



Israel and Africa

Assessing the Past,
Envisioning the Future

The Africa Institute
American Jewish Committee

The Harold Hartog School
Tel Aviv University

The Africa Institute of the American Jewish Committee:

- Raises awareness of those challenges facing Africa that most resonate with the political consciousness and social activism of the American Jewish community;
- Conducts advocacy on those challenges and facilitates technical cooperation and development assistance from the United States and Israel to Africa; and
- Seeks to establish lasting ties with civil society and governments in Africa, as well as African diasporas in the United States, based on the recognition of shared values and mutual understanding.

Established in 2000, the Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy of Tel Aviv University is dedicated to improving governance in Israel by:

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- Encouraging multidisciplinary research into governance and related issues.
- Building a bridge between the academic and policy communities.

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Introduction

We are delighted to introduce *Israel and Africa: Assessing the Past, Envisioning the Future*, a joint publication of the American Jewish Committee's Africa Institute and Tel Aviv University's Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy. We have sought the input of scholars, diplomats, and advocates—both African and Israeli—in giving consideration to the potential for a vibrant and constructive partnership between Israel and the African continent. In presenting these essays, we have chosen to put forward the rich plurality of views that exist on the subject rather than state those of our own organizations.

Israel and many countries in sub-Saharan Africa share the experience of gaining independence on the heels of the Second World War. While this resulted from the long strivings of widely different peoples, the challenges of modern statehood at that ideological and geopolitical juncture in world history provided an uncommonly strong bond. The opportunities seized and missed in developing this bond are part of the subject of this volume. But the lessons of the past are offered only to inform a realistic vision for the future.

It is our hope that our respective organizations will take an active role in that future. This volume is presented in conjunction with the launch of the American Jewish Committee's Africa Institute, an initiative that will seek to raise awareness in the American Jewish community of the challenges affecting sub-Saharan Africa, conduct advocacy on issues of common interest among Africa, the United States, Israel, and the Jewish people, and foster solid ties with governments and civil society in Africa, based on the recognition of shared values and mutual understanding.

The Africa Institute is a testament to the vision and generosity of Marion and Stanley Bergman. Stanley is also chairperson of the Har-

tog School's International Advisory Board and a valued friend of Tel Aviv University. We trust that this publication, in presenting the contributions of both scholars and advocates, will usher in a new era of collaboration between our two organizations.

David A. Harris
Executive Director
American Jewish Committee

Itamar Rabinovich
President
Tel Aviv University

Foreword

As chairman of the American Jewish Committee's Africa Institute and chairperson of the International Advisory Board for the Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy at Tel Aviv University, I am pleased that these two institutions have collaborated to produce this insightful collection of essays.

The Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy, a young initiative within Israel's largest university, plays a crucial role in cultivating Israeli leaders, training them to tackle the complex problems facing an increasingly globalized world. Its focus upon governance and the importance of preserving minority rights dovetails perfectly with the principles upon which the American Jewish Committee was founded in 1906.

The Africa Institute of the American Jewish Committee, which is being launched as this volume goes to print, will seek to raise awareness of those challenges facing Africa that most resonate with the political consciousness and activism of the American Jewish community. It will conduct advocacy based on such awareness, drawing on AJC's existing domestic and international contacts and seasoned platform. The ultimate objective is to establish solid ties with civil and religious societies as well as with governments in Africa, based on the recognition of shared values and mutual understanding.

This volume begins with a sober look at the history of Israeli-African relations. Authored by Prof. Naomi Chazan, a former member of the Knesset and one of the most esteemed Israeli scholars writing on this topic today, the opening essay calls for a more coherent and unified Israeli policy toward Africa, including mapping the constellation of informal Israeli actors on the African continent to ensure that these efforts don't undermine Israel's humanitarian and strategic priorities.

The next piece, written by Ambassador Haim Divon, focuses on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs development cooperation program, MASHAV, which Ambassador Divon directs. He outlines an ambitious technical assistance agenda to harness the talents of Israel's expert technical assistance community to promote food security, deploy advanced agricultural technologies, and expand access to life-saving healthcare treatment for youth populations.

Kwame Boafo Arthur and E. Gyimah-Boadi—two scholars at the University of Ghana, Legon, in West Africa—stress in their essay the importance of the common cultural heritages linking the Jewish people and Africa's Christian populations. These academicians also trace the history of economic and diplomatic relations between Israel and Africa, which have ebbed and flowed alongside divisive historical events.

The collection also includes Avi Beker's assessment of the increasingly popular term *tikkun olam*, which, despite the general ignorance surrounding its origins, presents a unique opportunity to galvanize youth support for humanitarian projects. Beker, head of the Diplomacy and Jewish Policy Program at the Hartog School, links this specifically Jewish impetus to another vanguard concept in international relations: soft power.

The final piece, by Eli Fried, policy researcher and projects director at the Hartog School, undertakes a thorough analysis of Israel's development assistance program and elaborates further on the notion of soft power by evaluating the benefits that could accrue to Israel by virtue of a coordinated strategy. Fried challenges Israel to increase its development assistance to Africa to improve Israel's international image, by making its actions match its rhetoric.

It is my hope that readers sense in this publication that, despite a complex past, there is great potential for long-term political and economic collaboration between Israel and the African continent.

Sincerely,
Stanley Bergman

Israel and Africa: Challenges for a New Era

Naomi Chazan

Israel's relations with Africa south of the Sahara, characterized by sharp swings over the past fifty years, are more indicative of the shifting concerns and moods of Israeli decision makers than of any consistent policy design. The central position of Africa in Israeli foreign policy in the 1960s gave way, after the massive African severance of diplomatic ties in the early 1970s, to a period of formal rupture that only gradually improved during the course of the 1980s. For the past fifteen years, and especially since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, while official links have been restored and even expanded, the place of the continent in Israeli thinking and priorities has diminished substantially.

The marginalization of Africa in Israel's global mindset at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a function not only of shifting international and regional concerns, but also of far more elusive emotional factors that have led to the virtual neglect of the continent in recent years.¹ The changing pattern of Israeli attitudes toward Africa and their effect on policies, means, actors, and subsequent activities are analyzed briefly in the following pages in an effort to explain the alternating trajectory of Israel-Africa relations and to pinpoint ongoing challenges.

The haphazard and shortsighted considerations that guide current Israeli activities in sub-Saharan Africa adversely affect Israel's basic interests on the continent, which have remained constant over time; they also fail to address many essential African needs. A comprehensive reassessment of Israeli policies and activities vis-à-vis Africa and

the design of appropriate long-term strategies will go a long way toward stabilizing the gyrations in the Israeli-African pendulum and help lay the foundation for the normalization of relations in the future.

Phase I: 1956-1973

The forging of Israeli-African relations coincided with the emergence of the continent from colonial rule. The first steps were taken in the mid-1950s, initially through contacts via informal bodies such as the Histadrut (Israel's monolithic trade union) and the Socialist International, and then through official channels with the establishment of an Israeli consulate in Accra in 1956, on the eve of Ghana's independence. Missions were created throughout the continent as dozens of states achieved sovereignty in the early 1960s.

Israel's decision to foster strong links with the new states on the continent, spearheaded by then Minister of Foreign Affairs Golda Meir, was guided by several fundamental considerations.² The first, and by far the most prominent, was political. The sheer number of African countries with voting rights in international bodies, and especially in the United Nations, meant that they could determine the difference between Israel's isolation and acceptance in the global community. Closely linked to this motive was a strategic concern: Reaching out beyond the immediate ring of hostile Arab states would create a security net, especially in the Horn of Africa and its eastern coast. Economic factors also intruded: The geographic proximity of Africa made it a potentially attractive source of raw materials and a new and growing market for Israeli products.

Underlying these obvious, and still durable, interests was a strong identification with the African struggle for independence and a palpable desire to share experiences in the aftermath of successful anti-colonial struggles. This somewhat sentimental vision might appear hollow in retrospect; at the time it provided the impetus for an all-out Israeli effort on the continent.

Israel's Africa outreach at this juncture was consciously designed to promote these goals. Two main means were devised: diplomacy and technical cooperation. The best diplomats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were recruited to design and implement the elaboration of formal ties and to set in motion a complex series of development projects under the auspices of the newly formed Department of International Cooperation (MASHAV). By the mid-1960s Israel had diplomatic missions in thirty-two African states. Over 1,800 Israeli experts (specializing in agriculture, medicine, education, and regional development) served in Africa during this period, and several thousand Africans participated in a variety of short-term training courses in Israel. Military programs consisting of training elite units and modest arms sales were established, primarily in Ethiopia and Uganda, but also in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Zaire. Some hesitant steps were made in the economic field as well: Trade relations were established (amounting to a volume of \$57 million in 1972), and Israeli companies (most notably, public firms such as Solel Boneh, Mekorot, and Zim, as well as private entrepreneurs like Moshe Meyer and Yekutiel Federman) began to work on the continent.

During the heyday of the Israeli-African relationship, in the mid-1960s, Israel reaped significant benefits both on the bilateral and multilateral levels. Not only did its emissaries enjoy an almost uniformly warm welcome—prompted by a clear African preference for links with states untainted by a colonial past—but their hands-on approach to African issues was widely appreciated. At the United Nations, the African vote provided a firm cushion against repeated attempts to isolate Israel.

The Six-Day War brought this honeymoon period to an end. On the African side, the euphoria of independence had given way to the reality of ongoing underdevelopment, political instability, and external dependence. Increasingly desperate leaders were more receptive to Arab promises for assistance and to pressures emanating from the Soviet bloc. From the Israeli perspective, its astonishing victory,

accompanied by the tightening of relations with the United States, nurtured an overconfidence that boosted an exaggerated estimation of its role in Africa. The import of Guinea's decision to break diplomatic relations with Israel after the conquest of the Sinai went largely unheeded.

By the early 1970s, however, after African efforts to mediate the Arab-Israel conflict were rebuffed by Israel, it became clear that it would be difficult to halt the erosion. In March 1982 Idi Amin Dada of Uganda, uncritically pampered by Israeli politicians, severed ties under combined Libyan and Saudi pressure. Chad, Congo-Brazzaville and Burundi followed suit. Israel's total diplomatic breakdown was the culmination of domestic economic and political uncertainty, growing African frustration with the West (and with Israel as its weakest link on the continent), and increased Arab economic and political influence. The Organization of African Unity's decision to instruct members to cut diplomatic ties with Israel at the height of the war made it almost impossible for individual states to demur. Just before, during, and immediately after the Yom Kippur War, all African countries—including close allies such as Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia—broke relations with Israel. Only three African states—Malawi, Lesotho, and Swaziland—prevented Israel's complete diplomatic collapse in the sub-Saharan.

