



**Remarks of Yehuda Yaakov  
Consul General of Israel  
2018 AJC Diplomats Seder**

Leonard Kopelman, Dean of the New England-based Diplomatic Corps  
Rob Leikind, Director of AJC-New England  
Jonathan Dorfman, AJC-NE Board President & his predecessor Mel Shuman  
Colleagues & Friends – SHALOM!

This summer I will conclude a four-and-a-half year posting rich with professional fulfillment and personal satisfaction; this region and community have been very good to me and my wife Ofra, and we are so grateful for that. It is therefore a great honor to speak this evening on behalf of the New England-based diplomatic corps, at this most important event celebrating Passover - the ultimate narrative about the power of diplomacy.

More than 3,000 years ago, Moses was the first in the recorded history of our people to engage in diplomacy for the sake of national security. Employing a potent and effective combination of soft and hard – very hard – power, he succeeded in achieving his objective: to lead the people of Israel out of bondage to the promised land, the Land of Israel.

Guess you could call diplomacy just another Israeli start-up!

Ever since, diplomacy has played a central role in the interaction of states and peoples. It has been axiomatic that in promoting national security soft power needs hard power, but also vis-versa. And while the proportions have varied from circumstance to circumstance, the two components are always present together in some form.

For the modern state of Israel, 70 years young next month, our founder and first Prime Minister – also our first Defense Minister - David Ben-Gurion and his first Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett best symbolize this ying-yang paradigm. No matter the names, efforts to strike a balance between these two continue the world over.

I've proudly served Israeli diplomacy for three decades. Our challenges are always great and the expectations that we make tangible contributions to our country's national security are always high. Despite the pressure, we have always managed to shine in wartime and peacetime and in-between time. We've seen this repeatedly: in expanding regional cooperation, combating threats from rogue states and terrorists, promoting the development of

emerging economies, fighting disease, and insisting on the recognition of Jerusalem as our capital. The list goes on.

Israeli diplomacy has played a central role in our country becoming a world leader, whose experience and know-how in a range of areas is actively sought. It boggles even my mind that a country of barely 8.5 million people is the first to rush to help those in need, from Syria to Haiti; despite a five-year drought in the Middle East we can supply all the water needs of our citizens – and many of our neighbors – thanks to locally developed technologies; we have gone from overwhelming energy dependence to becoming a regional supplier of natural gas; almost 20% of global investments in cybersecurity are made in Israel; about 300 multi-national corporations have established an R&D presence in our country; Israel's growth rate is among the OECD's highest, while our inflation and unemployment rates are among its lowest.

Most important for me, 70 years after our establishment, Israel is increasingly accepted by our neighbors in the Middle East and the Mediterranean as a desirable partner and a source of stability. Israeli diplomacy is also contributing to this.

At the local level, Israeli diplomacy works tenaciously to strengthen bilateral ties in the political, economic, academic, cultural and community spheres; all of these are essential components of the modern state's national security. Words cannot express my satisfaction when a New England governor visits Israel; when yet another Israeli-founded company opens a branch in New England; when dozens of students from here travel to my country; when social justice activists from the US and Israel get together, with our assistance, to strengthen shared progressive values; and, yes, when elite Israeli wines enter the local market.

It's not just Israel, of course. The New England-based diplomatic corps works 24/7 to ensure the national security of the countries it represents, simultaneously driving the pulse of this region. Your efforts are worthy of much more local recognition and media attention than you now receive.

I'll conclude with a thought about the future of our profession: Today's diplomats absolutely must be able to transition smoothly between the world of traditional diplomacy and the world of modern public diplomacy, which exists in a virtual space characterized by a rapidly changing dynamic - whose "rules" are often difficult to keep pace with. Today's diplomats – and the countries that appoint them – must incorporate this new reality into the core of their *modus operandi*.

I am optimistic. It is my firm belief that modern diplomacy will continue to strengthen national security by employing a sophisticated combination of traditional and technological means, by strategically combining the strengths of inter-personal connections and the tools of the virtual world. Yehuda Yaakov

needs @CGYehuda in order to succeed. If you think about it, that's not much different than how Moses, the first Israeli diplomat, got the job done.

Happy Passover – and see you next year in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel!