," *Israel HaYom*, 19.6.2012 available at:
http://www.israelhayom.co.il/site/newsletter_article.php?id=18326&newsletter=19.06.2012

55 • For a partial list see:
http://www.shituf.gov.il/content/425

56 • Kishinovsky, 2009.

57 • For more on this issue see: State Comptroller Report, 2012, which emphasizes that in recent years "there has been recognizable and significant progress by hasbara bodies in the area of online communication — in professionalism, organization and infrastructure. During the flotilla incident, online communication was one of the primary sources providing timely and accurate hasbara information which represented the Israeli standpoint to different audiences in Israel and throughout the world." (p. 149)

58 • New Media Hasbara Page of the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs, available at:
http://www.hasbara.gov.il/PublicDiplomacy/Pages/newmedia.aspx

59 • Kishinovsky, 2009.

60 • Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs. "Situation Room," available at:
http://www.hasbara.gov.il/PublicDiplomacy/hadar/Pages/default.aspx;

In this context it is worth noting the State Comptroller's positive review of Israelis' use of online communication during the flotilla incident (State Comptroller, 2012, p. 113).

61 • Ravid, 2010.

62 • Ben Menachem, Y. "The Collapse of Israeli Hasbara," *Arutz Sheva*, 3.6.10, available at:
http://www.inn.co.il/Articles/Article.aspx/8811

63 • As mentioned above, it is difficult to discuss an "anti-Israel public diplomacy.hasbara network" as though it were a cohesive body. For the purposes of this paper, we will use such terminology so as to enable

Notes

the necessary comparative analysis. It is worth noting, however, that when we talk about the "anti-Israel hasbara network" it is about a perceived network, not an actual one.

64 • Ahren, Raphael. "Israeli Apartheid Week Fails for Lack of Press, Ministry Finds," *The Times of Israel*, 19.02.2012, available at:
http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-apartheid-week-ignoredby-world-press-foreign-ministry-claims/

65 • Reut Institute. "The Year We Fought Back," *ReViews* 17, 25.11.01, p. 1-6.

66 • Bernstein, David. "The Problem with Going Negative," Jerusalem Post, 21.03.2012, available at
http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?id=262862;

Similar findings are reflected in the Gallup and Harris Polls. Also See Hassman, 2008, p 2-21.

67 • See Aussie, Dave (2010). "Pro-Israel Celebrities," Israellycool, 06.09.2010, available at:
http://www.israellycool.com/2010/09/06/pro-israel-celebrities/

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http://vimeo.com/36854424;

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72 • Vardi, M. "British Ambassador Warns: "support for Israel begins to crumble," *Nana 10*, 02.08.2012, available at:
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