II. 1973-1982

The rupture of formal relations between Israel and Africa did not end Israeli contacts with the continent.³ It did, however, yield an emotional backlash in official quarters, which not only wrought substantial shifts in perceptions, but also altered policies.

Israeli leaders, deeply offended by what they saw as the cynical betrayal of Israel by ungrateful African potentates, reacted by upgrading relations with the apartheid regime in South Africa in early 1974, denying persistent requests for the continuation of technical cooperation schemes, and significantly paring down resources devoted to

African issues. Attempts by old Africa hands to argue against these admittedly punitive measures, by stressing that the basic interests of Israel on the continent had not changed and that efforts must be made to mend fences, were by and large ignored. The culmination of Israeli isolation in the international arena during this period, the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1975, further fueled the growing antipathy toward things African. In this atmosphere, it was hardly surprising that almost no attempts were made to design new ways to pursue ongoing Israeli interests on the continent. Israel's attentions and energies began to shift beyond the West to Asia and then, in the late 1970s, closer to home.

With the Ministry of Foreign Affairs essentially out of the picture, other actors surfaced to fill the breach. The 1970s offered immense room for maneuverability for major companies and businessmen. Indeed, during this period economic ties with Africa actually grew: Trade increased threefold and Israeli companies dramatically expanded their operations, especially in Nigeria, Kenya, and Zaire. More Israelis worked on the continent during this period of informal ties than at the height of the Israeli diplomatic presence a decade earlier.

The defense establishment, undeterred by the absence of formal relations, stepped up its military links with even the most dubious African leaders, many of whom used Israeli arms, experts, and techniques to suppress human rights and repress increasingly recalcitrant populations. By the end of the decade, over 35 percent of Israeli arms exports were directed to the continent.

Mossad agents, military emissaries, and a small group of private businessmen (who, besides reporting to the Israeli authorities, also profited personally from their position as go-betweens) replaced diplomats as Israel's main interlocutors with African leaders and political (mainly opposition) groups. The geographic focus of Israeli activity on the continent changed accordingly: Although interest offices were maintained in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Kenya, the bulk of activity

took place elsewhere. Emphasis was placed on the mineral-rich and/or strategically important countries of Africa (Zaire, Nigeria, newly independent Angola, Ethiopia, and South Africa) or on beleaguered and militarily needy regimes (such as Liberia, Togo, and the Central African Republic).

Thus, the decade of formal estrangement was accompanied not by a complete lapse in ties, but by a palpable shift in Israeli motives and expectations. The zeal that characterized contacts during the 1960s was replaced by a new pragmatism that frequently turned into opportunism. Short-term self-interested considerations became a substitute for the altruism that had marked the early period of relations. The amount of involvement in African matters dwindled. If not for the simultaneous flourishing of African studies, first at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and then at Tel Aviv University, knowledge on African affairs would have been sporadic at best. And, while Israel's former pretensions to great power status on the continent mercifully dissipated, in truth, little effort was made to design a realistic African policy attuned to Israeli capacities and African realities. The period of diplomatic isolation brought a diffuse set of interests and actors into the Israeli-African arena; it suffered, however, from the absence of any guiding policy hand.

III. 1982-1993

The gradual resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and Africa during the 1980s was a function, primarily, of the growing African disappointment with the Arab world and deteriorating conditions on the continent. Two carefully prepared meetings in the mid-1970s between then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal and Felix Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire signaled some movement. The signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979, which removed the ostensible reason for the rupture of relations in 1973, provided added impetus. But little progress was achieved until the early 1980s, when David Kimche was appointed

director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, together with Avi Primor (then head of the Africa Desk), embarked on a campaign to achieve a diplomatic rapprochement.

A series of visits by Israeli leaders to various African states—notably by then Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon—set the stage for the new Israeli effort. Private businessmen who had established themselves in various African capitals (Leon Tamman in Kinshasa, for one) were pressed into service. Military contacts were increased and contracts negotiated.

While economic and defense ties continued apace, movement on the diplomatic front, however, proved to be exceedingly slow. In May 1982, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, anxious to capitalize on Israel's relations with Washington, became the first African head of state to announce the restoration of relations with Israel. He was followed in August of that year by Samuel Doe of Liberia, also interested in breaking the diplomatic isolation imposed on his objectionable regime by the United States. Only in the mid-1980s did more mainstream states, such as Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon, renew ties. By the early 1990s only four additional African states—the Central African Republic, Guinea, Ethiopia, and Kenya—resumed relations.

Several factors account for the sluggish improvement in Israel's formal standing in Africa. First, by this time Israeli and African aspirations diverged markedly. Israel's society, economy, and polity were fully oriented toward the West, while African states were suffering from growing impoverishment and increased global marginalization. African leaders wanted more, while Israel, still licking its wounds, was willing to offer much less. Second, the restoration of relations proved to be a complicated bilateral process, very different in content and design from the massive, virtually multilateral, nature of the 1973 break. Third, the multifaceted Israeli-South African relationship, anathema to African states, emerged as a veritable obstacle to the resumption of ties. Fourth, the constant tug-of-war between the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the one hand and the Israeli defense

establishment and private businessmen on the other hand served as a real impediment. The latter, not overjoyed at the prospect of diplomatic oversight of their activities, did not always rally to assist in brokering official contacts. And finally, a new generation of Israelis, uninterested in Africa and uninvolved in its problems, had emerged. The African predicament ceased to be an Israeli preoccupation.⁴

Throughout, the lack of any coherent or consistent Africa policy stymied progress. Nevertheless, the outlines of a new Israeli approach to the sub-Sahara did emerge during this transitional decade. The quest for the normalization of diplomatic relations with the entire continent was no longer linked to the establishment of permanent missions in every African state. Embassies would be located only in countries where Israel has clear economic or strategic interests. The return of the diplomats would not interfere with the activities of firms and individuals engaged in activities on the continent. Military ties (both official and private), purportedly under the supervision of the Defense Cooperation Unit of the Ministry of Defense, would be reviewed by a joint committee only if a glaring conflict of interest arose. Technical assistance would now not be used as an incentive for the resumption of diplomatic relations. In short, parameters of formal action were purposefully constricted by unabashedly pragmatic considerations, while the privatization of the Israeli presence in Africa, which took shape in the 1970s, was institutionalized.

During the course of the 1980s, as Israeli interests in the Far East expanded dramatically, relations with Africa continued to develop extremely slowly along these dualistic, and palpably utilitarian, lines. Israeli entrepreneurs were visible everywhere; some became informal advisers to heads of state in Nairobi, Yaoundé, Bangui, Addis Ababa, and Kinshasa. Senior officers turned businessmen were involved in operations on different sides of conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Angola, Rwanda, and Zaire. Diplomats resurfaced in several African capitals. For Africans, however, the distinction between government emissaries and private citizens became increasingly blurred,

inevitably leading to immense confusion not easily dispelled by official protestations.

By the late 1980s, nevertheless, the Israeli presence on the continent had expanded once again, facilitated by Israel's decision to join the international military embargo on South Africa in 1987. Trade relations, although still infinitesimal, grew; cultural contacts blossomed with the commencement of religious pilgrimages to Israel; academic exchanges increased; tourism flourished. A new equilibrium, admittedly devoid of the passion that had characterized the early years, was forged.

IV. 1992-2006

The last fifteen years have been marked by the complete diplomatic return of Israel to Africa. It has also been characterized by growing official Israeli indifference to the deteriorating situation on the continent, only somewhat mitigated by the emergence of Israeli and Jewish NGOs concerned with the ongoing African predicament. Despite massive changes in Israeli priorities and African circumstances, no comprehensive strategic review has been carried out, rendering the Israeli-African relationship as privatized and haphazard today as in recent decades.⁵

The diplomatic turnabout of recent years was facilitated by three main factors. First and foremost, the Oslo Accords and the peace treaty with Jordan removed the last political barriers that had prevented a diplomatic rapprochement in the past. Second, the transition in South Africa and Israel's constructive involvement with the new democratic government in Pretoria, largely orchestrated by Alon Liel, Israel's ambassador at the time, dispelled some of the unease associated with Israel's prior relationship with the apartheid government. Third, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower magnified the potential significance of the normalization of links with Israel in African eyes.

In late 1993, seven African countries reestablished ties. The fol-

lowing year an additional ten restored full diplomatic relations. By the end of the 1990s, the number reached forty—more than at the height of the Israeli-African connection in the 1960s. Several countries that had never had formal links with Israel were added to the list: Besides the recently independent Portuguese-speaking states (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé, and Príncipe), Zimbabwe, Namibia, Eritrea, and, significantly, Mauritania, established relations with Israel.⁶

Israeli responses to these African overtures, however, have been lukewarm at best. The diplomatic renewal with Africa coincided with the forging of relations with India and China and the nurturing of ties with Arab countries (both in North Africa and the Middle East). A decision was made, therefore, to set up missions selectively according to strategic and economic priorities. Initially, Israel established embassies in eleven African states besides Mauritania: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Angola, Cameroon, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. (The embassies in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Harare, Zimbabwe, have since been closed, primarily for financial reasons.) Most of Israel's ten ambassadors have nonresident status in neighboring countries as well. The regional embassy concept has meant that actual formal relations with many states are intermittent. If not for the growth of the African diplomatic presence in Israel and the periodic exchange of official delegations, they would be even more so.

Indeed, the selective character of Israel's diplomatic ties in Africa mirrors shifting interests in recent years, rather than any conscious policy reassessment. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has refrained from taking the lead in shaping the new era in Israeli-African relations. Most professional diplomats do not see their future in the African arena. The turnover of personnel, with several notable exceptions, has been rapid. The quality of those charged with managing African affairs has, sadly, deteriorated, while even the best-intentioned have found that their bargaining power within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as

well as their access to resources, has been severely constricted. Thus, while the technical cooperation program of MASHAV is still hailed as a key instrument of Israel's Africa outreach, dwindling portions of its already minute budget are allocated to the continent. The Israeli aid program has become dependent on foreign financing and, at least to some extent, on private business interests.

Stopgap measures have too often replaced ongoing programs. In the course of the past decade, numerous delegations of parliamentarians and academics have been dispatched to a variety of African states to compensate for the absence of a continuous presence on the ground. Diplomats in Washington and at the UN have become surrogates for permanent representatives in African capitals. Nongovernmental organizations and individuals—ranging from Magen David Adom and La'tet to the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish World Service, and spontaneous groups formed to deal with various African calamities, such as the floods in Mozambique and the drought in the Horn of Africa—have only somewhat filled the void.

