



Market Wise

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THE NEW American administration is in office, and the new Israeli government is just around the corner, but already there are mavens on both sides marketing their skills to help solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To get the message across, former US ambassadors to Israel and former Israel ambassadors to the United States will conduct a daylong roundtable discussion on American mediation in the Israeli-Arab conflict.

"Research, Management and Resolution" is to take place at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Maierdorf Faculty Club on the Mount Scopus campus next Wednesday. Participants include former US ambassadors Samuel W. Lewis (1977-1985) and William A. Brown (1988-1992), and former Israeli ambassadors Moshe Arens (1982-1983), Moshe Arad (1987-1990), Zalman Shoval (1990-1993, 1998-2000) and Danny Ayalon (2002-2006).

US Ambassador James B. Cunningham will also give a brief address, but not within the context of the panel. Prior to the panel discussion, lecturers will be delivered by American, Palestinian and Israeli academics, mediators and negotiators. The event is being coordinated by the United States Institute of Peace, the United States-Israel Educational Foundation, Fulbright, and the Swiss Center for Conflict Research, Management and Resolution at HU.

WHILE REPORTS indicate that Israeli universities are on the decline, Israeli think tanks are moving in the opposite direction. With few natural resources, Israel has long been marketing its brain power. In doing so, it has sometimes shot itself in the foot, because the best and the brightest are snapped up by overseas operators, causing a "brain drain" in Israel.

In what is believed to be the first-ever ranking of the world's leading public-policy research organizations, nine Israeli think tanks have been placed among the top 407. Out of 48 Israeli think tanks considered for evaluation, the nine best also made the top-25 think-tank list in the

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The 2008 Global Survey of Think Tanks, published by the University of Pennsylvania, studied 5,465 think tanks worldwide. A panel of experts nominated 407 think tanks to a list of global "Go-To Think Tanks."

The nine best Israeli think tanks that made it to the top 25 in MENA and the top 407 worldwide are: 1. The Institute for National Security Studies (No. 3 in MENA); 2. The Economic Cooperation Foundation (N. 12 in MENA); 3. The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies (No. 15 in MENA); 4. The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (No. 16 in MENA); 5. The Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) (No. 17 in MENA); 6. The Jerusalem Institute for Market Studies (No. 18 in MENA); 7. The Israel Center for Social and Economic Progress (No. 19 in MENA); 8. The Reut Institute (No. 20 in MENA); and 9. The Rabin Center for Israeli Studies (No. 21 in MENA).

The project grew out of ever-increasing requests from journalists, scholars and government officials for a list of the leading think tanks in a particular country or region of the world. Global "Go-To Think Tanks" is the culmination of 18 months of polling and surveying to create the list.

WINDOW-SHOPPING is an old expression that applies to standing outside a shop and looking at what it has in its display windows. Now window-shopping has gone a step further. Dudu Sagi, general manager of the Renanim shopping mall, has made it possible for anyone with access to a computer attached to the Internet to do digital window shopping. He has attached every shop in the mall to the Renanim Web site so that potential shoppers can do their digital window-shopping before coming to the mall. Those in a hurry can go straight to the shop(s) in which they've seen items they want to buy, without wasting time going from store to store.

It takes a little while to get the hang of the Web site, which could become quite addictive. The only hassle is that users have to be able to read Hebrew. If you can't, it's of very little use to you. For those who can, the address is www.renanim.co.il.

JUDO CHAMPION and Olympic medalist Arik Ze'evi, realizing that even an international champion needs a business outlet of some kind, has gone into partnership in the outdoor advertising agency Think Big. He's just waiting to get his new business cards, which compared to the billboards are very small.

LIKE TOPSY, the Port of Tel Aviv keeps growing and growing as new enterprises move in and existing enterprises expand, even as the economy shrinks. Ker Parquet has just invested NIS 2 million in a new showroom at the port and signed a four-year rental contract, under which it will pay NIS 150 per square meter. The showroom is located in an old building earmarked for preservation. Ker Parquet was selected for the flooring of some of the prestige buildings in Tel Aviv, including Yoo and Number 1 Rothschild, as well as the Mamilla Hotel currently under construction in Jerusalem.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE of expansion is the 50th branch of Yesh, the Shufersal (formerly known as Super-Sol) arm that caters to the haredi community, with prices of many products cheaper than in other divisions of the Shufersal chain. On hand for the affixing of the mezuzah at the Bilu junction store were Shufersal co-chairman Sholom Fisher, Shufersal CEO Effi Rosenhaus and Yesh general manager Yitzhak Walkin.

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