

# COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## EMPLOYEE POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM Original Amendment

This form is for disclosing the receipt of travel expenses from private sources for travel taken in connection with official duties. This form does not eliminate the need to report privately-funded travel on the annual *Financial Disclosure Statements* of those employees required to file them. In accordance with House Rule 25, clause 5, **you must complete this form and file it with the Clerk of the House by email at [gifttravelreports@mail.house.gov](mailto:gifttravelreports@mail.house.gov), within 15 days after travel is completed.** Please **do not** file this form with the Committee on Ethics.

**NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.**


1. Name of Traveler: Jeff Morehouse
2. a. Name of Accompanying Relative: \_\_\_\_\_ **OR**  None  
b. Relationship to Traveler:  Spouse  Child  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
3. a. Dates: Departure: Feb 16, 2025 Return: Feb 24, 2025  
b. Dates at Personal Expense, if any: \_\_\_\_\_ **OR**  None
4. Departure City: Washington, DC Destination: Tel Aviv, Israel Return City: Washington, DC
5. Sponsor(s), Who Paid for the Trip: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)
6. Describe Meetings and Events Attended: Meetings with officials and experts on issues impacting Israel and it's relationship with the United States and the Arab world.
7. Attached to this form are **each** of the following, *signify that each item is attached by checking the corresponding box*:
  - a.  a completed *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form*;
  - b.  the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* completed by the trip sponsor **prior** to the trip, **including all** attachments **and** the *Additional Sponsor Form(s)*;
  - c.  page 2 of the completed *Traveler Form* submitted by the employee; **and**
  - d.  the letter from the Committee on Ethics approving my participation on this trip.
8. a.  I represent that I participated in each of the activities reflected in the attached sponsor's agenda. *Signify statement is true by checking the box.*  
b. If not, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**I certify that the information contained on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signature of Traveler:  Date: 3/11/25

I authorized this travel in advance. I have determined that all of the expenses listed on the attached *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form* were necessary and that the travel was in connection with the employee's official duties and would not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Name of Supervising Member: Rep Richard Hudson Date: 3/11/25

Signature of Supervising Member: 

# COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## SPONSOR POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

Original  Amendment

This form must be completed by an officer of any organization that served as the primary trip sponsor in providing travel expenses or reimbursement for travel expenses to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. **A completed copy of the form must be provided to each House Member, officer, or employee who participated in the trip within 10 days of their return.** You must answer all questions, and check all boxes, on this form for your submission to comply with House Rules and the Committee's Travel Regulations. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the denial of future requests to sponsor trips and/or subject the current traveler to disciplinary action or a requirement to repay the trip expenses.

**NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.**

1. Sponsor(s) who paid or provided in-kind support for the trip: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)

2. Travel Destination(s): Israel

3. Date of Departure: February 16, 2025 Date of Return: February 24, 2025

4. Name(s) of Traveler(s): Jeffrey Morehouse

**Note:** You may list more than one traveler on a form only if **all** information is **identical** for each person listed.

5. **Actual amount** of expenses paid on behalf of, or reimbursed to, each individual named in Question 4:

	Total Transportation Expenses	Total Lodging Expenses	Total Meal Expenses	Total Other Expenses (dollar amount per item and description)
Traveler	\$10,467.62	\$2,445.11	\$1,366.47	\$4,406.74
Accompanying Family Member	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.  All expenses connected to the trip were for actual costs incurred and not a *per diem* or lump sum payment. Signify statement is true by checking box.

**I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signed by:  Date: 3/6/2025 | 15:11 EST

Name: Rachel Hirsch Title: Chief Legal Counsel

Organization: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)

**I am an officer of the above-named organization. Signify statement is true by checking box.**

Address: 251 H Street, NW Washington D.C., 20001

Telephone: (202) 246-0519 Email: rhirsch@aiefdn.org

**Committee staff may contact the above-named individual if additional information is required.**

**If you have questions regarding your completion of this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103.**

# COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## TRAVELER FORM

This form should be completed by House Members, officers, or employees seeking Committee approval of privately-sponsored travel or reimbursement for travel under House Rule 25, clause 5. The completed form should be submitted directly to the Committee by each invited House Member, officer, or employee, together with the completed and signed trip sponsor form(s) and any attachments. A copy of this form, minus this initial page, will be made available for public inspection.

This form and any attachments may be submitted at 1015 Longworth House Office Building or [travel.requests@mail.house.gov](mailto:travel.requests@mail.house.gov).

**Your completed request must be submitted to the Committee no less than 30 days before your proposed departure date.** Absent exceptional circumstances, permission will not be granted for requests received less than 30 days before the trip commences. **You must receive explicit approval from the Committee before you depart on this trip.**

Name of Traveler: Jeff Morehouse

**NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.**

**I certify that the information contained on both pages of this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signature: 

Name of Signatory (if other than traveler): NA

For Staff (name of employing Member or Committee): Chairman Richard Hudson

Office Address: 2112 Rayburn HOB

Telephone Number: 2022253715

Email Address of Contact Person: jeff.morehouse@mail.house.gov

Check this box if the sponsoring entity is a media outlet, the purpose of the trip is to make a media appearance sponsored by that entity, and these forms are being submitted to the Committee less than 30 days before the trip departure date.

**NOTE: You must complete all of the contact information fields above, as Committee staff may need to contact you if additional information is required.**

**KEEP A COPY OF THIS FORM.** Page 2 (but not this page) must be submitted to the Clerk as part of the post-travel disclosure required by House Rule 25. Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting paperwork for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

If there are any questions regarding this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103 or via email: [travel.requests@mail.house.gov](mailto:travel.requests@mail.house.gov).

# COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## TRAVELER FORM

1. Name of Traveler: Jeff Morehouse
2. Sponsor(s) who will be paying or providing in-kind support for the trip: American Israel Education Foundation Inc. (AIEF)
3. City and State **OR** Foreign Country of Travel: Israel
4. a. Date of Departure: February 16, 2025 Date of Return: February 24, 2025  
b. Yes  No  Will you be extending the trip at your personal expense?  
If yes, list dates at personal expense: \_\_\_\_\_
5. a. Yes  No  Will you be accompanied by a family member at the sponsor's expense? **If yes:**  
(1) Name of Accompanying Family Member: NA  
(2) Relationship to Traveler:  Spouse  Child  Other (specify): NA  
(3) Yes  No  Accompanying Family Member is at least 18 years of age?
6. a. Yes  No  Did the trip sponsor answer "Yes" to Question 8(c) on the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* (i.e., travel is sponsored by an entity that employs a registered federal lobbyist or a foreign agent)?  
b. **If yes**, and you are requesting lodging for two nights, explain why the second night is warranted:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Yes  No  *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* is attached, including agenda, invitation, invitee list, and any other attachments and Additional Sponsor Forms.

NOTE: The agenda should show the traveler's individual schedule, including departure and arrival times and identify the specific events in which the traveler will be participating.

8. Explain why participation in the trip is connected to the traveler's individual official or representational duties. **Staff should include their job title and how the activities on the itinerary relate to their duties.**  
As Leadership Chief of Staff for Chairman Richard Hudson, I advise him on all key votes related to foreign policy. Israel is a critical ally of the United States. Having the perspective of what is going on in Israel after Oct 7 will help my role as an advisor and help inform the Congressman on his votes in Congress.

9. **Yes  No  Is the traveler aware of any registered federal lobbyists or foreign agents involved in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip?**

10. For staff travelers, to be completed by your employing Member:

### ADVANCED AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

I hereby authorize the individual named above, an employee of the U.S. House of Representatives who works under my direct supervision, to accept expenses for the trip described in this request. I have determined that the above-described travel is in connection with my employee's official duties and that acceptance of these expenses will not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Signature of Employing Member:  Date: 1/17/2025



# U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2025

Mr. Jeffrey Morehouse  
Office of the Honorable Richard Hudson  
2112 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Morehouse:

Pursuant to House Rule 25, clause 5(d)(2), the Committee on Ethics hereby approves your proposed trip to Israel,<sup>1</sup> scheduled for February 16 to 24, 2025, sponsored by American Israel Education Foundation.

You must complete an Employee Post-Travel Disclosure Form (which your employing Member must also sign) and file it, together with a Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form completed by the trip sponsor, with the Clerk of the House within 15 days after your return from travel. As part of that filing, you are also required to attach a copy of this letter and both the Traveler and Primary Trip Sponsor Forms (including attachments) you previously submitted to the Committee in seeking pre-approval for this trip. If you are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement, you must also report all travel expenses totaling more than \$480 from a single source on the "Travel" schedule of your annual Financial Disclosure Statement covering this calendar year. Finally, Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting information provided to the Committee for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

Because the trip may involve meetings with foreign government representatives, we note that House employees may accept, under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), gifts "of minimal value [currently \$480] tendered as a souvenir or mark of courtesy" by a foreign government. Any tangible gifts valued in excess of minimal value received from a foreign government must, within 60 days of acceptance, be disclosed on a Form for Disclosing Gifts from Foreign Governments and either turned over to the Clerk of the House, or, with the written approval of the Committee, retained for official use.

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<sup>1</sup> Please be aware that the Committee's review of the proposed trip does not extend to either the security situation in the destination country or security related to foreign travel in general. We recommend you contact the Office of House Security (OHS) for a safety and security briefing prior to your departure. OHS may be reached at (202) 226-2044 or [ohsstaff@mail.house.gov](mailto:ohsstaff@mail.house.gov). House travelers should also register for the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at <https://step.state.gov>.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.

Sincerely,



Michael Guest  
Chairman



Mark DeSaulnier  
Ranking Member

MG/MD:mc

# COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## PRIMARY TRIP SPONSOR FORM

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer, or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee together with a *Traveler Form* **at least 30 days before the start date of the trip**. The trip sponsor should *NOT* submit the form directly to the Committee. The Committee's website (ethics.house.gov) provides detailed instructions for filling out the form. The Committee will notify the House invitees directly of its decision and will not notify the trip sponsors.

**NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Failure to comply with the Committee's Travel Regulations may also lead to the denial of permission to sponsor future trips. Signatures must comply with section 104(bb) of the Travel Regulations.**

1. Sponsor who will be paying for the trip:  
American Israel Education Foundation, Inc.
2.  I represent that the trip will not be financed, in whole or in part, by a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent.  
*Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*
3. **Check only one.** I represent that:
  - a.  The primary trip sponsor has not accepted from any other source, funds intended directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip; **OR**
  - b.  The trip is arranged without regard to congressional participation and the primary trip sponsor has accepted funds only from entities that will receive a tangible benefit in exchange for those funds; **OR**
  - c.  The primary trip sponsor has accepted funds, services, or in-kind assistance from other source(s) intended directly or indirectly to finance all or part of this trip and has enclosed disclosure forms from each of those entities.  
If "c" is checked, list the names of the additional sponsors: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Provide names and titles of **ALL** House Members *and* employees you are inviting. **For each House invitee, provide an explanation of why the individual was invited** (include additional pages if necessary): \_\_\_\_\_  
Please find attached \_\_\_\_\_
5. Yes  No  Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)?
6. Date of Departure: February 16, 2025 Date of Return: February 24, 2025
7. a. City of departure: Washington, D.C.  
b. Destination(s): Israel  
c. City of return: Washington, D.C.
8. **Check only one.** I represent that
  - a.  The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965; **OR**
  - b.  The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent; **OR**
  - c.  The sponsor employs or retains a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent, but the trip is for attendance at a one-day event *and* lobbyist / foreign agent involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was *de minimis* under the Committee's travel regulations.

9. **Check only one of the following.**
- a.  I checked 8(a) or (b) above; **OR**
  - b.  I checked 8(c) above but am not offering any lodging; **OR**
  - c.  I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for one night; **OR**
  - d.  I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for two nights. If you checked this box, explain why the second night of lodging is warranted. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

10.  Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities House invitees will be participating in during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities for trip invitees). *Indicate agenda is attached by checking box.*

11. **Check only one of the following.**
- a.  I represent that a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip. *Signify the statement is true by clicking the box; OR*
  - b.  *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is a U.S. institution of higher education.
12. For **each** sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip **and** its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:  
 AIEF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a charitable and educational mission which includes, among other things, educating policy makers and opinion leaders about the U.S.-Israel relationship. AIEF is solely responsible for recruiting, coordinating, executing, and funding all aspects of this trip. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

13. **Answer parts a and b. Answer part c if necessary:**
- a. Mode of travel: Air  Rail  Bus  Car  Other  (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - b. Class of travel: Coach  Business  First  Charter  Other  (specify: charter bus in Israel)
  - c. If travel will be first class, or by chartered or private aircraft, explain why such travel is warranted:  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 

14.  I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*

15. **Check only one.** I represent that either:
- a.  The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees; **OR**
  - b.  The trip involves events that are arranged specifically *with regard* to congressional participation. If "b" is checked:
    - 1) Detail the cost *per day* of meals (approximate cost may be provided): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$179
    - 2) Provide the reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 The trip is in Israel to educate senior congressional staff about the U.S.-Israel relationship.

16. Name, nightly cost, and reasons for selecting each hotel or other lodging facility:

Hotel Name: <u>Orient</u>	City: <u>Jerusalem</u>	Cost Per Night: <u>\$289</u>
Reason(s) for Selecting: <u>location and affordability</u>		
Hotel Name: <u>Sheraton</u>	City: <u>Tel Aviv</u>	Cost Per Night: <u>\$364</u>
Reason(s) for Selecting: <u>location and affordability</u>		
Hotel Name: <u>Magdala</u>	City: <u>Tiberias</u>	Cost Per Night: <u>\$336</u>
Reason(s) for Selecting: <u>location and affordability</u>		

17.  I represent that all expenses connected to the trip will be for actual costs incurred and not a per diem or lump sum payment. *Signify that the statement is true by checking the box.*

18. **Total Expenses for each Participant:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimates	Total <b>Transportation</b> Expenses per Participant	Total <b>Lodging</b> Expenses per Participant	Total <b>Meal</b> Expenses per Participant
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$10,733.33	\$2,370.00	\$1,250.00
For each Accompanying Family Member	n/a	n/a	n/a

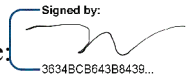
	<b>Other</b> Expenses (dollar amount per item)	Identify Specific Nature of "Other" Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$3,273.33	breakdown attached
For each Accompanying Family Member	n/a	n/a

19. **Check only one:**

- a.  I certify that I am an officer of the organization listed below; **OR**
- b.  *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is an individual or a U.S. institution of higher education.

20. **I certify by my signature that**

- a. **I read and understand the Committee's Travel Regulations;**
- b. **I am not a registered federal lobbyist or registered foreign agent; and**
- c. **The information on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/12/2025 | 16:41 EST  
Signed by: 3634BCB643B8438...  
 Name: Rachel Hirsch Title: Chief Legal Counsel  
 Organization: American Israel Education Foundation, Inc. (AIEF)  
 Address: 251 H Street NW, Washington D.C. 20001  
 Email: rhirsch@aiefdn.org Telephone: (202) 246-0519

If there are questions regarding this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103 or travel.requests@mail.house.gov.

**American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)  
Educational Seminar in Israel  
Senior Congressional Staff  
February 16-24, 2025**

**Addendum**

4. Name of Travelers

1. Kelsey Greenwald, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Tim Burchett (R-TN)
2. Jackson Gross, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable John James (R-MI)
3. Aaron Harawa, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Glenn Ivey (D-MD)
4. Reginald Harris, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Greg Landsman (D-OH)
5. Dan Kaufman, Communications Director, Office of the Honorable Lois Frankel (D-FL)
6. Will McPherson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Tom Cole (R-OK)
7. Brendon Mills, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Eugene Vindman (D-VA)
8. Patrick Mocete, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Young Kim (R-CA)
9. Jeff Morehouse, Leadership Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Richard Hudson (R-NC)
10. Dan Scharfenberger, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Tom Kean, Jr. (R-NJ)
11. Katherine Sears, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Jen Kiggans (R-VA)
12. Alex Vargo, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Addison McDowell (R-NC)
13. Chris Walsh, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Pat Ryan (D-NY)

5. Breakdown of other expenses

<b>BREAKDOWN OF OTHER COSTS:</b>	<b>PER PARTICIPANT</b>
SECURITY	\$1,552.63
SPEAKER HONORARIUM	\$1,050.16
ROOM RENTAL	\$461.22
HOTEL FOR CONTRACT STAFF & SPEAKERS	\$425.92
MEALS FOR CONTRACT STAFF & SPEAKERS	\$351.20
TOUR GUIDE	\$330.07
AIRPORT ASSISTANCE	\$155.06
PHOTOGRAPHY	\$38.86
MISC	\$20.09
TRANSPORTATION FOR CONTRACT STAFF & SPEAKERS	\$10.75
TIPS	\$8.01
ENTRANCE FEES	\$2.79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,406.74</b>

**American Israel Education Foundation  
Educational Seminar in Israel  
Senior Congressional Staff  
Feb 16 – Feb 24, 2025**

**Sunday, February 16, 2025**

- 1:00 PM El Al #18 departs Miami for Greenwald
- 2:30 PM Amtrak #156 departs Union Station for Gross, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Mocete, Harawa, Vargo, Harris
- 5:40 PM Amtrak #156 arrives Newark for Gross, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Mocete, Harawa, Vargo, Harris
- 9:00 PM El Al #26 departs Newark for Gross, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Harawa, Mocete, Vargo, Harris

**Monday, February 17, 2025**

- 7:35 AM El Al #18 arrives Tel Aviv for Greenwald
- 2:10 PM El Al #26 arrives Tel Aviv for Gross, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Harawa, Mocete, Vargo, Harris

**Monday, Feb 17, 2025**

- 2:10 PM Transfer to Jerusalem  
Check-in to the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem
- 6:00-7:15 PM **Welcome and Orientation Dinner**  
-at Patterson Hall, Orient Hotel
- 7:30-8:30 PM **Pulse of the Nation**  
Dessert with Efrat Shapira Rosenberg  
Media Figure, Content Director, Beit Avi Chai Foundation  
-at the Wingate Hall, Orient Hotel
- 8:45 PM Depart

9:00-10:00 PM      **Strategic Survey of Jerusalem, Part I: The City of David**  
Visit to archeological excavation site  
-at the City of David

10:15 PM            Depart for hotel

10:30 PM            Overnight at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

**Tuesday, Feb 18, 2025**

8:00 AM            Breakfast on own  
- at the hotel dining hall

9:00-10:00 AM      **The Significance of the US-Israel Relationship**  
the Honorable Stephanie Hallett  
Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Israel  
-at the Wingate Hall, Orient Hotel

10:15 AM            Depart

10:45-12:30 PM      **Strategic Survey of Jerusalem, Part II: The Holy Basin**  
Guided visit through the Old City of Jerusalem

- Robinson's Arch
- Western Wall
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre

12:45-1:30 PM      Lunch  
-at Abu Kamel

1:45 PM            Depart for the hotel

2:00-2:45 PM      Change into business clothes

3:00-4:00 PM      **Israeli Politics 101**  
With Yoni Leviatan  
-at Wingate Hall, Orient Hotel

4:15 PM            Depart for the Knesset

5:15-5:45 PM      **Israeli Democracy in Action, Part I: The Opposition**  
Meeting with The Honorable Gilad Kariv  
Member of Knesset, Labor party  
-at the Knesset

