



Beyond Peace: Israel, the Mashreq, and Europe Prospects for Cooperation

Hamburg, 14/15 January 2008



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Prospects for Cooperation**

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Preface

In just a few months' time, the State of Israel will celebrate the 60th anniversary of its foundation. It is deeply regrettable that the conflicts in the Middle East have not diminished in the intervening decades. The region continues to give constant cause for concern in global politics. The peace treaties signed between Israel and its neighbouring states Egypt and Jordan are at present outweighed by unsuccessful peace initiatives and military campaigns.

In organizing this symposium, the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius wishes to address the future direction of the Middle East. Based on the premise that two independent nation states are the only feasible solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the aim is to sketch out a way into the future for the region. Increasingly, there is a focus on the role of Europe, and of the European Union, because the 'old continent' has emerged as the most important economic and political partner for Israel and the countries of the Mashreq.

What is the potential contribution Europe and the European Union can make towards consolidating a new status quo in the Middle East? Could Europe become a catalyst for progress in the region in terms of political, economic and social development? What are the attitudes of Israel and the countries of the Mashreq towards the possibility of the European Union taking a stronger role in the region?

These are just some of the questions to be addressed during the two-day symposium, "Beyond Peace: Israel, the Mashreq, and Europe – Prospects for Cooperation", which will bring together representatives from the arenas of politics, economics and civil society from Egypt, France, Germany, Israel, Jordan, the Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Turkey, the European Union, and the United States.

With this symposium, the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius also wishes to honour Professor Dr. h.c. Manfred Lahnstein and his continued endeavours for Israel and the Middle East. In his role as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the University of Haifa, as President of the Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft (German-Israeli Friendship Committee) and as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the ZEIT-Stiftung, Manfred Lahnstein has, over many years, supported the State of Israel and Judaism, and tirelessly promoted reconciliation in the Middle East. In June last year, the University of Haifa rewarded him with an honorary doctorate.

We are pleased to be able to host this symposium, in the hope that this convention will make a constructive and creative contribution to shaping a peaceful future that we can all share.



Prof. Dr. Michael Göring
President of the Board of Directors
ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius



Dr. Markus Baumanns
Executive Vice President
ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius

"Working for peace is uphill work – but worth every effort"
Manfred Lahnstein interviewed by Oliver Gnad*



** Oliver Gnad has been Project Director Education / Governance of the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius until December 2007 and has organized the symposium "Beyond Peace: Israel, the Mashreq, and Europe – Prospects for Cooperation"*

Mr. Lahnstein, forty years ago you travelled to Israel for the first time as a member of a delegation of the European Trade Union Confederation. What did this trip mean to you at the time – particularly in the light of the dramatic events in 1967?

The real importance lay in my first personal experience of Israel, its people, its history and future. At the time, this made a deep impression on me. The tangibly all-pervasive threats from Arabic neighbours against the young nation state contributed to my deep feeling of solidarity with Israel. I was convinced even at the time that we should bind Israel closely to Europe.

What is Germany's special responsibility in the new Europe, and what does this entail for Germany's foreign policy, specifically in relation to Israel?

Strengthening the EU – which we all want – will necessarily reduce the scope of Germany's Israeli policy. On the other hand, there are new opportunities for Germany, along with the responsibility to be Israel's reliable and fair ally within the EU. We should not try to hide behind anyone in this scenario.

What are Israel's expectations of Germany after unification?

Israel expects Germany to take a very active role amongst other nations. For instance, the active role of the Bundeswehr off the coast of Lebanon was unanimously received in a positive light; concern over this role on the German side proved to be unfounded.

In the summer of last year, you called for Israel to become a member of the Council of Europe and the OECD. How realistic are these types of initiatives?

A very close relationship has developed between the EU and Israel, with successful cooperations on many levels. However, a full membership of Israel in the EU would pose so many political problems that the government in Jerusalem – very wisely – is treading very carefully. On the other hand, Israel is very close to Europe, not just in sports or in Eurovision contests. Membership in the Council of Europe (and the same is true of Turkey) and in the OECD (the same as Australia or South Korea) would deepen this bond. That is the reason why I am actively gathering support for the plan.

What is the relevance of the EU for Israel and, in general terms, what is Israel's view of the EU?

Europe is a partner of prime importance for Israel in many areas: in the economy as well as in the fields of cultural exchange and science and research. But the future image of the EU in Israel will depend crucially on whether and how we succeed in speaking in unison in the region. The US can be expected to remain the decisive partner for a while to come.