This pattern of formal disinterest (if not outright neglect on the part of the Israeli government) has been apparent in the inability to grapple with the implications of new aspects of the Israeli-African relationship. Two topics come to mind: the growth in the number of African workers in Israel and the ramifications of the immigration of the Ethiopian Jewish community. Many emerging issues on the continent, such as the AIDS epidemic, have received only cursory treatment. The inadequacy of available and up-to-date information on developments on the continent as a whole and particularly on specific states has intensified these tendencies. The closure of the African Studies Department at the Hebrew University and the termination of the Africa program at Tel Aviv University (slated to take place in October 2006) merely exacerbate the problem.

The absence of a clear Israeli strategy in Africa has meant that private individuals and concerns continue to mold the contours of Israeli-African ties today. Israeli firms still broker contacts with African

authorities, finance visits of even very senior African leaders to Israel, and are instrumental in arranging profitable deals. They vie for contracts on the ground, sometimes associating with questionable partners and engaging in shady business practices. Major diamond entrepreneurs have also entered the fray, playing a major role in, among others, Angola, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Private security companies and arms dealers have come to replace government-to-government military cooperation—selling their services and wares to the highest bidder in such countries as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Cote d’Ivoire, and Cameroon. Some have embroiled themselves (and, by extension, Israel) in particularly ugly local conflicts, against the better interests of all involved. Their operations often do not reflect Israeli policy; the Israeli government has no ability to monitor their activities, and too often they have damaged Israeli interests on the continent.

The Israeli government is not always aware of the range and content of the activities of Israelis working on the continent. Individual ambassadors are sometimes informed, while others are purposely bypassed. If in the past there was an overt struggle between the diplomats and African aficionados on the one hand and the defense establishment and private interests on the other, in this latest phase of Israeli-African relations this battle has been won by the latter.⁷ Without the knowledge, the resources, and the necessary will, efforts to design an African policy attuned to contemporary realities have faltered and, in effect, the capacity of the government to guide and oversee Israeli operations in the sub-Saharan has declined.⁸

Toward the Future

Israel’s relationship with Africa poses a major, and largely underestimated, challenge for Israeli foreign policy. The future of the continent is fast becoming a central item on the international agenda; the capacity to effectively confront the continent’s economic, political, and social problems will directly affect global developments.

Israeli relations with Africa cannot progress without a broad strategic reevaluation and the consolidation of a long-term policy designed to ensure a consistent, viable, and mutually beneficial relationship in the years ahead. This requires, above all, a revival of that kind of involvement, sensitivity, and concern that marked Israel’s first steps on the continent.

The starting point for such an undertaking is a review of the basic political, strategic, economic, cultural, and religious interests that have linked Israel and Africa during the past fifty years and an analysis of their contemporary manifestations. These concerns must be updated and applied to specific African countries, not only through analyses at home, but also through consultations with African counterparts.

On this basis, it will be possible to establish not only geographic but also, more importantly, substantive priorities. In this context, it is necessary to map all the Israeli actors operating on the continent (official, semi-official, voluntary, and private) and to define how their work can be harnessed to promote the normalization of relations in the long term. New forms of interaction need to be elaborated, ranging from cultural exchanges and collaborative research and development projects, to distance learning opportunities, civil society cooperation, high-tech programs, and forward-looking joint ventures.

While any Israeli-African cooperation in the future will involve citizens as well as officials, it is vital that regulatory mechanisms be established and that tools for continuous supervision are honed. Without a modicum of consistency in both thought and action, no strategy will succeed.

Clearly, adequate resources need to be found for such initiatives. Reliance on private businessmen with personal interests is not the answer. Neither is dependence on the goodwill of international agencies. Allocations should come, first and foremost, from the Israeli government, either through the substantial enlargement of existing budgets or through legislation providing for the diversion of a percentage

of the GDP to international assistance efforts (as is common in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries). In order to prepare the groundwork for such a concerted campaign, academic activities must be renewed and supported, alongside a serious effort to engage the Israeli public at home and the Jewish public abroad.

Above all, however, Israeli policymakers need to be convinced, once again, that the African connection is vital not only to Israel's strategic and political future, but also to its own values and norms. With the assistance of a new generation concerned with global issues and willing to devote its energies to these matters, the long-dormant attraction that bound Israelis and Africans in the past can be reinvigorated.

Notes

1. This is a central theme in the work of Tamar Golan, the veteran Israeli journalist, diplomat, and analyst of African affairs. See "Israel and Africa: Is There an Israeli Comeback?" (draft paper, 2005).

2. The literature on Israeli-African relations until the 1990s is extensive and tends to be repetitive. For two works that summarize Israeli and African viewpoints, respectively, see Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: the Problematic Friendship* (London: British Academic Press, 1992) and Olusola Ojo, *Africa and Israel: Relations in Perspective* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988).

3. For a brief summary of this period, see Naomi Chazan, "Israel in Africa," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 18 (Winter 1981), pp. 29-44.

4. For an overview of some of these issues see Arye Oded, *Africa and the Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), Leon Codo, "Israel's Return to Sub-Saharan Africa," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations* 11: 1 (1976), pp. 36-55, and Naomi Chazan, "Israeli Perspectives on the Israel-South Africa Relationship" (London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, Research Reports Nos. 9 and 10, 1987).

5. For an analysis of this situation, see "Israel and Africa," in Haim Ofaz (ed.), *Israel's Foreign Relations* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, the Leonard Davis Institute of International Relations, and the Abba Eban Center for Israeli Diplomacy, 1999), pp. 202-216.

6. Mauritania, an Islamic country bridging sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb and a member of the Arab League, is the only Arab country besides Egypt and Jordan to have established full diplomatic relations with Israel.

7. This point has emerged in numerous conversations with Israelis who have served in Africa in recent years, as well as in several consultations called to review Israeli-African relations. It is highlighted in Golan, "Israel and Africa," esp. pp. 13-14.

8. The one major attempt to create a coherent Israeli policy, initiated by Yoav Biran, then director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was cut short after the Barak government collapsed in early 2001.

MASHAV in Africa: the Israeli Government's Development Cooperation Program

Haim Divon

Israel's international development cooperation program began in 1958, only a decade after the country's War of Independence, with the establishment of the Center for International Cooperation (MASHAV), a department within Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Long before the establishment of the state in 1948, the father of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, in 1902 wrote in his book *Altneuland* (Old-New Land) "once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans." Herzl saw deep parallels between the African struggle for national independence from foreign domination and the struggle of the Jewish people for a homeland after centuries of exile.

Israel's program of development cooperation in Africa has reflected not only current geopolitical interests, but also an ideological and moral commitment. On her first trip to Africa in 1958, Golda Meir visited Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, and the French-controlled Cote D'Ivoire and met with their leaders, heralding an era of trust and mutual respect between Israel and Africa. Meir responded with a warm personal approach to the suffering of the African and Asian peoples—crippled by hunger, disease, and hopelessness—and believed that Israel was morally bound to help. MASHAV was created to fulfill Israel's moral obligation to these populations in particular.

Since MASHAV's inception, Israeli development experts have come from all facets of society—farmers, nurses, doctors, educators, social workers, and technicians, as well as university professors—who continue to follow the guidelines laid down by Foreign Minister Meir so many decades ago. These individuals are not on the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs payroll, nor do they receive the exorbitant salaries so common in today's development assistance market. Israeli experts are still naïve in their approach to development, in that they are primarily guided by the ethic of the country's founders: giving and sharing know-how and technologies with those living in poverty.

The severe challenges facing Africa today have assumed a prominent place in global and regional forums, most visibly in the ongoing discussion regarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is an overwhelming fact that the situation in Africa has actually worsened over the past two decades, even as much of the world has grown more prosperous.

One sixth of the human race, 1.2 billion people, lives in extreme poverty, defined by the UN as living on an income of less than one dollar per day. More than 300 million of these impoverished people live in Africa, where they make up approximately one third of the continent's total population.

People living in extreme poverty suffer from starvation, lack of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, receive poor or no medical care and face chronic unemployment. They cannot afford to send their children to school, and frequently don't have lack suitable clothing, shoes, and shelter. A large percentage of Africa's population is ravaged by HIV/AIDS, drought and civil war and, due to these conditions, many live without hope for the future.

MASHAV's Focus

Coinciding with the UN Millennium Declaration, MASHAV adopted as its first priority taking part in the international community's commitment to halve poverty by the year 2015.

Since its inception, MASHAV has been guided in its work in Africa by the basic approach that it is impossible to concentrate efforts in only one area of development work, such as food security. It is also necessary to provide proper attention to related areas such as health care, community building, and education. Only through a sustainable

and comprehensive development program can measured results be obtained and the desired impact felt by those who need assistance the most. As no one country or aid agency can single-handedly tackle the causes leading to extreme poverty, the donor community must coordinate efforts and combine resources to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

MASHAV's activities in Africa focus primarily on areas in which Israel has a competitive advantage, including agriculture, water resource management, micro-enterprise development, community development, medicine, public health, empowerment of women and nonformal education. Programs are based on a "train-the-trainers" approach to institutional and human capacity building, with professional training courses conducted in Israel and in Africa. This approach ensures a sustainable process that can be maintained on-site. Human resource cultivation has been widely recognized as key to the development process.

The success of development work in Africa necessitates a responsible and involved political leadership, on the national and local levels, and a cadre of locally based professionals capable of taking ownership of the project. In addition to setting up needed infrastructure within a community (e.g., roads and electricity), immediate attention must also be given to meeting basic human needs such as food security, safe water and sanitation, medical care, economic growth, community-building, and empowerment of women. Failure to include these essential components of a holistic development agenda will result in an unsustainable assistance program.

Israel's own development experience—moving from a developing country to a developed one in less than six decades, despite the constant threat of war, scarcity of resources, and its isolation in international forums—has enabled Israel to design comprehensive and integrative programs for urban and rural settings, both of which are of critical concern to Africa.

Program Components

MASHAV's programs in Africa consist of the following components:

A. Food Security

MASHAV's agricultural programming in Africa deals with the introduction of modern agricultural and agro-technical methods designed to increase the levels, sustainability, and quality of agricultural production. MASHAV introduces effective support systems to enhance the economic viability of agriculture in areas such as marketing, storage and transport, supply of agricultural inputs, and granting credit and finance to the agricultural sector and extension services.

Rural development also requires the introduction of nonagricultural initiatives, particularly because modern agriculture is less labor intensive. Therefore, it is important to encourage micro, small, and medium-size enterprises involved in the first-level processing of agricultural products (as in the production of olive oil, fruit jams, and pickled vegetables).

The growing dependence of African nations and people on emergency food aid is logistically problematic, precarious, and unsustainable. The situation is compounded by the dislocation of vast populations struggling to survive in their daily search for food, due to ethnic conflicts. And yet, in the past two decades, donor countries have scaled back their involvement in agricultural development aid.