- 5:45-6:30 PM      **Israeli Democracy in Action, Part II: The Coalition**  
Meeting with the Honorable Simcha Rothman  
Member of the Knesset, Religious Zionism party  
-at the Knesset
- 6:30-6:50 PM      **Visit to Plenary Hall**
- 7:00 PM            Depart for Dinner
- 7:30-9:30 PM      **Politics and Policy in Israel**
- Maayan Samun, Spokesman, The Honorable Yuli Edelstein,  
Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee
  - Ariel Segal, Senior Political Advisor, The Honorable Yair Lapid,  
Opposition Leader
  - Sharon Weinstein, Head of Bureau, The Honorable Sharren Haskel,  
Deputy Minister
- at Andalusia
- 9:45 PM            Depart for hotel
- 10:00 PM           Overnight at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

**Wednesday, Feb 19, 2025**

- 7:30 AM            Breakfast on own  
-at the hotel dining hall
- 8:30 AM            Depart for Yad Vashem
- 9:00-11:00 AM      **The Israeli Psyche, Part I: The Significance of the Holocaust**  
Guided visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum
- 11:15 AM            Depart for Mount Herzl
- 11:30-12:30 PM      **The Israeli Psyche, Part II: The Price of War**  
Learn about the role of fallen soldiers in Israeli society  
-at Mount Herzl
- 12:30 PM            Depart
- 12:45-1:30 PM      Lunch  
-at the Vert Hotel

1:45-3:15 PM	<b>Israel's Quest for Peace</b> Meeting with Dr. Tal Becker Former Senior Legal Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs -at the Presidential Suite, Vert Hotel
3:30 PM	Depart for Tel Aviv
4:00 – 5:00 PM	En route briefing: <b>The History of Tel Aviv</b>
5:00 PM	Check-in to the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv
6:30-7:30 PM	<b>Navigating the Middle East: Regional Strategic Overview</b> Briefing by Brig. Gen. (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel Former Director, Counter-Terrorism Bureau at Prime Minister's Office -at Studio 5, the Sheraton Hotel
7:45 PM	Depart for dinner
8:00-10:00 PM	<b>Dinner and Discussion</b> -at Ha'Achim
10:15 PM	Return to hotel
10:30 PM	Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

**Thursday, Feb 20, 2025**

7:00 AM	Breakfast on own -at the hotel dining hall
8:00-8:30 AM	<b>October 7: How It Happened</b> with Yoni Leviatan, Educational Seminar Leader -at Studio 5, the Sheraton Hotel
8:45 AM	Depart for the Gaza Envelope
10:30-12:00 PM	<b>October 7, Part I: The Kibbutzim</b> Visit and briefing at Kibbutz Nir Oz with Nir Metzger, resident -at Kibbutz Nir Oz
12:15 PM	Depart

12:45-1:30 PM	Lunch -at Falafel Baribua
1:30 PM	Depart
1:45-2:45 PM	<b>October 7, Part II: The Nova Party</b> Visit the site of the music festival massacre -at Reim Forest
2:45 PM	Depart
3:00-3:30 PM	<b>U.S. -Israel Missile Defense Cooperation</b> Visit the Iron Dome Battery -at Ibim
3:45 PM	Depart for Tel Aviv
5:30-7:00 PM	Break
7:15 PM	Depart for dinner
7:30-9:30 PM	<b>Citizen-Soldiers: The IDF's Impact on Israeli Society</b> Dinner with IDF Reservists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lt. Col. (Res.) Assaf Hershkovits</li> <li>▪ First Sergeant (Res.) Yoav Tzivoni</li> <li>▪ Captain (Res.) Noga Ventura</li> </ul> -at Darya
9:45 PM	Depart for hotel
10:00 PM	Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv
 <b><u>Friday, Feb 21, 2025</u></b>	
8:00 AM	Breakfast on own -at the hotel dining hall
8:30 -9:30 AM	<b>Understanding Hamas' Strategy</b> Briefing with Michael Milshtein Senior Fellow, International Institute for Counter Terrorism, Reichman University -at Studio 5, Sheraton Hotel

9:45 -10:45 AM	<b>International Law and IDF Ethics</b> Briefing with Major (Res.) Ben Wahlhaus Former Head, International Negotiations and Agreements International Law Department, Israel Defense Forces -at Studio 5, Sheraton Hotel
11:00 AM	Depart
11:30-12:30 PM	<b>Coexistence in the Heart of Israel</b> Guided Survey of Jaffa
12:30 PM	Depart
12:45-1:45 PM	Lunch -at Cassis
2:00 PM	Depart for hotel
2:15-3:15 PM	<b>A Palestinian Voice Post-October 7</b> Meeting with Ibrahim Dalalsha Executive Director, Horizon Center for Political Studies and Media Outreach -at Studio 5, Sheraton Hotel
3:30-4:30 PM	<b>The West Bank: A Situational Assessment</b> Briefing with Noa Shusterman Senior Researcher, Director of the Palestinians and the Region Research Program -at Studio 5, Sheraton Hotel
6:45 PM	Depart for Shabbat Dinner
7:00-9:00 PM	<b>Reflections on the Sabbath</b> Traditional Sabbath Eve dinner with Hana and Aviad Friedman -at their home
9:15 PM	Depart for hotel
9:30 PM	Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

**Saturday, Feb 22, 2025**

7:30 AM	Breakfast on own
8:00 AM	Depart for the North
10:30 – 11:30 AM	En route briefing: <b>The Jezreel Valley and Upper Galilee</b>
10:00-12:00 PM	<b>Historical Significance of the Sea of Galilee</b> Guided Survey of Christian Holy Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mount of Beatitudes</li><li>▪ Capernaum</li></ul>
12:15 PM	Depart
12:45-1:30 PM	Lunch -at Ketze Hanachal
1:45 PM	Depart
2:15-3:15 PM	<b>Israel's Northern Front, Part I: Syria</b> Strategic Briefing with Maj. (Res.) Ilan Schulman -at Merom Golan
3:30 PM	Depart
3:45-4:15 PM	<b>Strategic Survey of the Syrian Border</b> Overlook with Maj. (Res.) Ilan Schulman -at the U.N. crossing
4:30 PM	Depart
5:30 PM	Check-in to the Magdala Hotel, Migdal
6:30-8:00 PM	<b>Shared Society in Times of Crisis</b> Dinner with Ibrahim Abu Ahmed Arab Israeli Activist and Writer -at Magdalena
8:00 PM	Depart for dinner
8:15-10:00 PM	<b>Dinner and Reflections from the Week</b> -at Magdalena

9:45 PM Return to hotel

10:00 PM Overnight at the Magdala Hotel, Migdal

**Sunday, Feb 23, 2025**

7:30 AM Breakfast on own

8:00 AM Depart

9:00-10:30 AM **Israel's Northern Front, Part II: Lebanon and Hezbollah**  
Strategic briefing with Lt. Col. (Res.) Eyal Dror  
-at Kibbutz Sasa

10:30-11:00 AM **The Civilian Impact of Hezbollah's War on Israel**  
-Kibbutz Sasa with residents

11:15 AM Depart

1:00-1:45 PM Lunch  
-at Yulek Café

2:00-2:30 PM **Israel's Narrow Waistline**  
Strategic briefing  
-at the Alfei Menashe overlook

2:30-3:00 PM **Life as a Hostage Family**  
Meeting with Sarit Rosenthal  
Aunt of 20-year-old released hostage, Agam Berger  
-at the Alfei Menashe Synagogue

3:00 PM Depart for hotel

4:00-5:00 PM **The Day After**  
Conversation with Zvika Klein  
Editor-in-Chief, Jerusalem Post  
-at Studio 5, the Sheraton Hotel

5:15-6:45 PM Prepare for departure

7:00-9:00 PM **Closing Dinner and Reflections**  
-at Studio 5, the Sheraton Hotel

9:15 PM Depart for airport

**Monday, February 24, 2025**

12:05 AM	El Al #25 departs Tel Aviv for Gross, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger
12:45 AM	El Al #1 departs Tel Aviv for Walsh
1:00 AM	El Al #21 departs Tel Aviv for Kaufman
6:00 AM	El Al #337 departs Tel Aviv for Harris, Greenwald
1:00 PM	El Al #7 departs Tel Aviv for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa
5:05 AM EST	El Al #25 arrives Newark for Gross, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger
5:45 AM EST	El Al #1 arrives JFK for Walsh
7:50 AM EST	El Al #21 arrives Fort Lauderdale for Kaufman
8:22 AM EST	United #3414 departs Newark for Gross, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger
8:55 AM EST	Delta #5750 departs JFK for Walsh
9:54 AM EST	United #3414 arrives DCA for Gross, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger
9:59 AM EST	Delta #4868 departs JFK for
10:15 AM CET	El Al #337 arrives Amsterdam for Harris, Greenwald
10:16 AM EST	Delta #5750 arrives DCA for Walsh
11:14 AM EST	American Airlines #2939 departs Fort Lauderdale for Kaufman
1:00 PM CET	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines #651 departs Amsterdam for Harris, Greenwald
1:45 PM EST	American Airlines #2939 arrives DCA for Kaufman
3:45 PM EST	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines #651 arrives Dulles for Harris, Greenwald
6:00 PM EST	El Al #7 arrives JFK for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa
8:31 PM EST	Delta #5795 departs JFK for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa

10:00 PM EST

Delta #5795 arrives DCA for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa

**American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)  
Educational Seminar in Israel  
Senior Congressional Staff  
February 16 – 24, 2025**

**Itinerary**

**Sunday, February 16, 2025**

1:00 PM El Al #18 departs Miami for Greenwald

2:30 PM Amtrak #156 departs Union Station for Gross, Holding, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Mocete, Harawa

4:25 PM Delta #5713 departs DCA for Vargo, Harris

5:40 PM Amtrak #156 arrives Newark for Gross, Holding, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Mocete, Harawa

5:51 PM Delta #5713 arrives JFK for Vargo, Harris

9:00 PM El Al #26 departs Newark for Gross, Holding, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Harawa, Mocete

11:50 PM El Al #8 departs JFK for Vargo, Harris

**Monday, February 17, 2025**

7:35 AM El Al #18 arrives Tel Aviv for Greenwald

2:10 PM El Al #26 arrives Tel Aviv for Gross, Holding, Kaufman, McPherson, Morehouse, Scharfenberger, Sears, Walsh, Mills, Harawa, Mocete  
Transfer to Jerusalem  
Check-in to the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

4:55 PM El Al #8 arrives Tel Aviv for Vargo, Harris  
Transfer to Jerusalem  
Check-in to the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

6:00 – 7:15 PM **Welcome and Orientation Dinner**  
– at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

During the welcome and orientation dinner, staff will lead a discussion about the objectives for the week ahead.

7:30 – 8:30 PM            **Pulse of the Nation**  
Meeting with Efrat Rosenberg Shapira  
Media Figure, Content Director, Beit Avi Chai Foundation

Efrat Shapira Rosenberg is the current content director at Beit Avi Chai, where she creates and hosts popular podcasts about Israeli politics, current affairs and Jewish thought. Previously, Efrat was a program officer at the Avi Chai foundation, a major player in the field of Jewish renewal and education in Israel. As Israel continues to fight the war against Hamas in Gaza, as well as deal with escalating Iranian threats, Ms. Rosenberg will provide participants with a synthesis of domestic political trends, current international affairs, and the general state of mind of Israeli voters.

8:45 PM                    Depart for the City of David, Jerusalem

9:00 – 10:00 PM        **Late – Night Visit: The City of David**

Jerusalem’s City of David, more than any other site, represents the complexity of the Arab – Israeli conflict. The City of David is the site most archeologists agree to be the ancient city of Jerusalem that later became the capital of the united Israelite tribes under King David. This area is one of the most intensively excavated sites in the wider region. To Jewish Israelis, the site represents the beginning of their physical and emotional attachment to Jerusalem that has continued for over three thousand years. At the same time, much of the site is located in the predominantly Arab neighborhood of Silwan. The residents of Silwan, and the Palestinian Authority leadership are opposed to the archeological efforts being carried out in the City of David. In several instances, homes in Silwan were purchased and then destroyed to open up more areas for excavations. Palestinian leadership has denied the existence of any Jewish connection to Jerusalem.

10:30 PM                 Overnight at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

**Tuesday, February 18, 2025**

8:00 AM                    Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

9:00 – 10:00AM        **The Significance of the US – Israel Relationship**  
Meeting with David Brownstein  
Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy in Israel

During this discussion, Deputy Chief of Mission David Brownstein will share the U.S. perspective on the current war in Gaza, regional threats from Iranian proxies, and the potential for Arab – Israeli cooperation.

10:15 AM Depart for the Old City of Jerusalem

10:45 AM–12:30 PM **Strategic Survey of Jerusalem: The Holy Basin**

- Old City of Jerusalem
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Western Wall

The Old City of Jerusalem is home to the holiest shrines of the three monotheistic religions, including the Temple Mount, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Al – Aqsa Mosque. The Holy Basin is the historic location of Jerusalem and refers to the land surrounding the Old City, including the Mount of Olives, believed to be the departure point for Jesus’ final entry into Jerusalem and the cemetery where Jews have been burying their dead for 2,500 years. The Holy Basin also includes the Western Wall, Judaism’s holiest site, and the Temple Mount (Haram al – Sharif), sacred ground for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Control over these sensitive areas remains among the largest disputes in the Middle East. The professionally guided survey will walk through all of these sites and others, educating trip participants on their historical impact and their role in today’s political discussions.

12:45 – 2:00 PM Lunch like a local  
– at Abu Kamel Restaurant

2:15 PM Depart for hotel

3:30 – 4:30 PM **Israeli Politics 101**

With Reuven Hazan

Professor of Political Science, Hebrew University

It is critical for trip participants to have an understanding of the parliamentary system in Israel. Professor Hazan explains how the parliamentary party system works, how coalitions rise and fall, and how Israeli politics differ from American politics. Since the delegation will be visiting with government officials throughout the week, we believe it’s important to provide this overview early in the seminar.

4:45 PM Depart for the Knesset

5:30 – 6:00 PM **Israeli Democracy in Action, Part I: The Opposition**

Meeting with The Honorable Shelly Tal Meron

Member of Knesset, Yesh Atid party

It is customary for delegations to meet with members from the coalition and opposition parties. The Honorable Shelly Meron entered the Knesset in February 2023. She previously

served in the Israeli Air Force for six years in various roles, including as a spokesperson, a flight instructor for Bell AH – 1 Cobra pilots, and as an officer. She also worked for a technology company in Southeast Asia.

6:15 – 6:45 PM            **Israeli Democracy in Action, Part II: The Coalition**  
Meeting with The Honorable Amir Ohana  
Speaker of the Knesset  
– at the Knesset

The Honorable Amir Ohana is an Israeli lawyer, former Shin Bet official and politician who has served as the Speaker of the Knesset since 2022, and as a member of the Knesset for Likud. He previously held the posts of Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Security. Ohana is a veteran of the acclaimed Israeli Shin Bet security agency, and an attorney. He achieved the rank of major in the IDF and continues to serve in reserve duty.

6:45 – 7:15 PM            **Guided visit to the Knesset Plenary**

The Knesset Plenum, also known as the Plenary or Assembly Hall, is the three – story hall of the Knesset, Israel's unicameral legislature. Participants will be able to see members of the 120 – person body debate and vote on various motions. This session will allow participants to see the parliamentary system in action.

7:30 PM                    Depart for dinner

8:00 – 10:00 PM        **Politics and Policy in Israel**  
Dinner with Israeli Chiefs of Staff and Policy Advisors  
– at Andalusia

During this dinner the participants will have the opportunity to hear from their counterparts in Israel – staffers serving different members of the Israeli Knesset. The discussion will explore the difference between the American and Israeli political systems; the role of political staffers; and the views of the various Knesset members they serve on current issues affecting the region.

10:30 PM                Overnight at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

**Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

7:30 AM                    Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 – 9:00 AM        **Reporting on Israel: How Narratives Are Formed**

Meeting with Matti Friedman  
Author and Journalist

Matti Friedman is a renowned reporter with a career that has taken him from Lebanon to Morocco, Cairo, Moscow and Washington, D.C., and to conflicts in Israel in the Caucasus. Mr. Friedman is a dynamic and insightful speaker who provides a journalist's perspective on how Israel's story is told by the international media, and how that media portrayal impacts the stories taking place on the ground.

9:15 AM Depart for Mount Herzl Military Cemetery

9:45 – 10:45 AM **The Israeli Psyche, Part I: The Price of War**  
Learn about the role of fallen soldiers in Israeli society  
– at Mount Herzl Military Cemetery

A critical piece of understanding Israeli society and culture, is the role of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), mandatory army service, and veterans. Mount Herzl is the site of Israel's national cemetery, named after Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism. Israel's leaders and fallen soldiers are buried there. Every plot section in Mount Herzl has a broad plaza for memorial services. Most state memorial ceremonies for those killed in war are conducted in the National Military and Police cemetery. This visit will highlight the way Israel remembers its fallen and relates to the role of the military in as part of the fabric of the Jewish State. Since the massacre on October 7<sup>th</sup> and the ensuing war, the cemetery has seen many funerals in recent months and visiting now will help participants understand the current Israel psyche.

11:00 AM Depart for the Vert Hotel, Jerusalem

11:15 – 12:45PM **Israel's Quest for Peace**  
Meeting with Tal Becker  
Former Senior Legal Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
– at the Vert Hotel, Jerusalem

Since Israel's founding, the Jewish state has sought to reach a just and lasting solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The United States has been closely involved in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Dr. Tal Becker is a senior member of the Israeli peace negotiation team. In this position, he is on the front lines of many of Israel's most pressing diplomatic, legal and policy challenges. He is a veteran negotiator, and key behind the scenes representative, for Israel in a wide variety of contexts. During this session, he will address the current political climate for Israel on the international stage and discuss post war scenarios.

12:45 – 1:30 PM Lunch  
– at the Vert Hotel

1:45 PM Depart for Yad Vashem

2:00 – 4:00 PM **The Israeli Psyche, Part II: The Significance of the Holocaust**  
Guided survey of Yad Vashem  
The World Holocaust Remembrance Center

One cannot understand Israel's worldview without understanding the trauma of the Holocaust. Israelis view threats to its destruction in light of the events of the 1930s and 1940s, when the German government's threats to exterminate the Jewish people were not taken seriously by the international community. This museum provides an important reference point as to how Israelis interpret the threat of an Iranian nuclear program and Iranian leaders committed to Israel's destruction. Yad Vashem has become a symbol of the Jewish people and its transformation from total helplessness to self – reliance and strength. Thus, a visit to Yad Vashem provides a historical context for the Jewish state. The museum's professional docent will guide the delegation through the main exhibit hall and the children's memorial.

4:15 PM Depart for Tel Aviv

5:45 PM Check into the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

6:30 – 7:30 PM **Navigating the Middle East: Regional Strategic Overview**  
Briefing by Brig. Gen. (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel  
Former Director, Counter – Terrorism Bureau, Prime Minister's Office  
– at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

To understand the strategic threats facing Israel, participants must understand the unique situation facing Israel at the borders with the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Syria, all home to Iranian proxies. This briefing will provide an overview of each border, as well as the malign activity from Iran contributing to unrest in the region.

7:45 PM Depart for dinner

8:00 – 10:00 PM **Dinner and Discussion**  
– at Ha'Achim Restaurant

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel's complexities.

10:30 PM Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

**Thursday, February 20, 2025**

7:00 AM Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 – 8:30 AM **October 7: How It Happened**  
With Yoni Leviatan, AIEF  
– at the Sheraton Hotel

On October 7, 2023, the Jewish communities living along the Gaza border were destroyed, thousands were killed, and hundreds kidnapped. As preparation for the day's programming, Yoni Leviatan will provide an overview of the October 7 massacre.

8:45 AM Depart for the Gaza Envelope

9:00 – 10:00 AM En route briefing:  
**Understanding Hamas**

Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and its growing influence in the West Bank have had a direct impact on Israel, even before the events of October 7. This session will explore Hamas's history, ethos, goals and attitudes toward Israel. It will also discuss how Israel has understood and misunderstood Hamas and its intentions, new approaches since the war began, and the challenges for the "day after".