What would the conditions be for Israel joining the EU in terms of political, and – more importantly – security requirements?

At the moment, these are hypothetical questions. The old English adage applies: "We should cross the bridge when we come to it". Instead, we should concentrate on consolidating our relations along the southern and south-eastern boundaries of the EU. There are many challenges in this region of the Mediterranean that call for a unified approach in multilateral cooperations. I am convinced that Israel could be a valuable and active partner in this endeavour.

Where do you see the geographical and cultural or ideological boundaries of Europe?

For reasons that in recent times have been extensively discussed, I am in favour of granting Turkey full membership of the EU, provided the negotiations can be brought to a positive conclusion. The debate on values that you mentioned should not be played out in religious terms, in my view. I wish to uphold the values of our constitution and the Convention on Human Rights of the United Nations.

Unlike Israel, its neighbouring Arabic states are not regarded as potential members by the EU. To facilitate interaction in the region, the EU has developed the so-called European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). What is your view of this instrument, and in how far can it contribute to peace in the Middle East and its societies?

The ENP might prove very beneficial, provided the instrument is filled with concrete meaning as soon as possible and incorporated into a reliable and efficient multilateral framework. For the time being, active membership in the so-called "Quartet" will be more important in moving forward much-needed policies for peace in the Middle East.

... Critics of the ENP regard it primarily as an instrument for – possibly unwanted – intervention in socio-political negotiations in Arabic countries.

What use is a dialogue that ignores central issues? We are already seeing too much political showmanship! And who would want to oppose democratic principles in other parts of the world being adapted to their specific requirements? Personally, I would place the rule of law in a constitutional state at the top of the agenda.

In pragmatic terms, what are the possible next steps towards forging closer relationships between the EU and Arabic ENP countries?

There is a great deal of practical work to be done. I would just mention a few areas: migration, terrorism, drug and human trafficking, also economic aid, a fair-trade EU agricultural policy, environmental protection, water management. All of this already constitutes a huge challenge!

Apart from the Middle East initiative of the "Quartet", what can the EU do to bring Israelis and Arabs closer together?

The role of the Middle East "Quartet" is to focus on the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It is to be hoped that the agenda recently agreed upon in Annapolis will be adhered to, but I am doubtful as to the very ambitious time schedule. In connection with this conflict, the EU should do its utmost to assist Tony Blair in order to make this complicated mission a success. It is obvious though, that much patience will be needed. In the words of my friend Amos Oz, "Peace has to be agreed between enemies". This is always difficult. Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and with Jordan do prove, though, that it is possible. Working for peace is uphill work – but worth every effort!





Programme

Beyond Peace: Israel, the Mashreq, and Europe
Prospects for Cooperation

Hamburg, 14/15 January 2008

14 January 2008

Quo Vadis, USA? And how Western are you?

Public Lecture

Bucerius Law School – Auditorium maximum

- 17.00 Welcome
- Markus Baumanns**, Executive Vice President,
 ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Hamburg
- 17.05 Remarks by **Fritz Stern**, Historian, Columbia University, New York
- commented by **Wolfgang Ischinger**, German Ambassador
 to the United Kingdom, London, and
 Avi Primor, Director, Center for European Studies,
 Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Herzliya
- introduced and moderated by **Georg Mascolo**, Bureau Chief,
 DER SPIEGEL, Berlin
- 18.45 Reception
- 19.30 Bus transfer

15 January 2008

Beyond Peace: Israel, the Mashreq, and Europe Prospects for Cooperation

Symposium

Hotel "Le Royal Méridien" – Conference Room "Blankenese"

09.00 - 09.15

Introduction

Volker Perthes, Director, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin

09.15 - 11.15

Quo Vadis, Israel? And how European are you?