There is no way to attain basic food security and sustainability without promoting primary sector agricultural practices in basic food crop production, food storage, and post-harvest care. There can be no shortcut to food security. MASHAV's approach to agricultural development in Africa is based on harnessing science, technology, and extension. It rejects the notion that the world can suffice with the practice of insecure subsistence agriculture in Africa, typified by older and less productive technologies. The challenge is to adapt these less-

advanced technologies to contemporary standards of irrigation practices, fertilizer application, and crop protection methods. Hence, the developed world must help harness the agricultural, educational, and environmental sciences to create the necessary increase in crop yields, combined with decentralized systems of food storage, in order to avoid unmanageable logistical problems so common today.

Over the last two decades, MASHAV established a number of demonstration projects in selected semiarid regions in Africa. These projects were designed to showcase new technologies for intensifying and diversifying crop production, with the goal of promoting a more judicious and efficient use of water through rationing of limited water resources and installation of pressure irrigation systems. These methods have proven to be effective, despite their higher initial cost.

At present, Israel is developing an innovative mini-sprinkler and drip irrigation system that requires a much lower level of atmospheric pressure than the systems used today. The system, called Africa Market Garden (AMG) or Techno-agricultural Innovation for Poverty Alleviation (TIPA), lends itself to establishing individual market gardens in limited areas to contribute substantially to sustainable food production. By utilizing this system, the small African farmer can construct his/her own small water rationing facility.

By disseminating technologies such as these, MASHAV encourages African community gardens and individual market gardens to be developed on a large scale throughout the continent, thereby revolutionizing traditional African agriculture, which emphasizes the role of women in obtaining food security for their families.

B. Medicine and Public Health

MASHAV serves as a bridge between Israel's medical community and the developing world. Its programs in the field of medicine and public health are characterized by a long-term approach to delivering medical services, particularly in rural regions. Programs include assisting in reform on the administrative and organizational levels, as well as

concentrating on human and institutional capacity building.

There is no doubt that HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. The tragic death toll in Africa as a result of the AIDS pandemic is staggering, as is the number of people on the continent who die annually from preventable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and malnutrition. In addition to dispatching medical experts to Africa to collaborate with local, regional, and national government bodies, MASHAV trains health professionals and works alongside organizations to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and to care for infected patients. MASHAV has also adopted a unique program aimed at bringing Israeli medical expertise to orphaned HIV-positive children in Ethiopia.

Figures indicate that every year close to 60,000 children in Ethiopia become infected with HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that 2.2 million people—200,000 of them children—are living with the virus. In cooperation with Hadassah Hospital, teams of specially trained health professionals and volunteers have been working with two orphanages in Addis Ababa. The teams are taught to relate to the children through the use of medical clowning, and as a result of this project the number of children who died of AIDS in one of these orphanages dropped to three, as compared to sixty the previous year. This program has also been implemented in Israel, where it has been adopted by twelve hospitals around the country.

Another component of this project is the implementation of a comprehensive support program for community-based initiatives, enabling orphanages to become self-sustaining food sources through encouraging agricultural activities. This program is based on the success of similar children's villages in Israel during the early years of statehood, which were designed to absorb orphaned Holocaust refugees. Other initiatives in this area include early childhood development and training in post-traumatic psychosocial care for children affected by HIV/AIDS.

In addition, for more than three decades, MASHAV has been

sending blindness prevention and eye-care missions to regions in Africa that have limited eye treatment facilities. Hundreds of surgical procedures are routinely performed by visiting Israeli teams working together with local staff. Israeli ophthalmologists train local personnel, with equipment and supplies donated by the Israeli government.

C. Community Building and Development

Since the early days of its statehood, Israel has given high priority to adopting policies, establishing support structures, and encouraging initiatives aimed at generating economic growth and social integration on a grassroots level. Israel's experience with rapid economic development and absorbing waves of mass immigration enabled Israeli experts to acquire expertise in rural development, community building, cooperative organization, and micro-enterprise in an emerging economy of immigrant populations.

Israel's work in the field of crisis intervention, youth in distress, psychological and physical rehabilitation, and communities affected by trauma has contributed to MASHAV's decision to adopt a new program in cooperation with African countries. This program focuses on youth at risk in Africa, with particular attention to the integration of demobilized child-soldiers.

When contemplating the issue of youth in postconflict areas, one must address demobilization and the role of ex-combatants in society. Recent surveys attest to the fact that most of these youths are too old, or have missed too much schooling, to return to their studies. As many of the young soldiers come from poor families, MASHAV emphasizes programs to assist these young adults in acquiring skills and finding employment in a postconflict society. Women soldiers confront different problems following demobilization. Issues of reproductive health and the stigma attached to female fighters make integration into society a difficult process.

Professional training programs put emphasis on long-term development and not only short-term relief. MASHAV seeks to help

African nations to set up training centers in different disciplines to improve their human capacity-building capabilities. In this context, MASHAV is also interested in using its know-how to fortify the infrastructure of research and development (R&D) around the continent.

D. Advancement of Women

The majority of those one billion people living in abject poverty in the developing world are women. For more than forty years MASHAV has conducted programs throughout the African continent focused on reducing gender disparities and training women to participate in decision-making processes. Programs address the connection between gender, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, as well as the need for gender-sensitive policymaking.

Participants in these programs are encouraged to develop empowerment and advocacy strategies to heighten the consciousness of national leaders regarding women's economic and social welfare, and to increase interaction between women's organizations and the public and private sectors.

The rapid increase in the migration of women and the recognition that such movement contributes to their social and economic empowerment and development were the basis for MASHAV's international conference for women last year on migration and gender issues, within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. The conference was organized in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Center for International Migration and Integration (CIMI) under the auspices of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). The Haifa Declaration, reflecting conclusions and recommendations from the final session, will be brought to the attention of the 2006 UN General Assembly.

E. Education

MASHAV specializes in adapting educational systems to meet the demands specific to developing economies. Its programming is directed toward both formal and informal educational frameworks, drawing on the Israeli experience of incorporating a multilingual population of immigrants into the educational system. Emphasis is also placed on programs in early childhood education.

F. *Tikkun Olam*

The Jewish imperative of *tikkun olam*,¹ the obligation of Jews to work for a more perfect world, has been formally adopted by the State of Israel to motivate Jewish communities and organizations throughout the world to provide development assistance to the poorest nations of the world, especially Africa. This initiative will be a collaborative effort between the Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy, Tel Aviv University, and MASHAV.

Programs are currently being implemented cooperatively between MASHAV and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for health and water programs in Sri Lanka; with the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and B'nai B'rith International for empowering cooperatives in Sri Lanka to reconstruct damaged economic and social infrastructure after the devastating tsunami; and with the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) for a TIPA agricultural project in Senegal.

G. *Shalom Clubs*

MASHAV maintains contact with many of its former course participants from Africa through a network of Shalom Clubs. Many of these clubs undertake activities such as setting up women's cooperatives, heightening awareness of HIV/AIDS, fundraising for orphanages, reconstructing schools following natural disasters, and helping local governments bring proper health care to remote areas.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Israel's development cooperation programs in Africa are characterized by an integrative and multifaceted approach. MASHAV strives for project sustainability and continues to work with local, regional, and national governments, international organizations, civil society members, and the public sector to expand assistance projects in Africa.

In conjunction with other donor countries and with the cooperation of responsible African leaders, MASHAV will continue to work closely with and respond to the emerging needs of its African project partners.

Notes

1. See Avi Beker's essay, "*Tikkun Olam* in Africa," in this volume, p. 34.

Africa's Evolving Relations with Israel

Kwame Bofo Arthur and E. Gyimah-Boadi

African-Israeli relations have roughly passed through three phases. The first phase spans the period immediately before and after the emerging independence of African states. Before independence, Africa saw Israel as a key supporter of decolonization, while after independence, Africa turned to Israel as an important source of technical support. For its part, Israel viewed positive relations with Africa as a means to ameliorate its diplomatic isolation, garner support at the United Nations, achieve greater international legitimacy, and create economic opportunities for Israeli government concerns and private business interests.

If African-Israeli relations in the 1960s were in a “honeymoon period,” they became largely discordant and hostile during the second phase, in the 1970s. Africa, especially its political elites and academics, came to associate Israel with international imperialism and racism, due to its association with South Africa's apartheid regime. Israel, for its part, appeared to regard Africa as a hostile continent that had displayed ingratitude and myopia.

In the current phase, beginning with the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between Israel and Egypt, especially at the end of the Cold War and the twilight of apartheid in South Africa, African-Israeli relations have entered a new phase of ferment. While relations may not be as rosy as they were in the 1960s, they are certainly less fraught now than in the 1970s and are perhaps more sophisticated and nuanced.

With growing emphasis on democracy, good governance, and human security at the country, subregional, and continental levels, Africans seem to have reembraced universalistic and humanistic global

values, as evidenced by the ideals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the new African Union (AU).¹ The responses of the AU and African heads of state to the Sudan-Darfur crisis suggest an emerging realism in which African/AU opposition to oppression and discrimination is applied without regard to race, ethnicity, or creed. These developments present an opportunity for African nations and Israel to rebuild and deepen official relationships for their mutual benefit and to complement existing cultural bonds.

The Basis and Content of Africa-Israel Relations

Diplomatic Ties

Formal diplomatic ties between Israel and Africa began with the establishment of an Israeli mission in Ghana in 1956, the year before Ghana's independence. Initially focused on West Africa, Israel shifted its sights eastward, toward achieving closer relations with Ethiopia and Kenya. By the early 1970s, Israel maintained full diplomatic relations with about thirty-three countries. These ties were an expression of African affinity for Israel, which was itself a young state that had achieved independence in 1948 and was eager to share its experience and expertise with newly independent African states.

Relations between African countries and Israel began to sour in the late 1960s. Perceived Israeli support for the Biafran secessionist movement in Nigeria came under heavy criticism from African leaders. Support to secessionist Biafra was deemed highly alarming to members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), many of whom were faced with current or potential ethnic rebellions in their own countries. Following the Six-Day War of June 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula, there was a marked sense of unease among African states. The 1970s were perhaps the darkest years of African-Israeli relations. Twenty-nine

African countries severed diplomatic relations with Israel, partly driven by the promise of cheap oil and financial aid from the Arab world and ostensibly in compliance with an Egyptian-sponsored resolution at the OAU. Adopted in Algiers, Algeria, in September 1968, OAU Resolution 53 called for:

... the withdrawal of foreign troops from all Arab territories occupied since the 5th June, 1967 in accordance with the Resolution taken by the Security Council on 22 November 1967, and appeals to all Member States of the OAU to use their influence to ensure a strict implementation of this Resolution.²

Some African countries—namely Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, and South Africa—however, maintained full diplomatic relations with Israel. Others, such as Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Central African Republic, maintained contact with Israel, often through interest offices in third-party foreign embassies. An Israeli interest section was hosted in the Swiss Embassy in Ghana, for example.