10:00 – 12:00 PM **October 7, Part I: The Kibbutzim**  
Guided visit and meeting with a representative from Kibbutz Nir Oz  
– at Kibbutz Nir Oz

During the visit to Kibbutz Nir Oz, participants will bear witness to the Hamas invasion and massacre. They will hear what happened to the community on October 7, and how the IDF regained control. They will meet with a resident of the Kibbutz who will walk them through the events that started the war.

12:15 PM Depart

12:45 – 1:15PM Lunch  
– at Falafel Baribua Restaurant

1:30 PM Depart

1:45 – 2:15 PM **October 7, Part II: The Nova Party**  
Visit the site of the music festival massacre  
– at Reim Forest

When Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel on October 7, they also massacred and kidnapped hundreds of young civilians at a music festival taking place in the Gaza envelope area. Since then, the Nova site has become a meeting point for victim's families and hostage families. The site has also evolved into a living memorial to their loved ones. This visit will help the participants understand the enormity of the events of the days and the trauma experienced by Israeli society.

2:30 PM Depart

3:00 – 3:30 PM **U.S. – Israel Missile Defense Cooperation**  
Visit Iron Dome Battery

More than a decade ago, Israel developed Iron Dome to protect its citizens from persistent and increasingly dangerous rockets fired by Iranian – backed terrorists. Since being deployed, Iron Dome has intercepted more than 90 percent of the rockets it has targeted—preventing war, saving countless lives, and reducing physical and psychological damage. Participants will have the opportunity to visit an Iron Dome site and speak with the soldiers responsible for its operation.

4:45 PM Depart for Tel Aviv

7:15 PM Depart for dinner

7:30 – 9:30 PM **Citizen – Soldiers: The IDF's Impact on Israeli Society**  
Dinner with IDF Reservists

- Lt. Col. (Res.) Assaf Hershkovits
- Yoav Tzivoni
- Noga Ventura

In Israel, military service is mandatory for everyone over the age of 18, with several exceptions. Most Israelis join the army right after high school and serve for three years. As such, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is an integral part of the fabric of Israeli society. During this dinner, participants will have the chance to meet with several reservists and hear about their experiences in the army. They will discuss the values of the Israel Defense Forces – known as Ruach Tzahal (The Spirit of the IDF). This overarching ethical code, and the guidelines and operation resulting from it, shape the mode of action applied by all IDF soldiers and units, both in peace and at war.

10:00 PM Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

### **Friday, February 21, 2025**

8:00 AM Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining Hall

8:30 – 9:30 AM           **Understanding Hamas’s Strategy**  
Briefing with Col. (res.) Miri Eisin  
Senior Fellow, International Institute for Counter Terrorism, Reichman  
University

Hamas’s takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and its growing influence in the West Bank have had a direct impact on Israel, even before the events of October 7. This session will explore Hamas’s history, ethos, goals and attitudes toward Israel. It will also discuss how Israel has understood and misunderstood Hamas and its intentions, new approaches since the war began, and the challenges for the “day after”.

9:45 – 10:45 AM       **Briefing with Dr. Eran Shamir Borer**  
Director, Center for National Security and Democracy,  
Israel Democracy Institute

Dr. Eran Shamir – Borer serves as the Director of the Center for National Security and Democracy since September 2022. Prior, Eran served for over 20 years in various positions in the International Law Department of the Military Advocate General's Corps in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), including as the head of the department, and retired at the rank of Colonel. In this capacity, Eran was responsible for the provision of advice to all levels of command in the IDF regarding international law, including with respect to the IDF’s operational activities in times of contingency. During his service, Eran represented the State of Israel in various international fora, participated in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and was involved in contending with the diplomatic and legal challenges facing Israel at the international level. Eran’s academic publications address different areas of international law, particularly global governance, and the law of armed conflict. During this session, he will address the current political climate for Israel on the international stage.

11:00 AM               Depart for Jaffa

11:30 – 12:30 PM       **Coexistence in the Heart of Israel**  
Guided Survey of Jaffa

The ancient city of Jaffa, now part of the modern Tel Aviv – Jaffa Municipality has a rich history reflecting the different communities that have used it as a port city. Today, a diverse community of Jews, Christians and Muslims call it home. This tour will cover the ancient and modern city, allowing participants to have a deep understanding of different Israeli populations as well as the challenges and opportunities of a shared society.

12:30 PM               Depart

12:45 – 1:45 PM       Lunch

2:00 PM               Depart for hotel

2:15 – 3:15 PM

**A Palestinian Voice Post – October 7**

Lunch with Ibrahim Dalalsha

Executive Director, Horizon Center for Political Studies & Media Outreach

Ibrahim Dalalsha is the director of Horizon Center for Political Studies and Media Outreach, a private Palestinian think tank and consultancy firm in Ramallah. The center compiles political, legal, security and economic studies and other topics related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Dalalsha has played an integral role in peace negotiations across the Middle East. His former career as a senior Palestinian political advisor at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem stretched across two decades. During this session he will provide an insider’s view of the Palestinian political landscape.

3:30 – 4:30 PM

**The West Bank: A Situational Assessment**

Briefing with Noa Shusterman

Senior Researcher, Director of the Palestinians and the Region Research Program

During this session Noa Shusterman will outline a number of issues related to the West Bank, in order to for participants to understand the prospects for a path forward between Israelis and Palestinians. She will focus on the makeup of Palestinian society, internal issues and security challenges inherent in the West Bank, the role of the Palestinian Authority (P.A.), and P.A. coordination with Israeli bodies.

6:45 PM

Depart for dinner

7:00 – 9:00 PM

**Reflections on the Sabbath**

Traditional Sabbath Eve dinner hosted by Hana and Aviad Friedman

Israel, the only Jewish country in the world, boasts the unique tradition of honoring the Jewish Sabbath from Friday sundown until Saturday sundown. 80 percent of the Israeli population will commemorate the Sabbath, in various forms, which typically include a family dinner and special blessings. During this dinner the Friedmans will lead a discussion on their hometown of Tel Aviv, the center of the largest metropolitan area in Israel, home to most of Israel’s hi – tech industry, and the country’s international airport. They will describe life in Tel Aviv since October 7, including the impact on civilian life in Tel Aviv, where the population lives just hours from a war zone.

9:30 PM

Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

**Saturday, February 25, 2025**

7:30 AM

Breakfast on own

– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 AM Depart for the North

8:30 – 9:30 AM En route briefing:  
**The Jezreel Valley and Upper Galilee**

Our tour guide will spend an hour during the drive from Israel's center to the north to provide a briefing on the Jezreel Valley and the Upper Galilee and the challenges facing these regions of the country. For thousands of years, the Jezreel Valley served as a land bridge linking Africa, Asia and Europe; as a thoroughfare for ancient caravans and; more frequently, armies. The Jezreel Valley is also home to historical and biblical sites including Tel Megiddo and Nazareth. Today it is an important symbol of Israel's complex and diverse political reality. The Jezreel Valley, together with the areas of the Lower and Upper Galilee, is home to the majority of Israel's Arab citizens. A survey of this area provides an opportunity to discuss and learn about Israel's Arab citizens – over 20 percent of the population – each of which has full democratic, social and welfare rights, the right to vote and serve in the Knesset, and the opportunity to serve on Israel's Supreme Court. The Upper Galilee is home to the largest variety of ethnic communities in Israel including Druze, Circassian, Arab Muslim and Arab Christian villages. The Galilee is also home to ancient Jewish and Christian holy sites that provide additional historical and political context to regional tensions.

10:00 – 12:00 PM **Historical Significance of the Sea of Galilee**

Guided Survey of:

- Mt. of Beatitudes
- Capernaum

As part of the seminar's focus on the complex religious fabric of Israeli society, the delegation will be visiting several of the most sacred sites for Christians in the Holy Land. Included is a guided survey and discussion of some of the most important events in the life of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. Just as strategic surveys in Jerusalem focused on Jewish, Muslim, and Christian history and claims to the land, the site visits to the Christian sites help provide context for the competing religious narratives for the land of Israel. For example, we will be visiting the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, the most studied and read speech of any religion in history. Our guide will also lead discussions through Capernaum.

12:15 PM Depart

12:45 – 1:30 PM Lunch en route

1:45 PM Depart

2:15 – 3:15 PM **Israel's Northern Front, Part I: Syria**  
Strategic Briefing with Maj. (Res.) Ilan Schulman  
– at the Merom Golan Hotel

With the fall of the Assad regime, Syria is one of the most important stories in the Middle East. Additionally, it raises questions about Israel's security while uncertainly reigns there. Captain (Res.) Ilan Shulman, a disabled IDF veteran, divides his time guiding geopolitical tours on the Galilee and Golan Heights, lecturing to students, giving geo – political briefings for delegations through various Israeli foreign ministry programs, and fulfilling his IDF reserve duties in the Northern Command's intelligence unit. Shulman was raised in Kibbutz Merom Golan near Israel's border with Syria, where one of his favorite jobs was herding the kibbutz cattle. Shulman served in the IDF's paratrooper's unit, rising to the position of company commander. He holds a BA in Israel and Middle East Studies. During this session he will provide an overview of Israel's border with Syria and the evolving situation on this Northern Front.

3:30 PM                      Depart

3:45 – 4:15 PM            **Strategic Survey of the Syrian Border**  
Overlook visit with Maj. (Res.) Ilan Schulman  
– at Quinetra

This outlook will give participants an opportunity to see the proximity to Syria and understand better the IDF's deployment. This visit will complement the previous briefing by Ilan Shulman.