Introductory remarks by **Shlomo Avineri**, former Director,
Institute for European Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Panel Discussion:

Majid Al-Haj, Vice President, University of Haifa, Haifa

Shlomo Avineri, former Director, Institute for European Studies,
Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Fania Oz-Salzberger, Director, Posen Research Forum for
Jewish European and Israeli Political Thought, Faculty of Law,
University of Haifa, Haifa

Ron Pundak, Director General, Peres Center for Peace, Tel Aviv

Alfred Tovias, Director, Leonard Davis Institute for
International Relations, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

moderated by **Jürgen Hogrefe**,
EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg AG, Berlin

11.15 - 11.45

Coffee Break

11.45 - 13.15

The Arab World and the European Union: Creating Mutual Gains through Cooperation

Introductory remarks by **Riad al Khouri**, Director,
Middle East Business Associates Ltd., Amman

Panel Discussion:

Mahdi Abdul-Hadi, Chairman, Palestinian Academic Society
for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem

Riad al Khouri, Director, Middle East Business Associates Ltd.,
Amman

Sari Nusseibeh, President, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem

Abdel Monem Said-Aly, Director, Al-Ahram Center for Political
and Strategic Studies, Cairo

moderated by **Volker Perthes**, Director,
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin

13.15 - 15.00

Lunch



15.00 - 16.30

The EU – Finding its Role in the Middle East

Introductory remarks by **Joschka Fischer**, former German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Berlin

Panel Discussion:

Cengiz Çandar, Chief Columnist, Referans / Turkish Daily News, Istanbul

Joschka Fischer, former German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Berlin

Dominique Moïsi, Deputy Director, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris

Marc Otte, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process, Brussels

moderated by **Christoph Bertram**, former Director, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Hamburg

16.30 - 17.00

Coffee Break



17.00 - 17.30

Wrap up and Outlook

Cooperation between Israel, the Mashreq and Europe – A Cautious Vision

Manfred Lahnstein, Chairman of the Board of Trustees,
ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Hamburg

19.00

Dinner

Restaurant "Le Soleil", Hotel "Le Royal Méridien", Hamburg

A personal note by **Michael Göring**, President of the Board of
Directors, ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Hamburg

Speakers' Curricula Vitae

Mahdi Abdul-Hadi is Head and founder of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) in Jerusalem. PASSIA is an independent, non-profit Palestinian institution. It undertakes research on Palestine and its international affairs. Dr. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi is member of the Jerusalem Arab Council in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace in Ramallah, and the Association of Palestinian Policy Research Institutes. He was Fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University (1985), the Salzburg International Seminar (1986), the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the EuroMeSCo network, and the Arab Social Science Research Network. He is also a member of the Arab Thought Forum headed by Prince Hassan bin Talal in Amman, Jordan. Dr. Abdul-Hadi received his Ph.D. from the School of Peace Studies at Bradford University.

Majid Al-Haj is Vice President and Dean of Research, Head of the Center for Multiculturalism and Educational Research and Professor of Sociology at the University of Haifa. He has been Visiting Professor at Carleton University (Canada) and Duke University (USA) and Visiting Scholar at the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan and the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Majid Al-Haj received his doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and pursued post-doctoral studies at Brown University, USA. His most recent work focuses on education, multiculturalism, empowerment of minorities, immigration and ethnic formation. He has published extensively on the social and political structure of the Palestinians in Israel, Palestinian refugees, and a wide range of other topics.

Riad al Khouri is currently Senior Fellow of the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan and Visiting Scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Institute, where he is working on a comparison of EU Euro-Med agreements with US free trade agreements in the Arab World. He graduated from l'Ecole Internationale de Genève, the American University of Beirut and Oxford University, where he studied Economics. He has taught Economics at Lebanese universities, and acted as economic advisor to the president of the Palestine National Fund. His economic consulting assignments include work for the private sector as well as a wide range of international and multi-lateral organizations, among them ILO, OPEC Fund, UNDP, UNIDO, USAID, and the World Bank. He writes widely about economic development issues and publishes extensively in books, scholarly journals, and for mass media.

Shlomo Avineri is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He studied at the Hebrew University and the London School of Economics and has held visiting appointments at Yale, Cornell, Oxford, and Northwestern University, and many other universities around the globe. He was also Visiting Scholar at the Wilson Center, the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C. He is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Center for Applied Political Research (CAP) in Munich, and recurring Visiting Professor at Central European University in Budapest. From 1975 to 1977, he was Director-General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the first government of Yitzhak Rabin. In 1979, he was a member of the joint Egyptian-Israeli commission that drafted the Cultural and Scientific Agreement between the two countries. In 1996, he was awarded the Israel Prize, the country's highest civilian decoration. His op-ed articles have appeared in The New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, DIE ZEIT, Die Welt, Le Figaro, Le Monde, Gazeta Wyborcza, Daily Star, and Jordan Times.