The African “embargo” of Israel began to collapse after the 1978 Camp David Accords and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Israel. A gradual process of restoring diplomatic relations between sub-Saharan African countries and Israel began in the 1980s, gaining momentum as peace negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors progressed. Following Zaire’s lead in 1982, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, Cameroon, and Togo renewed diplomatic ties with Israel in 1983, 1986, 1986, and 1987, respectively.

Cultural Ties

Perhaps the strongest ties that bind Africa and Israel are not political but rather cultural. African cultural attraction to Israel arises primarily from the widespread belief in Christianity in Africa, originally introduced during the colonial era, which has led Christian Africans to strongly associate modern Israel with the biblical Israel and Christian holy sites.

Another deep source of cultural affinity is embedded in the presence of Jews in Africa, especially in Ethiopia (estimated at 20,000) and South Africa (estimated at 88,000).³ This kinship was dramatically manifest in the Israeli-organized airlift of more than 10,000 Ethiopian Jews from Ethiopia to Israel in 1984-85, despite Ethiopia’s hard-line government, which was hardly cooperative. These ties are strengthened every year through pilgrimages organized by African Christians to holy sites in Israel. The popularity of this phenomenon with Africans has transcended even the most frigid official relations between Israel and African nations.

Technical and Development Cooperation

Development and technical cooperation has been a key element in strengthening African-Israeli relations.⁴ Israeli technical assistance to Africa has been particularly important in the area of infrastructure and agricultural development. Israeli technical assistance skills have been applied with great success in Africa, facilitating closer ties with the continent. Examples of these programs include desert reclamation projects in sub-Saharan nations such as Cameroon, where Israel built a training center to assist in halting the advance of the Sahara Desert, and Côte d’Ivoire (under the late president Felix Houphouët-Boigny), where Israeli contractors undertook several major building projects. Israeli technicians and construction companies were also reportedly involved in the construction of the national airports in Uganda and Ghana, and the construction of water and sewage systems in Ghana’s capital city, Accra.

African skilled technicians have also benefited significantly from Israeli-sponsored educational exchange and training programs. African adoption of Israeli technical skills is augmented by the presence of Israeli advisers and technicians in many African states, even where there are no official ties. For instance, successive Ghanaian governments hosted Israeli technical teams to service their water system, even as Ghana maintained an official boycott of Israel.

Economic and Military Ties

Africa has frequently turned to Israel for military and security assistance. As a young country, Ghana benefited tremendously from Israeli technical support in setting up and expanding its national defense and security system. Israeli assistance was key to the establishment of Ghana's Army Staff College, its Maritime Academy, Flight Training School, and paramilitary Young Pioneers Movement. Other African countries followed the Ghanaian example, notably the countries of East Africa, which enjoyed Israeli military and security assistance as they gained independence.

By the 1970s only South Africa and politically conservative sub-Saharan African states maintained strong military ties with Israel. Israel reportedly trained elite armed units protecting the heads of state of Cameroon, Liberia, Togo, and Zaire. Ethiopia received military aid from Israel in 1978 (at the same time it received military aid from the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Libya) in its border war with Somalia and also for its battle against Eritrean secessionists, who were supported by Arab states, in exchange for the evacuation of Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

After many years of providing military assistance to apartheid South Africa, Israel took steps in 1987 to reduce its military ties with the country, which had been estimated at between \$400 million and \$800 million per year. Israeli trade links with Africa have broadened in recent years beyond the focus on South Africa to involve other countries.

Economic relations between Africa and Israel have not been limited to the military sphere. For example, Ghana and Israel have also engaged in mutually beneficial economic arrangements that mirror the vicissitudes of their political relationship. Israeli exports to Ghana rose from \$1.4 million in 1962 to \$3.3 million in 1964 and \$5.3 million in 1965, tapering off only moderately to \$4.9 million in 1966.⁵ From 1966 to 1968, the aggregate value of Israel's exports to Ghana

reached \$26.6 million, compared to Israel's exports to Côte d'Ivoire during the same years, which equalled only \$3.75 million. During this period, Israel imported more from Ghana than it did from any other state in West Africa. In 1964, Israeli imports from Ghana totalled \$1,006,000, slightly more than the figures for Côte d'Ivoire (\$960,000), but more than four times its imports from Nigeria (\$224,000).

Trade ties were most pronounced between Israel and apartheid South Africa, justified on the grounds that this link offered protection for the South African Jewish community and would develop an export market for Israel's defense and commercial industries. In 1986, apart from the arms trade, Israel imported approximately \$181.1 million worth of South African goods, consisting primarily of coal, while Israel's exports to the country were worth about \$58.8 million.

Recent Developments

Official African-Israeli relations have ebbed and flowed over the past half century. Despite often lukewarm official ties, dynamic informal and private contacts between Africans and Israel have continued to flourish. This includes economic and commercial ties, such as the presence of the import agency Dizengoff in Ghana, cultural and academic contacts, and a variety of joint agricultural, medical assistance, and professional training programs, as well as direct humanitarian aid. Annual African Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem and other holy sites, and South African Jewish youth engaging in kibbutz work in Israel serve to complement these programs. Additionally, Africans fleeing from economic stagnation in their home countries have been attracted to Israel, where some immigrate illegally to obtain perceived opportunities as migrant workers (fruit picking, construction work, and domestic service), especially during the Palestinian intifada, when Palestinian laborers were not allowed into Israel.

At the formal and official levels, African nations and Israel are engaged in ongoing political dialogue, as seen in visits by heads of

state and government ministers, including then Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's visit to South Africa in 2004. The best evidence of the renewal of official African-Israeli ties has been the establishment of diplomatic relations with thirty countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Israel has ten diplomatic missions in this region, including ones in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Cameroon, and Angola.

Conclusion

African-Israeli relations were originally based on mutual empathy, driven by similar struggles for independence, as well as tangible benefits to both in the areas of trade and technical cooperation. Divergent interests and antagonistic alliances in the Cold War, solidarity among nonaligned states, and the politics of oil drove a deep wedge between African nations and Israel. The close military and trade ties between Israel and apartheid South Africa also made Israel deeply unpopular among left-leaning African governments and intelligentsia, particularly in the 1970s.

Unofficial relations between Africans and Israelis have continued to flourish over the years, especially in the areas of cultural exchanges and trade. Although relations between Africa and Israel have been improving as a result of the Israeli-Arab thaw after Oslo, the collapse of Communism, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the liberalization and democratization of African nations, the warming in recent decades has generally been cautious and slow. It remains to be seen how soon official relations between Africa and Israel will be realigned with unofficial relationships—that is, between corporations, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations—taking advantage of the current climate of political openness in Africa and Israel's renewed commitment to development in Africa.

Notes

1. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an economic development program of the African Union. NEPAD was adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was established as part of NEPAD, and is a self-monitoring method for standardizing good governance reforms, as outlined in NEPAD's Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic, and Corporate Governance. Finally, established in July 2002 to supersede the Organization of African Unity, the African Union (AU) is a connection of fifty-three states that supports democracy, human rights, and economic development on the continent.

2. Organization of African Unity, "Resolution on the Aggression Against the UAR," March 24, 2006, <<http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Decisions/hog/fHoGAssembly1968.pdf>>.

3. "The Jewish Population of the World," The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2006, March 24, 2006, <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html>>.

4. See Eli Fried's essay, "Soft Power and Israel's Policy of Development Cooperation," p.43.

5. Israel's leading exports are "cut diamonds, high-technology equipment, and agricultural products (fruits and vegetables)," according to *CIA—The World Factbook—Israel*, Central Intelligence Agency, Jan. 10, 2006, at March 24, 2006 <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/is.html>>.

Tikkun Olam in Africa

Avi Beker

Herzl's African Initiative

Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, reached his vision about the Jewish state only after being exposed to the shock treatment of anti-Semitism. His writings express his deep frustration with those societies that didn't allow the Jews to become emancipated citizens. While recognizing the need for a sovereign Jewish state, Herzl expressed his own version of Isaiah's prophecy that Israel should become a "light unto the nations." Responding to the horrors of slavery and colonialism, Herzl chose the continent of Africa as the site for expressing Jewish responsibility. In his novel *Altneuland* (Old-New Land), published in 1902, Herzl delineated his plans for future Israeli aid to the African continent:

There is still one question arising out of the disaster of the nations which remained unresolved to this day, and whose profound tragedy only a Jew can comprehend. This is the African question. Just call to mind all those terrible episodes of the slave trade, of human beings who, merely because they were black, were stolen like cattle, taken prisoner, captured, and sold. Their children grew up in strange lands, the objects of contempt and hostility because their complexions were different. I am not ashamed to say, though I may expose myself to ridicule in saying so, that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my own people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans.

Herzl's early commitment to Africa demonstrates how foreign aid and international development were constitutive to political Zionism, preceding the establishment of Israel.

It can be argued that today's *tikkun olam*, the effort to perfect the world, is simply an extension of the earlier biblical concept of Israel serving as a "light unto the nations." Both "light unto the nations" and *tikkun olam* are Jewish expressions of another widespread term in contemporary international relations: soft power.

Soft power is a term coined by the American political scientist Joseph Nye, Jr., who calls it the "second face of power." Instead of using the coercive power of military and economic influence, Nye believes that nations and peoples should try to shape the preferences of others by co-opting them: "You try to obtain influence over other countries because they admire your values, emulate your political and economic system, aspiring to your level of prosperity and openness."¹ There is no better way to describe this concept than to use the simple but lofty and idealistic words of Isaiah (42:6), in which he portrays God as assigning to Israel the role of a "light unto the nations." As part of a vision of the end of days, he prophesies a vision of peace, an idealistic world, and a universal way to transmit ideas and moral values, without coercion, simply by attracting others.

If the history of mankind is our laboratory, we can argue that Jewish dispersion has been a source of Jewish soft power. Because the Jewish people were denied the right of sovereignty for 2,000 years, Jewish dispersion necessitated the exercise of Jewish soft power. Jews had to develop their own methods of political and physical survival, particularly because almost every generation faced the threat of anti-Semitism and persecution. Since Jews experienced countless expulsions and pogroms, they had to convince rulers and powerful persons, through argument, of their worth to the regime and to society at large. Contemporary Jewish societies, operating in a world in which Jewish sovereignty has been restored through the birth of the State of Israel, need to look to new sources of "soft power."

One of these elements of attraction is the kabbalistic concept of *tikkun olam*.

Popular Mysticism

Originally, the term *tikkun olam* was used in the Mishna, the earliest collection of Jewish oral law that precede the Talmud, to denote actions prescribed by rabbinic authorities to avoid social problems and address communal concerns. The *Aleinu* prayer, which is recited three times daily by observant Jews, uses the term in an eschatological way, speaking about a time when there will be a universal recognition of God and a universal moral law. Jews should take it upon themselves to “perfect (repair) the world under the rule of God.”

In the Kabbalah the term *tikkun olam* is related to the human efforts needed to overcome suffering and catastrophe. A common kabbalistic interpretation of evil is based on the notion of “breaking the vessels,” which meant, according to Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed in the sixteenth century, that sometimes destruction was necessary to prevent catastrophe. Luria used the term *tikkun olam* to describe the way to redeem the world cosmically through the power of personal actions, ethical and ritual, to repair the world.

In the marketplace of ideas there are social forces and fashionable trends that transform complex and esoteric concepts into popular slogans. Those who try to shape the Jewish agenda cannot ignore the fact that *tikkun olam* has become a widely used rallying cry for everything from rescue missions in Southeast Asia after the tsunami to humanitarian assistance in Africa, and from social justice advocacy to personal moral behavior. The challenge is, therefore, two-fold: to use the positive energy and goodwill that *tikkun olam* evokes and to incorporate its positive vision into the agenda of the organized Jewish world. In advancing *tikkun olam*, the Jewish world must reconcile the universal and particularistic dimensions of Jewish identity.

At a time when celebrities like Madonna and Britney Spears attend Kabbalah classes, Jews and non-Jews alike have looked to Jewish mysticism for new spiritual guidance. The growing awareness of *tikkun olam* is reflected in a new book by Conservative Rabbi Elliot N.

Dorff, *The Way into Tikkun Olam* (Jewish Lights Publishing Co., 2005). Rabbi Dorff’s book traces the history of *tikkun olam* and then turns to practical considerations that shed light on one’s responsibilities to and in the world.

For most of their history, Jews were primarily concerned with their own survival. Only with Emancipation and growing freedom and civil rights at the end of the eighteenth century did Jews begin to orient themselves toward a more universalistic and humanistic agenda. Some left their Jewish communities to lead in causes that resonated with the universalistic *tikkun olam*.

The Multiple Paths of *Tikkun Olam*

Ever since the Emancipation, Jews have been at the forefront of social struggles and have been attracted to radical and revolutionary movements. Some have led the struggle for human rights in the United States, Western Europe, and elsewhere. Others have fought for the inclusion of genocide in UN treaties and involved themselves in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

A leading scholar of social revolution, Prof. Jacob Talmon of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1916-80), explained that young Jews felt a special sensitivity to suffering, and as a result of their assimilation, became restless and took revenge on their parents, who preached to them about revolution and social justice, but eventually reneged on their own ideas.²

So why are Jews at the forefront of liberal causes, whether on the left or right? Many of their names are familiar to us: Karl Marx, Ferdinand Lassalle, Rosa Luxembourg, Moses Hess, Bernard Lazare, Leon Blum, and Leon Trotsky.

Isaac Deutscher, a twentieth-century British historian, wrote an essay on “The Non-Jewish Jew,” in which he observed that “the Jewish heretic who transcends Jewry belongs to a Jewish tradition.” Deutscher suggested that there was something unique about Jews

because they “dwelt on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions and national cultures.... Their minds matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other. They lived on the margins or in the nooks and crannies of their nations.”³

In the second half of the twentieth century, many Jewish radicals had absorbed the impact of the Holocaust as a fiercely personal experience. They also strongly believed in the more universalistic moral-social message of Judaism.⁴ Jews have continued to play a leading role in the advancement of social change and justice to ensure economic and political equality the world over.

Light unto the Nations

The Holocaust presented an unprecedented theological challenge for many Jews who were left with unanswered questions concerning God, human nature, and society. But Jewish heritage and its legacy to mankind offer far more than being victims to the worst kinds of atrocities. Being a “light unto the nations” is often identified as part of the universal mission of the Jews as a dispersed people. The Diaspora has been a central feature of the Jewish condition, making the dispersion of the Jews a crucial element in relation to many civilizations and power centers. This notion is expressed in the Torah when God tells Jacob: “And you shall spread out powerfully westward, eastward, northward and southward; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you and by your offspring” (Genesis 28:14). This can be seen as an early and precise expression of the concept of soft power.

The Reform Movement within Judaism appropriated the concept of a “light unto the nations” and made it a central tenet of its religious outlook. The Pittsburgh Platform, adopted by a gathering of Reform rabbis in the United States in 1885, embraced a view of Judaism as a liberal religion, not a nation: “We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approach of the realization of Israel’s great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice and peace among all men.... [W]e extend

the hand of fellowship to all who co-operate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.”⁵

In the twenty-first century, world Jewry seems poised to regain its confidence and willingness to engage in a worldwide mission to redefine and update the message of its prophets. The challenge is how to formulate a *tikkun olam* vision that will provide a new source of Jewish identity in the post-Holocaust era and that will be able to integrate the concerns of Israel, the sovereign arm of the Jewish people.

Israel and *Tikkun Olam*

Following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a mix of realism and idealism went into the formulation of its foreign policy. In the vision of David Ben-Gurion, the founding father and first prime minister of Israel, one can find the opposing tendencies in Israeli attitudes toward the larger world. On the one hand, Ben-Gurion speaks of the danger of another Holocaust by Israel’s neighbors and the indifference of the world to the threat of Israel’s annihilation. On the other hand, he speaks of Israel’s foreign policy in messianic terms, adopting the biblical prophecy of Isaiah’s “light unto the nations.” Israel cannot be a nation like others, in Ben-Gurion’s view, because it is its duty to be a “model people and to build a model state,” which will extend its help to other nations, particularly the newly independent states in Africa.⁶ (See Eli Fried’s essay, p. 43.)

Although Israel’s policy toward Africa had vital interests involved—political, diplomatic, economic, and security—the “‘spiritual’ component was also present.”⁷ As explained by Michael Brecher, professor of political science at McGill University, Israel sympathized with victims of exploitation in Africa, particularly those who had been persecuted on racial and ethnic grounds. Brecher notes that “there was a powerful thrust flowing from prophetic teachings—to share knowledge with the less fortunate and to assist in the search for the ‘good society.’”⁸

Golda Meir, then foreign minister of Israel, told the Knesset in

1963: “Israel has always assumed, is assuming and will continue in the future to assume, an active role in every operation and every object meant to consummate the restoration of human and national dignity to once-downtrodden peoples in Africa and in every place on earth.”⁹ Speaking to Israeli senior diplomats in 1959, Meir explained that human and economic development in Africa “is a drive toward universal self-determination and justice.” MASHAV, the newly established division for international cooperation within the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was meant, in her words, “to unselfishly share know-how with the African people.”

In the 1970s, following the anti-Israel campaign at the United Nations, Israel decreased its level of activities and investment in international development. Following Arab pressure, several African countries that had received Israeli aid and training broke diplomatic relations with Israel. At the beginning of 2006, the director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Ron Prosor, announced plans to reinvigorate Israel’s international development efforts. For the first time, the director-general introduced Israeli development as a policy goal, part of a vision of Israeli soft power and Jewish *tikkun olam*.¹⁰

The *Tikkun Olam* Partnership

The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI), a think tank that aims to contribute to the continuity of the Jewish people, highlights the role of *tikkun olam* in its comprehensive assessment of the Jewish condition for 2004-2005. It emphasizes that *tikkun olam* should motivate engagement in global efforts to advance human rights, to protect the environment, and to encourage thoughtful dialogue. The study warns against the tendency of some Jewish groups or individuals who, in their sincere search for universalism, “aspire to become just another power player” or “to have a normal state.”¹¹ Dennis Ross, former ambassador and special envoy of President Bill Clinton to the Middle East and current chairman of the board of JPPPI, explained that Israel need not be a “normal” state, because that would, in effect, mean

abandoning Jewish values. Israel and the Jewish people, says Ross, must offer the world a sublime moral model, as befits the people of the prophets, to “repair” the distress caused by globalization.¹²

American Jews, secular or religious, use the term *tikkun olam* to express their distinctiveness as Jews. Senator Joseph Lieberman, the first Jew to be nominated as candidate for vice president of the U.S., used the term *tikkun olam* to explain the desire of Jews to become involved in political affairs.

Tikkun olam should be a preferred strategy of the Jewish people because it offers an opportunity to translate universalistic ideals into concrete programs. These activities, in conjunction with the State of Israel, will also attract Jewish youngsters by appealing to their desire to become involved with international development and advocacy, thereby promoting elements of Jewish continuity.

The Africa Institute of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) is an excellent model for employing the soft power reservoir of world Jewry. Founded in 1906, AJC has always held the belief that the most effective way to advocate for Jewish interests is to advocate on behalf of all minorities. A joint project in international development that will bring together the power and the clout of North American Jews with the technological know-how of Israel can offer a major breakthrough for both the developing world and world Jewry.

While *tikkun olam* is not a religious commandment, there is no doubt that it incorporates many *mitzvot* and the Jewish values of charity and social justice. In the post-Holocaust search for meaning, and in an era of globalization, there is a need to offer policies and choices that relate to the majority of Jews living in pluralistic societies. *Tikkun olam* can be that attractive concept to Jews, who might otherwise abandon their Jewish heritage, as it offers them opportunities for repairing the ills of the world.

Notes

1. Joseph Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).
2. Jacob Talmon, *In the Age of Violence* (Hebrew, Tel Aviv: 1975), pp. 263-64.
3. Isaac Deutscher, "The Non-Jewish Jew," in Tamara Deutscher, ed., *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968), pp. 26-27.
4. Yair Oren, "Tikkun Olam: The Phenomenon of Jewish Radicals in France during the 1960s and '70s," *Policy Forum* 19 (Jerusalem: Institute of the World Jewish Congress, 2000) pp. 8-9.
5. From the fifth and sixth principles of the Pittsburgh Platform, in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism: American and European Sources to 1948* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, Ltd., 1965), p. 34.
6. On David Ben-Gurion's fears of annihilation and Holocaust, see Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) and on the use of "light unto the nations," see Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp. 242-44.
7. Brecher, *ibid.*, p. 242.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
9. Yehuda Avner, "A Jilted Love Affair in Africa," *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 8, 2006.
10. Ron Prozor, speech to the Herzliya Conference, Jan. 23, 2006.
11. *Between Thriving and Decline: Annual Assessment 2004-2005* (Jerusalem: The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, 2005), p. 75.
12. Avi Beker, "Giving up on Normalcy," *Ha'aretz*, July 13, 2004.

Soft Power and Israel's Policy of Development Cooperation

Eli Fried

She is a small country, with a small population, and wields no great military or economic power. In the long run, however, it is *spiritual power* that decides; in the kingdom of the spirit not quantity counts, but quality ... and its contribution to the establishment of the new world will bring it peace, security, and the world's respect.¹ (Emphasis added.)