4:30 PM                      Depart

5:30 PM                      Check – in to the Magdala Hotel

6:30 – 7:30 PM            **Shared Society in Times of Crisis**  
Meeting with Ibrahim Abu Ahmed  
Arab Israeli Activist and Writer  
– at the Magdala Hotel

Approximately 22% of Israeli residents are part of the non – Jewish minority, which includes, among others, Muslims, Christians, and Druze. As a liberal, democratic state, Israel is rooted in liberty, the rule of law, free and fair elections, and full civil rights for all citizens. To provide a firsthand perspective of the minority experience, participants will meet with Ibrahim Abu Ahmed, an Arab – Palestinian – Israeli writer and lecturer. He is the Director of Alumni Relations and the Tourism Project at the Regional Organization for Peace and Economic Security (ROPES). Abu Ahmed regularly speaks to various groups including students, journalists, elected officials, and policymakers. His field of expertise includes the challenges of the Arab minority in Israel, the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, the war in Syria, the instability in Lebanon, and Iranian intervention in the region, among others.

7:45 PM                      Depart for dinner

8:00 – 9:30 PM           **Dinner and Discussion**  
– at Magdalena

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel's complexities.

9:45 PM                    Return to the Magdala Hotel

10:00 PM                 Overnight at the Magdala Hotel

**Sunday, February 23, 2025**

7:30 AM                  Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 AM                  Depart

8:00 – 9:00 AM         En route briefing:  
**The History of Hezbollah**

During the drive to Israel's border with Lebanon, the guide will provide an overview of Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed terrorist group based in Lebanon that is dedicated to Israel's destruction. The terrorist group's influence in Lebanese politics, massive weapons arsenal and use of Lebanese civilians as human shields make the Iranian proxy a serious threat to Israel.

9:00 – 10:00 AM       **The Civilian Impact of Hezbollah's War on Israel**  
– at Kibbutz Sasa

When Hezbollah started to fire on Israel on October 7, just hours after Hamas terrorists fired thousands of rockets and infiltrated the country, northern Israeli communities were immediately at risk. The visit to Kibbutz Sasa, with an IDF spokesperson and a local resident, will demonstrate the impact on one such community and highlight for participants the displacement of tens of thousands of Israelis who were forced to evacuate while their homes are under fire from Hezbollah.

10:15 AM                 Depart

11:00 – 12:00 PM     **Israel's Northern Front, Part II: Lebanon**  
Strategic briefing with Lt. Col. (Res.) Sarit Zehavi  
Founder and Director, Alma Research Center  
– at the Alma Research and Education Center, Tefen

Lt. Col. (Res.) Sarit Zehavi served 15 years in the IDF in Military Intelligence –first in the Research and Analysis Branch, and later in the Northern Command. During her military service she briefed hundreds of delegations, ranging from U.S. Senators, Congressmen and politicians to global military commanders, senior journalists and visiting VIP delegations. She is the founder/director of Alma, an educational research center focusing on the security issues of Israel’s northern border. Zehavi has authored many position papers focusing on Lebanon, Syria and Israel’s national security challenges, and continues to brief delegations on these topics. She holds an MA in Middle East Studies from Ben Gurion University and is a resident of the northern Galilee region. Lt. Col. Zehavi will brief the delegation on security threats coming from the Lebanese border, and the role Iran plays in supporting Hezbollah terrorism against Israel. As a lifelong resident of the North, she will also share her experiences living on the border with Lebanon.

- 12:15 PM                    Depart
- 1:45 – 2:30 PM            Lunch  
                                  – at the Yulek Café
- 2:45 – 3:15 PM            **Israel’s Narrow Waistline**  
                                  Strategic briefing  
                                  – at Alfei Menashe overlook

Alfei Menashe is a Jewish community located on the western edge of the West Bank. Less than 10 miles from the Mediterranean Sea, Alfei Menashe provides a unique vantage point to discuss Israeli settlement policy, the routing of the security barrier, as well as Israel’s narrow waistline. The sliver of Israeli land west of the West Bank is often referred to as the Hadera – Gadera rectangle, with the city of Hadera denoting the northern point, and the city of Gadera the southern point. The Hadera – Gadera rectangle is home to over 50 percent of Israel’s population, as well as civilian infrastructure. The area is also home to Israel’s “silicon valley”, as well as Ben Gurion international airport. The discussion at Alfei Menashe will allow participants to see firsthand the proximity of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in both Israel and the West Bank; as well as the strategic threats faced by the Israeli population living in Israel’s narrow waistline.

- 3:15 – 3:45 PM            **Life as a Hostage Family**  
                                  Meeting with Sarit Rosenthal,  
                                  Aunt of 20-year-old hostage, Agam Berger

Agam Berger was kidnapped by Hamas from Israel's Nahal Oz base just 24 hours after starting her very first job in the military as a border surveillance officer. She remains in captivity with four other female soldiers. Her Aunt, Sarit Rosenthal, who lives at the Alfei Menashe settlement, will share with the group the latest efforts of the hostage family community to bring Agam and the rest of the hostages home.

4:00 PM Depart for the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

5:00 – 6:45 PM Prepare for departure and check-out

7:00 – 9:30 PM **Closing Dinner and Reflections**  
– at the Sheraton hotel, Tel Aviv

The closing dinner provides an opportunity for participants to process the scope of the week, from the religious center of the Judeo – Christian world in Jerusalem, to the bustling economic powerhouse of Tel Aviv; and the conflict plagued borders with Gaza, Syria and Lebanon. We will process the range of topics explored, including the U.S. – Israel strategic partnership, prospects for Arab – Israeli peace, the experience of minorities in Israel, as well as greater existential threats throughout the region. Participants will also have the opportunity to share their takeaways and ask any lingering questions that weren't covered during the week.

9:30 PM Depart for Ben Gurion Airport

### **Monday, February 24, 2025**

12:05 AM El Al #25 departs Tel Aviv for Gross, McPherson,  
Morehouse, Scharfenberger

12:45 AM El Al #1 departs Tel Aviv for Holding, Walsh

1:00 AM El Al #21 departs Tel Aviv for Kaufman

6:00 AM El Al #337 departs Tel Aviv for Harris, Greenwald

1:00 PM El Al #7 departs Tel Aviv for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa

5:05AM EST El Al #25 arrives Newark for Gross, McPherson, Morehouse,  
Scharfenberger

5:45AM EST El Al #1 arrives JFK for Holding, Walsh

7:50AM EST El Al #21 arrives Fort Lauderdale for Kaufman

8:22AM EST United #3414 departs Newark for Gross, McPherson,  
Morehouse, Scharfenberger

8:55AM EST Delta #5750 departs JFK for Walsh

9:54AM EST United #3414 arrives DCA for Gross, McPherson,

Morehouse, Scharfenberger

9:59AM EST	Delta #4868 departs JFK for Holding
10:15 AM CET	El Al #337 arrives Amsterdam for Harris, Greenwald
10:16AM EST	Delta #5750 arrives DCA for Walsh
11:14AM EST	American Airlines #2939 departs Fort Lauderdale for Kaufman
11:25AM EST	Delta #4828 arrives Dulles for Holding
1:00 PM CET	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines #651 departs Amsterdam for Harris, Greenwald
1:45PM EST	American Airlines #2939 arrives DCA for Kaufman
3:45 PM EST	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines #651 arrives Dulles for Harris, Greenwald
6:00PM EST	El Al #7 arrives JFK for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa
8:31PM EST	Delta #5795 departs JFK for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa
10:00PM EST	Delta #5795 arrives DCA for Vargo, Mills, Mocete, Sears, Harawa

**American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)  
Educational Seminar in Israel  
Senior Congressional Staff  
February 16-24, 2025**

**Addendum**

**4. List of Invitees**

As senior congressional staff to member of Congress, these invitees are consistently engaged in issue areas relevant to the U.S. – Israel relationship. These issues include U.S. foreign policy, U.S. appropriations, refugee and immigrant issues, homeland security, cybersecurity, and veteran’s affairs. These issues—along with issues more broadly related to the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Israel—will be explored during the AIEF Israel Seminar, which is focused on educating congressional on events throughout the region by providing on-the-ground context.

1. Jackson Gross, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable John James (R-MI)
2. Aaron Harawa, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Glenn Ivey (D-MD)
3. Reginald Harris, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Greg Landsman (D-OH)
4. Sonny Holding, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable April Delaney (D-MD)
5. Dan Kaufman, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Lois Frankel (D-FL)
6. Will McPherson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Tom Cole (R-OK)
7. Brendon Mills, Chief of Staff , Office of the Honorable Eugene Vindman (D-VA)
8. Patrick Mocete, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Young Kim (R-CA)
9. Jeff Morehouse, Leadership Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Richard Hudson (R-NC)
10. Dan Scharfenberger, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Tom Kean, Jr. (R-NJ)
11. Katherine Sears, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Jen Kiggans (R-VA)
12. Hannah Spengler, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Don Davis (D-NC)
13. Alex Vargo, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Addison McDowell (R-NC)
14. Chris Walsh, Chief of Staff, Office of the Honorable Pat Ryan (D-NY)

## 18. Breakdown of other expenses

<b>Other Cost</b>	<b>Cost per participant</b>
Security	\$1,333.33
Speaker Fees	\$750.00
Hotels for contract staff	\$300.00
Tour Guide/Yad Vashem Guide	\$240.00
Meals for contract staff and guests	\$225.00
Room Rentals and Setup	\$200.00
Airport Assistance	\$100.00
Miscellaneous	\$50.00
Photography	\$25.00
Transportation for contract staff and speakers	\$20.00
Entrance Fees	\$20.00
Tips	\$10.00
<b>Total per participant=</b>	<b>\$3,273.33</b>

**American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF)  
Educational Seminar in Israel  
Senior Congressional Staff  
February 16 – 24, 2025**

**Itinerary**

**Sunday, February 16, 2025**

Evening                      Flights depart the United States

**Monday, February 17, 2025**

Afternoon                      Flights Arrive at Ben Gurion Airport  
Transfer to Jerusalem  
Check-in to the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

6:00 – 7:15 PM                **Welcome and Orientation Dinner**  
– at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

During the welcome and orientation dinner, staff will lead a discussion about the objectives for the week ahead.