Markus Baumanns has been the Executive Vice President of the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius since 2006, and is responsible for the initiatives of the Foundation in the field of Science and Education and the projects in America and Asia. He is also Chairman of the Executive Board of Bucerius Law School, the first private Law School in Germany, founded by the ZEIT-Stiftung. He obtained a Master's Degree in History, Political Science and Literature in 1990 and a Ph.D. in History in 1994 from the University of Cologne. He started his career in 1990 in the Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government. In 1995, he entered the German Foreign Service and served as diplomat at the German embassy in Bogotá, Colombia. In January 2000, he started at the ZEIT-Stiftung as Program Director for international programs, press and public relations. From 2001 to 2006, he served as CEO and Provost of the flagship project of the Foundation, the Bucerius Law School.

Christoph Bertram served as Director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP) from 1998 to 2005. As one of the largest and most influential think-tanks in Europe, the SWP is frequently consulted by the German Government and Parliament on questions of foreign and security policy. Prior to that, Bertram served as Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and as foreign policy correspondent of the Hamburg-based weekly DIE ZEIT. In Spring 2006, he held the Steven Muller Chair in German Studies at the Bologna Center of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University.

Cengiz Çandar is the Chief Columnist of the daily Referans and the English language daily Turkish Daily News. He is also a Lecturer on Middle East History and Politics at the Istanbul Kültür University. From 1999 to 2000, he was Public Policy Scholar at the Wilson Center and Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington D.C. From 1991 to 1993, he was Special Advisor on foreign policy issues to President Turgut Özal. Cengiz Çandar is the author of several books, mainly on Middle East issues, on Turkish-American relations and on Turkish foreign policy. He is currently working on a book on Turkey's Middle East strategy.

Joschka Fischer served as Germany's Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice Chancellor from 1998 to 2005. Mr. Fischer was widely respected for leading the Green Party to the centre stage of German politics. Upon his appointment as Minister of the Environment and Energy in the federal state of Hesse in 1985, he was the first member of the Green Party to assume a government post. From 1991 to 1994, he again served as Hessian Minister for the Environment, Energy, and Federal Affairs. From 1994 to 1998, he acted as Parliamentary Spokesman for the Green Party in the German Bundestag. For the duration of the academic year 2006/2007, Joschka Fischer was Visiting Professor at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

Michael Göring is CEO and member of the Executive Board of the Hamburg-based ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, one of the largest foundations in Germany. Since 2005, he has been the ZEIT Foundation's President of the Board of Directors. Professor Dr. Michael Göring is member of the Executive Board of the Bucerius Law School as well as of the Board of Trustees of the Bucerius Kunst Forum. As one of Germany's philanthropic leaders, he is involved with numerous foundations and private organizations. Since 2000, he has taught as honorary professor at the Cultural and Media Management Institute at the Hamburg School of Music and Theatre.

Jürgen Hogrefe is the Chief Representative of EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg AG, and since May 2003 has directed the department for economics, politics and society of the Holding which is based in Berlin. Following his studies in journalism, political science and Latin American studies, he worked as a journalist, and in 1983 became the speaker of the Green Party in the state parliament of Lower Saxony. Starting in April 1985, he worked as an editor for the news weekly DER SPIEGEL, and from 1994 to 1998 served the magazine as Israel correspondent. He then became foreign affairs editor at the Berlin office of the magazine.

Wolfgang Ischinger is the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Kingdom. Since early August 2007, he has also represented the European Union in the Troika negotiations on Kosovo. He joined the German Foreign Service in 1975 with a German law degree and a Master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He worked at the UN Secretariat in New York and was later posted to Washington D.C. and to Paris. In Bonn, he served as Private Secretary to Foreign Minister Genscher. From 1993 to 1998, Ambassador Ischinger served in various senior positions in the Foreign Ministry. He led the German delegation during the Bosnia Peace Talks at Dayton, Ohio, the negotiations concerning the NATO-Russia Founding Act, as well as the negotiations on NATO and EU enlargement, and on the Kosovo crisis. From 1998 to 2001, Mr. Ischinger was State Secretary (Deputy Foreign Minister) in the German Foreign Office. From 2001 to 2006, he served as Germany's Ambassador to the US in Washington D.C.

Manfred Lahnstein is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Hamburg. He served as German Federal Minister of Finance in 1982, and was Head of the Federal Chancellery in Bonn from 1980 to 1982. Previously, he served as State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Finance from 1977 to 1980. He was active in the private sector as a member of the Board of Directors for Bertelsmann AG from 1983 to 1994, where he was responsible for the development of the New Media sector. From 1994 to 1998, he was a member of Bertelsmann's supervisory board. In 1994 he founded Lahnstein & Partner, International Consultants, Hamburg.