David Ben-Gurion, 1962

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, believed that the state's survival depended not only on its military strength, but also on engendering international understanding for its inherent morality and legitimacy.² While today Israel's capacity to defend itself is sounder than it was immediately following its establishment, the international community's conviction that Israel should exist has in recent years increasingly been called into question.³ This trend is not one that can be countered with military power, nor has Israel's customary statecraft or traditional *hasbara* (public relations, advocacy) mitigated this problem. Rather, the difficult international environment faced by Israel calls for the implementation of a concerted soft power strategy, focusing on improving Israel's strength by bolstering its international "attraction." An important component of this strategy should be a reenergized policy of development cooperation.

Soft power is defined as the ability of a state to attract others by the legitimacy of its own policies and the values that underlie them. The term has been in vogue since it was coined by Prof. Joseph Nye, Jr., in 1990.⁴ Israel's development cooperation program, which com-

menced some forty years earlier, was fashioned on remarkably similar principles to those underlying Nye's soft power theory. As cited above, Ben-Gurion used terms akin to those outlined by Nye, regularly referring to Israel's potential to achieve its policy objectives by attracting others and by setting an example to the nations of the world. Under Ben-Gurion's stewardship, beginning in the early 1950s, Israel formulated an intensive and effective development assistance campaign. However, following the "betrayal" of Israel by the African states in the early 1970s—the breaking off of diplomatic relations around the time of the Yom Kippur War—considerable faith was lost in the policy's effectiveness.

For the past thirty years Israeli policymakers have questioned the adequacy of development cooperation, which has led to its significant de-emphasis as a tool of foreign policy. I believe that it is time to begin to reassess this dogma, leaving behind the perceived affront regarding the behavior of the African states in the early 1970s. This emotional response, while legitimate, has disproportionately contributed to the lack of public or policy discussion concerning the strategic importance of development assistance. There must therefore be a renewed examination of the purposes, capacities, and consequences of development assistance as an instrument of diplomacy. Rather than being seen as a tool to foster diplomatic relations with recipient states or to persuade them to vote supportively at the UN General Assembly, development assistance must be considered one component of a coordinated, well-conceived soft power strategy.

History of Israel's Development Cooperation Policy

Israel's development assistance program from the late 1950s to the early 1970s was extensive, particularly in Africa. In comparative terms, Israel had almost twice as many technical experts serving abroad as the average Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country and its per capita spending on development assistance was on average 50 percent higher than other OECD countries.

Furthermore, with over 97 percent of OECD development experts hailing from France, Great Britain, Belgium and the U.S., Israel's contribution exceeded that of the other thirteen OECD states that then had bilateral assistance programs: Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia.⁵

Prior to the inception of Israel's development cooperation campaign, not a single Israeli diplomat could be found in Africa north of Johannesburg, and Israel maintained only seven embassies in the world (six of which were in Europe and North America).⁶ However, soon after the program's commencement in Ghana, the two states agreed to establish diplomatic relations, at which time the Israeli consulate in Accra was upgraded to an embassy, the first such high-level representation in Africa or Asia.⁷ Within ten years, Israel had established diplomatic relations with all of the non-Arab states of Africa except Somalia.⁸

Support for Israel increased in international forums such as the United Nations during the late 1950s and 1960s. In 1961, Israel turned to the UN for the first time as a forum in its search for a negotiated Middle East peace. At that time Israel presented a motion for immediate direct negotiations between its government and the Arab states; although the motion was defeated, it gained the support of sixteen states, including nine from Africa.⁹ An identical resolution the following year was supported by twenty-one states, twelve of which were African.¹⁰ During the Six-Day War, very few African states voted against Israel at the UN General Assembly.¹¹ Using these criteria—diplomatic relations and voting patterns in international forums—Israel's assistance policy in the 1950s and 1960s could be considered an early success story.

However, the benefits of Israeli development cooperation took a turn for the worse in the late 1960s, and particularly following the onset of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Most dramatically, twenty-seven of thirty-three African states severed relations with Israel, most of

them contemporaneously with the war.¹² Voting patterns of the African states at the UN also changed dramatically through the 1970s, as African nations supported the Arab states in condemning Israel. Most devastating, from Israel's point of view, was the infamous UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 of November 10, 1975, which asserted that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination."

This chain of events caused Israel's development cooperation agenda to lose much of its political steam. Israel's assistance budgets were gradually slashed and MASHAV's operations considerably down-scaled. Whereas in 1959-60, the government budgeted 1.7 million Israeli pounds for assistance out of the total Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget of 5 million Israeli pounds,¹³ today MASHAV's budget stands at approximately NIS 35,405,000 (\$7,571,013) out of an MFA budget of NIS 1.3 billion.¹⁴ This represents a drop from 34 percent to 3 percent of the total MFA budget.

In assessing the African severing of diplomatic ties, it is important to place this trend in its proper context, which included: a negative attitudinal shift on the part of African nations following Israel's "flat refusals" to withdraw from the territories occupied in the 1967 Six-Day War and, in particular, from the Sinai Peninsula, which is situated on the African continent;¹⁵ Africa's blaming the Yom Kippur War on Israel's refusal to withdraw;¹⁶ mounting Arab propaganda in Africa against Israel; a failed Organization of African Unity peace mission in 1971-72, which resulted in several African leaders seeing the Arab states as less intransigent than Israel;¹⁷ increasing economic pressures, particularly related to the global oil crises; promises of Arab development aid to Africa; and Israel's growing relationship with South Africa, which fed the severe downward spiral in African-Israeli relations.

This explanation is not mentioned to justify or condone the African behavior toward Israel, nor to discount Israel's legitimate feelings of offense and betrayal. However, it does raise the question of whether development assistance, or any strategy of soft power for that

matter, is capable of achieving tangible results. Nye notes that while the ability of a state to achieve specific policy goals, such as garnering UN votes, may sometimes be affected by soft power, this cannot be its ultimate aim; rather, soft power is better suited to influence the general goals sought by a country.¹⁸

The measure and evaluation of any soft power strategy—including development assistance—in quid pro quo terms is not only a misconception of its purpose, but will invariably lead to erroneous conclusions concerning its effectiveness, as is the case with Israeli development cooperation. Moreover, soft power techniques are not necessarily intended to, nor often are capable of, overcoming rapid and powerful negative international movements, particularly those in which *realpolitik* is the prevailing force, and where a country's image has been significantly harmed, as occurred in Israel's case after 1967. The remainder of this essay will outline what soft power strategy, and specifically development assistance, can and should aim to achieve.

Nye's Theory of Soft Power and Development Assistance

Soft power utilizes cooption, rather than coercion, to enhance a state's capacity to attain policy objectives.¹⁹ Nye refers to a country's culture, political values and foreign policy as sources of its soft power.²⁰ He also includes international development assistance as important to a state's soft power, citing, for example, the George W. Bush administration's pledge to take the lead in fighting HIV/AIDS as a policy that enhances its attractiveness or its soft power resources.²¹

An effective development assistance campaign can enhance a state's soft power by exporting a "diplomacy of values," thereby enhancing its credibility, trust, and leadership in the world.²² The portrayal of a state's positive value structure may be achieved through emergency humanitarian relief, the promotion of development and poverty reduction, and support for human rights and democracy.²³

Many countries today incorporate development assistance policy

as a tool of soft power. The United States government's development assistance program, for example, falls squarely within the soft power paradigm, having been incorporated into the U.S. National Security Strategy.²⁴ The categorical linking of development assistance to the promotion of U.S. power constitutes a "recognition of the value of both hard and soft power in the pursuit of a safer and more secure world."²⁵ The 2006 National Security Strategy emphasizes the critical importance of U.S. aid to national security, highlighting, for example, the approval of \$1.5 billion in aid from the newly created Millennium Challenge Account; the president's \$15 billion emergency plan to combat AIDS; the \$900 million African clean water initiative; the promotion of debt sustainability and relief; and U.S. government cooperation with private enterprise to promote development goals.²⁶ These and other activities emphasize the administration's belief in the relevance of U.S. aid to national security or, as stated in the 2006 National Security Strategy, "America's national interests and moral values drive us in the same direction: to assist the world's poor citizens and least developed nations and help integrate them into the global economy."²⁷ The tsunami disaster of December 2004 provides a further case in point, in response to which Nye stated that the \$350 million of U.S. government disaster relief, the assistance of private U.S. charities and nonprofit organizations, and the promotion of images of U.S. soldiers delivering relief to disaster victims contributed to American soft power.²⁸

China is another state that self-evidently utilizes development assistance to promote its soft power. Its multipronged soft power strategy in Africa includes leveraging traditional financial aid and technical support programs with a rapidly expanding bilateral trade and commercial relationship, while emphasizing its principle of noninterference in its partners' domestic affairs.²⁹ China's soft power, or its attraction, is therefore based on conducting trade and providing aid on a "no-strings-attached" basis.

If development assistance is an important component of soft

power strategies for military and economic powers such as the U.S. and China, it is all the more so for small, threatened states less capable of defending against hard power enemies, and therefore in need of cultivating as many friends as possible. One such state is Singapore, which, like Israel, is a small state facing ongoing existential threats. Singapore has long recognized the benefits of a well-designed soft power strategy, a key component of which is its development assistance and service program. This program is run by a partly government-funded organization entrusted with "building goodwill and warm ties" between Singapore and its nearby developing states.³⁰ Singapore's soft power strategy, including its development assistance program, is seen as a critical strategic paradigm required for a "state under siege."³¹

The Promise of Soft Power to Meet Israel's Challenges

If existential threats and ongoing siege demand a soft power strategy, then certainly this applies to the State of Israel. At the time of its establishment, Israel's very existence was seen by many as a moral act that contributed to the righting of a historic injustice.³² The sense of attraction toward Israel grew in its early days, as it overcame natural and externally imposed challenges and built a lively democratic state.³³ However, since the Six-Day War, Israel's international attraction has diminished, to the point that Israel's predicament may be described today as one of "negative soft power," in the sense that "it not only lacks support, but in fact generates negative and even hostile attitudes."³⁴ Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, recently went so far as to cast doubt on the likelihood that the 1947 vote on the UN Partition Plan would today pass at the UN General Assembly.³⁵

In light of such realities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) seems recently to have begun conceptualizing a soft power strategy—which includes development cooperation—as part of Israel's foreign policy. MFA Director-General Ron Prosor, in a policy address in Jan-

uary of this year, cited the international trend “to prefer ‘soft’ diplomacy over ‘hard’ diplomacy” and noted that Israel must “find the appropriate balance between hard power and soft power.” He went on to state:

This brings me to the topic of promoting soft power; we are working within the diplomatic framework in order to strengthen Israel’s educational, cultural, and technological influence. We changed our direction with regards to public diplomacy, and we now emphasize these aspects of Israel, focusing less on the anachronistic *hasbara* which deterred investment, trade, and tourism. We are currently directing a project on rebranding the State of Israel. *In this context, the Department of International Cooperation [MASHAV], which operates within the Foreign Ministry, is the winning formula of soft power.* It combines economic utility with the values of the state. It conveys Israel’s contribution to “healing the world.”³⁶ (Emphasis added.)