7:30 – 8:30 PM                **Pulse of the Nation**  
Meeting with Efrat Rosenberg Shapira  
Media Figure, Content Director, Beit Avi Chai Foundation

Efrat Shapira Rosenberg is the current content director at Beit Avi Chai, where she creates and hosts popular podcasts about Israeli politics, current affairs and Jewish thought. Previously, Efrat was a program officer at the Avi Chai foundation, a major player in the field of Jewish renewal and education in Israel. As Israel continues to fight the war against Hamas in Gaza, as well as deal with escalating Iranian threats, Ms. Rosenberg will provide participants with a synthesis of domestic political trends, current international affairs, and the general state of mind of Israeli voters.

8:45 PM                         Depart for the City of David, Jerusalem

9:00 – 10:00 PM                **Late – Night Visit: The City of David**

Jerusalem’s City of David, more than any other site, represents the complexity of the Arab – Israeli conflict. The City of David is the site most archeologists agree to be the ancient city of Jerusalem that later became the capital of the united Israelite tribes under King David. This area is one of the most intensively excavated sites in the wider region. To Jewish Israelis, the site represents the beginning of their physical and emotional attachment to

Jerusalem that has continued for over three thousand years. At the same time, much of the site is located in the predominantly Arab neighborhood of Silwan. The residents of Silwan, and the Palestinian Authority leadership are opposed to the archeological efforts being carried out in the City of David. In several instances, homes in Silwan were purchased and then destroyed to open up more areas for excavations. Palestinian leadership has denied the existence of any Jewish connection to Jerusalem.

10:30 PM Overnight at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

**Tuesday, February 18, 2025**

8:00 AM Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

9:00 – 10:00AM **The Significance of the US – Israel Relationship**  
Meeting with David Brownstein  
Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy in Israel

During this discussion, Deputy Chief of Mission David Brownstein will share the U.S. perspective on the current war in Gaza, regional threats from Iranian proxies, and the potential for Arab – Israeli cooperation.

10:15 AM Depart for the Old City of Jerusalem

10:45 AM–12:30 PM **Strategic Survey of Jerusalem: The Holy Basin**

- Old City of Jerusalem
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Western Wall

The Old City of Jerusalem is home to the holiest shrines of the three monotheistic religions, including the Temple Mount, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Al – Aqsa Mosque. The Holy Basin is the historic location of Jerusalem and refers to the land surrounding the Old City, including the Mount of Olives, believed to be the departure point for Jesus’ final entry into Jerusalem and the cemetery where Jews have been burying their dead for 2,500 years. The Holy Basin also includes the Western Wall, Judaism’s holiest site, and the Temple Mount (Haram al – Sharif), sacred ground for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Control over these sensitive areas remains among the largest disputes in the Middle East. The professionally guided survey will walk through all of these sites and others, educating trip participants on their historical impact and their role in today’s political discussions.

12:45 – 2:00 PM Lunch like a local  
– at Abu Kamel Restaurant

2:15 PM Depart for hotel

3:30 – 4:30 PM            **Israeli Politics 101**  
With Reuven Hazan  
Professor of Political Science, Hebrew University

It is critical for trip participants to have an understanding of the parliamentary system in Israel. Professor Hazan explains how the parliamentary party system works, how coalitions rise and fall, and how Israeli politics differ from American politics. Since the delegation will be visiting with government officials throughout the week, we believe it's important to provide this overview early in the seminar.

4:45 PM                    Depart for the Knesset

5:30 – 6:00 PM            **Israeli Democracy in Action, Part I: The Opposition**  
Meeting with The Honorable Shelly Tal Meron  
Member of Knesset, Yesh Atid party

It is customary for delegations to meet with members from the coalition and opposition parties. The Honorable Shelly Meron entered the Knesset in February 2023. She previously served in the Israeli Air Force for six years in various roles, including as a spokesperson, a flight instructor for Bell AH – 1 Cobra pilots, and as an officer. She also worked for a technology company in Southeast Asia.

6:15 – 6:45 PM            **Israeli Democracy in Action, Part II: The Coalition**  
Meeting with The Honorable Amir Ohana  
Speaker of the Knesset  
– at the Knesset

The Honorable Amir Ohana is an Israeli lawyer, former Shin Bet official and politician who has served as the Speaker of the Knesset since 2022, and as a member of the Knesset for Likud. He previously held the posts of Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Security. Ohana is a veteran of the acclaimed Israeli Shin Bet security agency, and an attorney. He achieved the rank of major in the IDF and continues to serve in reserve duty.

6:45 – 7:15 PM            **Guided visit to the Knesset Plenary**

The Knesset Plenum, also known as the Plenary or Assembly Hall, is the three – story hall of the Knesset, Israel's unicameral legislature. Participants will be able to see members of the 120 – person body debate and vote on various motions. This session will allow participants to see the parliamentary system in action.

7:30 PM                    Depart for dinner

8:00 – 10:00 PM      **Politics and Policy in Israel**  
Dinner with Israeli Chiefs of Staff and Policy Advisors  
– at Andalusia

During this dinner the participants will have the opportunity to hear from their counterparts in Israel – staffers serving different members of the Israeli Knesset. The discussion will explore the difference between the American and Israeli political systems; the role of political staffers; and the views of the various Knesset members they serve on current issues affecting the region.

10:30 PM              Overnight at the Orient Hotel, Jerusalem

**Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

7:30 AM              Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 – 9:00 AM      **Reporting on Israel: How Narratives Are Formed**  
Meeting with Matti Friedman  
Author and Journalist

Matti Friedman is a renowned reporter with a career that has taken him from Lebanon to Morocco, Cairo, Moscow and Washington, D.C., and to conflicts in Israel in the Caucasus. Mr. Friedman is a dynamic and insightful speaker who provides a journalist’s perspective on how Israel’s story is told by the international media, and how that media portrayal impacts the stories taking place on the ground.

9:15 AM              Depart for Mount Herzl Military Cemetery

9:45 – 10:45 AM    **The Israeli Psyche, Part I: The Price of War**  
Learn about the role of fallen soldiers in Israeli society  
– at Mount Herzl Military Cemetery

A critical piece of understanding Israeli society and culture, is the role of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), mandatory army service, and veterans. Mount Herzl is the site of Israel’s national cemetery, named after Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism. Israel’s leaders and fallen soldiers are buried there. Every plot section in Mount Herzl has a broad plaza for memorial services. Most state memorial ceremonies for those killed in war are conducted in the National Military and Police cemetery. This visit will highlight the way Israel remembers its fallen and relates to the role of the military in as part of the fabric of the Jewish State. Since the massacre on October 7<sup>th</sup> and the ensuing war, the cemetery has seen many funerals in recent months and visiting now will help participants understand the current Israel psyche.

- 11:00 AM Depart for the Vert Hotel, Jerusalem
- 11:15 – 12:45PM **Israel’s Quest for Peace**  
Meeting with Tal Becker  
Former Senior Legal Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
– at the Vert Hotel, Jerusalem

Since Israel’s founding, the Jewish state has sought to reach a just and lasting solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The United States has been closely involved in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Dr. Tal Becker is a senior member of the Israeli peace negotiation team. In this position, he is on the front lines of many of Israel's most pressing diplomatic, legal and policy challenges. He is a veteran negotiator, and key behind the scenes representative, for Israel in a wide variety of contexts. During this session, he will address the current political climate for Israel on the international stage and discuss post war scenarios.

- 12:45 – 1:30 PM Lunch  
– at the Vert Hotel

- 1:45 PM Depart for Yad Vashem

- 2:00 – 4:00 PM **The Israeli Psyche, Part II: The Significance of the Holocaust**  
Guided survey of Yad Vashem  
The World Holocaust Remembrance Center

One cannot understand Israel’s worldview without understanding the trauma of the Holocaust. Israelis view threats to its destruction in light of the events of the 1930s and 1940s, when the German government’s threats to exterminate the Jewish people were not taken seriously by the international community. This museum provides an important reference point as to how Israelis interpret the threat of an Iranian nuclear program and Iranian leaders committed to Israel’s destruction. Yad Vashem has become a symbol of the Jewish people and its transformation from total helplessness to self – reliance and strength. Thus, a visit to Yad Vashem provides a historical context for the Jewish state. The museum’s professional docent will guide the delegation through the main exhibit hall and the children’s memorial.

- 4:15 PM Depart for Tel Aviv
- 5:45 PM Check into the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv
- 6:30 – 7:30 PM **Navigating the Middle East: Regional Strategic Overview**  
Briefing by Brig. Gen. (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel  
Former Director, Counter – Terrorism Bureau, Prime Minister's Office  
– at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

To understand the strategic threats facing Israel, participants must understand the unique situation facing Israel at the borders with the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Syria, all home to Iranian proxies. This briefing will provide an overview of each border, as well as the malign activity from Iran contributing to unrest in the region.

7:45 PM Depart for dinner

8:00 – 10:00 PM **Dinner and Discussion**  
– at Ha’Achim Restaurant

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel’s complexities.

10:30 PM Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

#### **Thursday, February 20, 2025**

7:00 AM Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 – 8:30 AM **October 7: How It Happened**  
With Yoni Leviatan, AIEF  
– at the Sheraton Hotel

On October 7, 2023, the Jewish communities living along the Gaza border were destroyed, thousands were killed, and hundreds kidnapped. As preparation for the day’s programming, Yoni Leviatan will provide an overview of the October 7 massacre.

8:45 AM Depart for the Gaza Envelope

9:00 – 10:00 AM En route briefing:  
**Understanding Hamas**

Hamas’s takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and its growing influence in the West Bank have had a direct impact on Israel, even before the events of October 7. This session will explore Hamas’s history, ethos, goals and attitudes toward Israel. It will also discuss how Israel has understood and misunderstood Hamas and its intentions, new approaches since the war began, and the challenges for the “day after”.

10:00 –12:00 PM      **October 7, Part I: The Kibbutzim**  
Guided visit and meeting with a representative from Kibbutz Nir Oz  
– at Kibbutz Nir Oz

During the visit to Kibbutz Nir Oz, participants will bear witness to the Hamas invasion and massacre. They will hear what happened to the community on October 7, and how the IDF regained control. They will meet with a resident of the Kibbutz who will walk them through the events that started the war.