Georg Mascolo has been working for the SPIEGEL Publishing Group since 1988. Until 1992, he was assigned as a reporter for SPIEGEL TV, the Group's television section. He extensively covered the end of the GDR/ German unification as well as the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1992, he joined DER SPIEGEL magazine, Germany's most influential political weekly. He was deputy bureau chief of DER SPIEGEL's Berlin office until 2000, when he took charge of the German desk at DER SPIEGEL headquarters in Hamburg. He headed the SPIEGEL editorial team that reconstructed the events of 9/11 and won multiple awards. In August 2004, Georg Mascolo was assigned to DER SPIEGEL's Washington bureau as senior political correspondent. He is now the bureau chief of DER SPIEGEL in Berlin.

Dominique Moïsi is co-founder and Special Advisor to the Institut Français des Relations Internationales in Paris and Professor for International Relations at Collège d'Europe Natolin in Warsaw, Poland. Dominique Moïsi was professor at l'Institut d'Études Politiques, Paris, at l'École Nationale d'Administration (ENA), as well as at the Johns Hopkins University, SAIS, Bologna, to mention just a few of his previous positions. His op-eds and essays appear in Foreign Affairs, the Financial Times, Die Welt, Ouest France and many other dailies and weeklies throughout the world. Moreover, Dominique Moïsi contributed articles to more than 50 books on European security, and transatlantic relations, as well as Europe and the Middle East. His most recent book "France in an Age of Globalization" (2000) has been translated into several languages.

Sari Nusseibeh is President and Professor of Philosophy at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. He was the architect of the strategy of civil resistance during the Intifada from 1987 to 1993, and returned to political life from 2001 to 2003, when he served as the political commissioner for Jerusalem affairs in the PLO. Born in Damascus, he returned to the West Bank in 1978 to teach at Birzeit University. At the same time, he taught classes in Islamic philosophy to Jewish students at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Professor Nusseibeh was a Fellow at the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, the Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. Between 1991 and 1993, he served as Chairman of the Technical and Advisory Committees to the peace talks and was a member of the Steering Committee of the Palestinian Negotiating Team. Sari Nusseibeh holds an M.A. Oxon in Politics, Philosophy and Economics and a Ph.D. from Harvard University in Islamic Philosophy.

Marc Otte has been the European Union Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process since 2003. He started his career as teacher at the Teacher Training School of Bokakata in the Democratic Republic of Congo. After a stint in the private sector, he entered the Belgian Foreign Service. From 1976 to 1992, he served in Washington D.C., Kinshasa, and Los Angeles. From 1992 to 1996, he was Ambassador of Belgium to Israel, thereafter he was Director for Security Policy and Disarmament in the General Directorate for Political Affairs of the Belgian Foreign Ministry. In 1999, he became advisor on defence and security policy to the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Head of the ESDP Task Force and the EU Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union in Brussels. Marc Otte holds an M.A. in Political and Social Sciences and a post graduate degree of the Institute for Developing Countries from the University of Louvain.

Fania Oz-Salzberger is Senior Lecturer in History and Director of the Posen Research Forum for Jewish European and Israeli Political Thought at the Faculty of Law, University of Haifa. She is Professor and Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel Studies at Monash University in Melbourne. Her books include "Translating the Enlightenment" (Oxford, 1995) and "Israelis in Berlin" (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 2001; Frankfurt am Main, 2001). She has published widely on the history of political thought and on the European Enlightenment. Her articles have appeared in the International Herald Tribune, the Wall Street Journal, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Ha'aretz. International affiliations include appointments as Fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Advanced Studies (1998) and Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin (1999 to 2000). She holds a B.A. in History and Philosophy and a M.A. in Modern History from Tel Aviv University, and a Ph.D. from Oxford University.

Volker Perthes is Executive Chairman and Director of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP), Berlin. He received his doctorate from the University of Duisburg in 1990 and his habilitation in 1999. He was assistant professor at the American University of Beirut from 1991 to 1993, and joined SWP in 1992, where he headed the Research Group "Middle East and Africa" for several years. He has held teaching positions at the universities of Duisburg, Münster and Munich. Currently, he is Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Humboldt University Berlin and Free University of Berlin. He has published profusely on Middle East and Greater Middle East political topics.