There is good reason to agree with the MFA director-general that development cooperation constitutes an exemplary implementation of Israeli soft power strategy. Development cooperation personifies what has been termed the “policy-values-culture” triangle: Israeli policy, Jewish values, and Jewish culture, the primary source of soft power of Israel and the Jewish people.³⁷ Development cooperation policy has great potential to provide Israel with a real sense of “attraction,” or soft power, vis-à-vis both recipient countries and the international community at large.

First, development cooperation is clearly a policy priority of the Israeli government. Second, it is rooted in Jewish values, as envisaged by many of Israel’s early leaders, who saw Israel’s creation in messianic terms. Ben-Gurion was the primary advocate of applying Jewish values to Israeli development cooperation, stating, for example:

It is the messianic vision, which has lived for thousands of years in the heart of the Jewish people, the vision of national and universal salvation, and the aspiration to be a “covenant of the people” and a “light of the nations,” that has preserved us to this day, and only

through loyalty to our Jewish and universal mission will we safeguard our future in the homeland and our standing among the nations of the world.³⁸

Third, contemporary development cooperation portrays Israel in its classic (and long-forgotten) identity as a state with limited resources, but with a desire to assist others. This approach is reminiscent of the earliest days of Israeli development cooperation, when Israel sent experts (which it had) rather than money (which it lacked) to work together and forge relationships with African and Asian counterparts.³⁹

Finally, development cooperation represents the values and culture of the modern-day Jewish world. The involvement of Jews in *tikkun olam*—healing the world—has become the way many Jews express their Judaism today.⁴⁰ By deepening its development assistance commitments, Israel can work together with and leverage similar efforts occurring throughout the Jewish world, a connection that not only lends weight to Israel’s efforts but provides a new and positive bridge between the agendas of world Jewry and Israel.

Israel’s international aims, as described by MFA Director-General Prozor, are also largely focused on the requirements “that we link Israel to the international agenda, and the international agenda to Israel”; that Israel act “as a responsible nation and an active member in the family of nations”; and that it “form broader coalitions in order to open room to maneuver and gain support for our policy.”⁴¹ Israel’s participation as an active member of the international community and its presence in broader coalitions to gain support for its policies clearly fall within the rubric of soft power strategy. Further, this is the precise *modus operandi* of international development activity, which, by definition, encourages the sharing of expertise and resources. Particularly in light of the international community’s current focus on development issues, Israeli development cooperation represents an opportunity to showcase Israel as a responsible member of the international community, thereby bolstering its image.

An important caveat to the above is the awareness that increasing Israel's participation in international development assistance efforts will not necessarily ensure the upgrading of relations, nor will it produce a desired UN vote from a recipient country. However, this strategy will no doubt increase Israel's sense of attraction by enhancing its long-term relationships, connecting its diplomats and development experts with local communities, pairing academic, professional and political elites with their counterparts in other states, and partnering Israeli institutions with local and international agencies.

Policy Challenge

The challenge for Israeli policymakers today is to devise a well-conceived policy for development cooperation within the framework of an overall soft power strategy.⁴² This will require setting concrete priorities for Israel's development assistance program, which have been somewhat lacking in recent years.⁴³ This will no doubt involve increased budgets or, as Nye points out, making the allocation of funds for development assistance match the rhetoric.⁴⁴ Until recently, there had been little discussion in Israeli governmental circles of reversing the downward movement in its development budget allocation. The Agenda 21 program, adopted by most of the world's governments at the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, set a target for Official Development Assistance (ODA) for wealthy nations at 0.7 percent of GDP.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the government funding for MASHAV's development assistance programs, as a percentage of GDP, flounders at 0.0057 percent.

At this time there appears to be a political push for greater budgets for development assistance, with the MFA director-general recently stating:

As a responsible and enlightened nation, we must meet international standards. Israel must designate a certain percentage of its GNP for contributions to the developing world, as do other developed nations, and as is required of us as a member of the OECD.⁴⁶

Importantly, the message not only must be internalized by the MFA, but also accepted by the public at large, by the political establishment, and, most critically, by the top echelons of the Finance Ministry, which controls the state's purse strings. The message should convey the great opportunities that may be derived from revitalizing Israel's development cooperation agenda. Conceived properly, such an endeavor will contribute to an outward-looking foreign policy for a country that exercises not only hard power to defend itself, but is also a respected, proactive member of the international community.

Notes

1. David Ben-Gurion, *Israel: Years of Challenge* (Great Britain: Massada-P.E.C. Press Ltd, 1962) pp. 239-40.
2. Ibid., chapter 13; Aluf Ben, "Improve the Image," *Ha'aretz*, Feb. 16, 2006.
3. Ibid., Aluf Ben; see also Sharon Pardo, *Soft Power: A National Asset* (Jerusalem: The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute), No. 2, Jan. 2005.
4. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs* 83:3 (May/June 2004), pp. 16-20. See also Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990). Prof. Nye is the former dean the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, chairman of the National Intelligence Council, and assistant secretary of defense in the Clinton administration.
5. Tibor S. Rodin, *Political Aspects of Israeli Foreign Aid in Africa*, Ph.D. dissertation in political science, University of Nebraska, University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, pp. 46-47.
6. Samuel Decalo, "Israeli Foreign Policy and the Third World," *Orbis* 11:3, Fall 1967, pp. 724-45, reprinted in Samuel Decalo, *Israel and Africa: Forty Years, 1956-1996*, Middle East Studies, No. 1 (Gainesville and London: Florida Academic Press), p. 26.
7. Ibid., p. 33.
8. Hanan S. Aynor and Shimon Avimor (eds.), *Thirty Years of Israel's International Technical Assistance Cooperation* (Jerusalem: Ha'igud: Society for Transfer of Technology, and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, 1990), p. 179.
9. Decalo, "Israeli Foreign Policy," p. 39.
10. Ibid.
11. Aynor and Avimor, *Thirty Years*, pp. 260-261.
12. Lawrence P. Frank, "Israel and Africa: The Era of Tachlis," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 26:1 (March 1988), pp. 151-55.
13. Aynor and Avimor, *Thirty Years*, p. E11.

14. 2006 figures, taken from 2006 government budget, at <http://www.mof.gov.il/budget2006/mainpagin.htm>.

15. "Africa and the Middle East War," *West Africa*, Oct. 15, 1973, p. 1443. Also, in Frank, "Israel and Africa," p. 152.

16. As stated by General Yakuba Gowon, then chairman of the Organization of African Unity. See "Middle East War: West African Reactions," *West Africa*, Oct. 15, 1973, p. 1508.

17. "Africa and the Middle East War."

18. Joseph Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), pp. 16-17.

19. See generally Nye, *Bound to Lead*; Nye, *The Means to Success*.

20. Nye, *The Means to Success*, Chapter 1.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2; Joseph Nye, Jr., "America's soft power suffering as it loses the propaganda war," *Taipei Times*, Jan. 22, 2005.

22. See Carol Lancaster, "Redesigning Foreign Aid," *Foreign Affairs* 79:5 (Sep./Oct. 2000), pp. 74-88.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.

24. From the edited transcript of a speech by Nancy Birdsall entitled "American Power and Development," April 12, 2005, Carnegie Council-Eckerd College.

25. Steven Radelet and Sheila Herrling, *The Millennium Challenge Account: Soft Power or Collateral Damage*, Center for Global Development, 2:2, April 2003.

26. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, March 2006.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Joseph Nye, Jr., "Rice must deploy more 'soft power,'" *Daily Star* (Beirut, Lebanon), Jan. 25, 2005.

29. Drew Thompson, "China's Soft Power in Africa: From the 'Beijing Consensus' to Health Diplomacy," *Asia Media*, Oct. 13, 2005.

30. From an address by Dr. Tan Tay Keong, executive director of the Singapore International Foundation, delivered at the Hartog School of Government, Tel Aviv University, Nov. 16, 2005. The presentation detailed the fully coordinated nature of Singapore's soft power strategy, which focuses on the "uniqueness" of Singapore as its "attraction," i.e., its soft power. The strategy aims to make Singapore "the land of opportunity," or the "London of finance, the New York of culture, and the Boston of education."

31. *Ibid.*

32. Pardo, *Soft Power*, p. 9.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

34. *Ibid.*, Yehezkel Dror, foreword to Pardo.

35. Aluf Ben, "Improve the Image."

36. MFA Director-General Ron Prosor, in an address to the Sixth Herzliya Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security, Jan. 22, 2006.

37. Pardo, *Soft Power*, p. 10.

38. Rodin, *Political Aspects of Israeli Foreign Aid in Africa*, p. 108, citing *Israel Government Year Book 1959-69*, p. 83.

39. In this regard, Ben-Gurion wrote of Israeli experts: "They must feel that they are performing a pioneering mission—not just a job for hire. This should be manifest in an attitude of humanity and fraternity, with neither arrogance nor self-deprecation, toward the peoples among whom they work, and an all-out effort to pass on the best of our knowledge and experience. Representatives of this type, and to our good fortune we have had them so far, will benefit those they serve and Israel." Ben-Gurion, *Israel: Years of Challenge*, p. 235-36.

40. For more on this point, see Avi Beker's article, p. 34.

41. Ron Prosor, address to Sixth Herzliya Conference.

42. While precise operational recommendations fall outside the rubric of this paper, suggestions may include reducing the number of recipient states; increasing focus regarding partners chosen within recipient states; and maintaining and building relations with those partners over time. This concept is based on an interview with Aliza Inbal of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 12, 2006. A broader approach may also include establishing an office of public diplomacy, similar to the U.S. Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, which would have overall charge of operationalizing Israel's soft power strategy, with MASHAV's participation in its ongoing development cooperation agenda.

43. The most recent State Comptroller's Report stated: "The management of the Foreign Ministry didn't set priorities for MASHAV, and MASHAV doesn't allocate its resources on the basis of predetermined criteria. MASHAV didn't prepare a work plan for integration into the international agenda." State Comptroller, *Annual Report 55 for 2004 and for the Accounts of the 2003 Financial Year*, p. 604.

44. Nye, "Rice must deploy."

45. GDP is referred to for simplicity, although the OECD and some countries have altered the measure to Gross National Income (GNI), which includes terms of trade adjustment.

46. Ron Prosor, speech to the Sixth Herzliya Conference.

Contributors to this Volume

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