Avi Primor is the Director of the Center for European Studies at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. Following his studies of political science and international relations, he joined the Israeli diplomatic service in 1961. After postings in Africa, Scandinavia and France, Primor became the speaker of the Israeli delegation at the Geneva peace conference to end the Yom-Kippur War in 1973. In 1975, he became the Press and Public Affairs Officer of the Israeli Foreign Office. Two years later, he was made Director of the Department for International Organizations. From 1984 to 1987, Primor was Deputy General Secretary of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs; this was followed by a posting to Belgium in conjunction with representing his country in the European Community. In 1990 he was granted leave from the diplomatic service, instead acting as Vice President of the Hebrew University Jerusalem. From 1993 to 2000, Avi Primor was the Israeli Ambassador to Germany, after that Vice President of the University Tel Aviv until 2003. Avi Primor even today remains one of the most important voices in the German-Israeli dialogue. He is the author of numerous books and a frequently heard commentator on tv, radio and in the printed media.

Ron Pundak serves as the Director General of the Peres Center for Peace, a position he has held since mid-2001. He played a decisive role in creating the secret track of the unofficial Oslo negotiations at the beginning of 1993, and subsequently served as a member of the official Israeli negotiating team in the later stage of the Oslo Process. Since then, Pundak has been involved in a number of "Track 2" initiatives regarding an Israeli-Palestinian final status agreement, dealing with issues such as Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and economic aspects of the conflict. Prior to joining the Peres Center for Peace, Pundak served as Executive Director of the Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF). He has also worked in the fields of intelligence, army, government and journalism. Ron Pundak holds a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern political history from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London.

Abdel Monem Said-Aly has been Director of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo since 1994. He has also served as a member of the board for the al-Ahram Foundation since 1999. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution and a Senior Research Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. He is the founder of both the International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace and the Egyptian Peace Movement. He previously served on the board of the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies in Cairo. A prolific author, Said-Aly has written extensively about the Arab world in both English and Arabic. At the 2004 Cairo Book Fair, he was awarded the "Best Political Book" prize for "The Arabs and September 11th, 2001". His pieces regularly appear in al-Ahram Daily, al-Watan, al-Anba, and al-Ahram al-Arabi newspapers. He is a commentator on political affairs for ORBIT TV Cairo and Egyptian television. Said-Aly received his B.A. in Political Science from Cairo University and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Political Science from Northern Illinois University.

Theo Sommer is currently Editor-at-Large of the German weekly DIE ZEIT. From 1973 to 1992 he served as Editor-in-Chief and held the position of publisher from 1992 to 2000. Sommer headed the Policy Planning Staff of the German Defense Ministry from 1969 to 1970, was responsible for the Defense Ministry's White Book in 1970, and since then has played a prominent part in his posts as Vice-Chairman of the Commission on "Common Security and Future of the German Army" (Weizsäcker Commission). He was a member of the International Commission on the Balkans (1995 to 1996) and of the Independent International Commission on Kosovo (1999 to 2000).

Fritz Stern is a leading contemporary English-language history writer. He was born in Breslau, from where the Nazis forced his family to emigrate in 1938. He gained his B.A., later M.A., degrees in history from Columbia University in New York. His Ph.D. followed in 1953; he became a full professor in 1963. His academic specialization is the history of the Jews in Germany. Fritz Stern has regularly spent time in Germany as a Visiting Professor. After unification, Stern defended the new Germany against criticism abroad, and in 1993 was an advisor to the US Ambassador in Bonn, Richard Holbrooke. Most recently he published his well received memoirs titled, "Fünf Deutschland und ein Leben" ("Five Germanys I Have Known"). In 1999, Fritz Stern was awarded the "Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels" (the German publishers' and booksellers' peace prize); in 2005 he was awarded the "Deutscher Nationalpreis" (German national prize).

Alfred Tovas is Walter Rathenau Professor in European Economics at the Department of International Relations of the Hebrew University. He is currently the Director of the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations at the same university. He also holds the EU-sponsored Jean Monnet Chair on External Economic Relations of the EU, the only one of its kind in Israel. After completing his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Geneva, he taught for several years at this university, in 1979 moving to the Hebrew University, where he has been since then. He was Visiting Lecturer and Research Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (1999 to 2000) and served for several years as Chairman of the Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration, and also as Deputy Director of the Institute for European Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has also been a consultant to the OECD, UNCTAD and to the World Bank, and Research Fellow of the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels.

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