12:15 PM              Depart

12:45 – 1:15PM      Lunch  
– at Falafel Baribua Restaurant

1:30 PM                Depart

1:45 – 2:15 PM      **October 7, Part II: The Nova Party**  
Visit the site of the music festival massacre  
– at Reim Forest

When Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel on October 7, they also massacred and kidnapped hundreds of young civilians at a music festival taking place in the Gaza envelope area. Since then, the Nova site has become a meeting point for victim’s families and hostage families. The site has also evolved into a living memorial to their loved ones. This visit will help the participants understand the enormity of the events of the days and the trauma experienced by Israeli society.

2:30 PM                Depart

3:00 – 3:30 PM      **U.S. – Israel Missile Defense Cooperation**  
Visit Iron Dome Battery

More than a decade ago, Israel developed Iron Dome to protect its citizens from persistent and increasingly dangerous rockets fired by Iranian – backed terrorists. Since being deployed, Iron Dome has intercepted more than 90 percent of the rockets it has targeted—preventing war, saving countless lives, and reducing physical and psychological damage. Participants will have the opportunity to visit an Iron Dome site and speak with the soldiers responsible for its operation.

4:45 PM                Depart for Tel Aviv

7:15 PM                Depart for dinner

7:30 – 9:30 PM            **Citizen – Soldiers: The IDF’s Impact on Israeli Society**

Dinner with IDF Reservists

- Lt. Col. (Res.) Assaf Hershkovits
- Yoav Tzivoni
- Noga Ventura

In Israel, military service is mandatory for everyone over the age of 18, with several exceptions. Most Israelis join the army right after high school and serve for three years. As such, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is an integral part of the fabric of Israeli society. During this dinner, participants will have the chance to meet with several reservists and hear about their experiences in the army. They will discuss the values of the Israel Defense Forces – known as Ruach Tzahal (The Spirit of the IDF). This overarching ethical code, and the guidelines and operation resulting from it, shape the mode of action applied by all IDF soldiers and units, both in peace and at war.

10:00 PM                    Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

**Friday, February 21, 2025**

8:00 AM                    Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining Hall

8:30 – 9:30 AM            **Understanding Hamas’s Strategy**  
Briefing with Col. (res.) Miri Eisin  
Senior Fellow, International Institute for Counter Terrorism, Reichman  
University

Hamas’s takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and its growing influence in the West Bank have had a direct impact on Israel, even before the events of October 7. This session will explore Hamas’s history, ethos, goals and attitudes toward Israel. It will also discuss how Israel has understood and misunderstood Hamas and its intentions, new approaches since the war began, and the challenges for the “day after”.

9:45 – 10:45 AM            **Briefing with Dr. Eran Shamir Borer**  
Director, Center for National Security and Democracy,  
Israel Democracy Institute

Dr. Eran Shamir – Borer serves as the Director of the Center for National Security and Democracy since September 2022. Prior, Eran served for over 20 years in various positions in the International Law Department of the Military Advocate General's Corps in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), including as the head of the department, and retired at the rank of Colonel. In this capacity, Eran was responsible for the provision of advice to all levels of command in the IDF regarding international law, including with respect to the IDF’s operational activities in times of contingency. During his service, Eran represented the State

of Israel in various international fora, participated in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and was involved in contending with the diplomatic and legal challenges facing Israel at the international level. Eran's academic publications address different areas of international law, particularly global governance, and the law of armed conflict. During this session, he will address the current political climate for Israel on the international stage.

11:00 AM Depart for Jaffa

11:30 – 12:30 PM **Coexistence in the Heart of Israel**  
Guided Survey of Jaffa

The ancient city of Jaffa, now part of the modern Tel Aviv – Jaffa Municipality has a rich history reflecting the different communities that have used it as a port city. Today, a diverse community of Jews, Christians and Muslims call it home. This tour will cover the ancient and modern city, allowing participants to have a deep understanding of different Israeli populations as well as the challenges and opportunities of a shared society.

12:30 PM Depart

12:45 – 1:45 PM Lunch

2:00 PM Depart for hotel

2:15 – 3:15 PM **A Palestinian Voice Post – October 7**  
Lunch with Ibrahim Dalalsha  
Executive Director, Horizon Center for Political Studies & Media Outreach

Ibrahim Dalalsha is the director of Horizon Center for Political Studies and Media Outreach, a private Palestinian think tank and consultancy firm in Ramallah. The center compiles political, legal, security and economic studies and other topics related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Dalalsha has played an integral role in peace negotiations across the Middle East. His former career as a senior Palestinian political advisor at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem stretched across two decades. During this session he will provide an insider's view of the Palestinian political landscape.

3:30 – 4:30 PM **The West Bank: A Situational Assessment**  
Briefing with Noa Shusterman  
Senior Researcher, Director of the Palestinians and the Region Research Program

During this session Noa Shusterman will outline a number of issues related to the West Bank, in order to for participants to understand the prospects for a path forward between Israelis and Palestinians. She will focus on the makeup of Palestinian society, internal

issues and security challenges inherent in the West Bank, the role of the Palestinian Authority (P.A.), and P.A. coordination with Israeli bodies.

6:45 PM Depart for dinner

7:00 – 9:00 PM **Reflections on the Sabbath**  
Traditional Sabbath Eve dinner hosted by Hana and Aviad Friedman

Israel, the only Jewish country in the world, boasts the unique tradition of honoring the Jewish Sabbath from Friday sundown until Saturday sundown. 80 percent of the Israeli population will commemorate the Sabbath, in various forms, which typically include a family dinner and special blessings. During this dinner the Friedmans will lead a discussion on their hometown of Tel Aviv, the center of the largest metropolitan area in Israel, home to most of Israel's hi – tech industry, and the country's international airport. They will describe life in Tel Aviv since October 7, including the impact on civilian life in Tel Aviv, where the population lives just hours from a war zone.

9:30 PM Overnight at the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

### **Saturday, February 25, 2025**

7:30 AM Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall

8:00 AM Depart for the North

8:30 – 9:30 AM En route briefing:  
**The Jezreel Valley and Upper Galilee**

Our tour guide will spend an hour during the drive from Israel's center to the north to provide a briefing on the Jezreel Valley and the Upper Galilee and the challenges facing these regions of the country. For thousands of years, the Jezreel Valley served as a land bridge linking Africa, Asia and Europe; as a thoroughfare for ancient caravans and; more frequently, armies. The Jezreel Valley is also home to historical and biblical sites including Tel Megiddo and Nazareth. Today it is an important symbol of Israel's complex and diverse political reality. The Jezreel Valley, together with the areas of the Lower and Upper Galilee, is home to the majority of Israel's Arab citizens. A survey of this area provides an opportunity to discuss and learn about Israel's Arab citizens – over 20 percent of the population – each of which has full democratic, social and welfare rights, the right to vote and serve in the Knesset, and the opportunity to serve on Israel's Supreme Court. The Upper Galilee is home to the largest variety of ethnic communities in Israel including Druze, Circassian, Arab Muslim and Arab Christian villages. The Galilee is also home to ancient Jewish and Christian holy sites that provide additional historical and political context to regional tensions.

10:00 – 12:00 PM      **Historical Significance of the Sea of Galilee**

Guided Survey of:

- Mt. of Beatitudes
- Capernaum

As part of the seminar's focus on the complex religious fabric of Israeli society, the delegation will be visiting several of the most sacred sites for Christians in the Holy Land. Included is a guided survey and discussion of some of the most important events in the life of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. Just as strategic surveys in Jerusalem focused on Jewish, Muslim, and Christian history and claims to the land, the site visits to the Christian sites help provide context for the competing religious narratives for the land of Israel. For example, we will be visiting the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, the most studied and read speech of any religion in history. Our guide will also lead discussions through Capernaum.

12:15 PM              Depart

12:45 – 1:30 PM      Lunch en route

1:45 PM              Depart

2:15 – 3:15 PM      **Israel's Northern Front, Part I: Syria**  
Strategic Briefing with Maj. (Res.) Ilan Schulman  
– at the Merom Golan Hotel

With the fall of the Assad regime, Syria is one of the most important stories in the Middle East. Additionally, it raises questions about Israel's security while uncertainly reigns there. Captain (Res.) Ilan Shulman, a disabled IDF veteran, divides his time guiding geopolitical tours on the Galilee and Golan Heights, lecturing to students, giving geo – political briefings for delegations through various Israeli foreign ministry programs, and fulfilling his IDF reserve duties in the Northern Command's intelligence unit. Shulman was raised in Kibbutz Merom Golan near Israel's border with Syria, where one of his favorite jobs was herding the kibbutz cattle. Shulman served in the IDF's paratrooper's unit, rising to the position of company commander. He holds a BA in Israel and Middle East Studies. During this session he will provide an overview of Israel's border with Syria and the evolving situation on this Northern Front.

3:30 PM              Depart

3:45 – 4:15 PM      **Strategic Survey of the Syrian Border**  
Overlook visit with Maj. (Res.) Ilan Schulman  
– at Quinetra

This outlook will give participants an opportunity to see the proximity to Syria and understand better the IDF's deployment. This visit will complement the previous briefing by Ilan Shulman.

- 4:30 PM Depart
- 5:30 PM Check – in to the Magdala Hotel
- 6:30 – 7:30 PM **Shared Society in Times of Crisis**  
Meeting with Ibrahim Abu Ahmed  
Arab Israeli Activist and Writer  
– at the Magdala Hotel

Approximately 22% of Israeli residents are part of the non – Jewish minority, which includes, among others, Muslims, Christians, and Druze. As a liberal, democratic state, Israel is rooted in liberty, the rule of law, free and fair elections, and full civil rights for all citizens. To provide a firsthand perspective of the minority experience, participants will meet with Ibrahim Abu Ahmed, an Arab – Palestinian – Israeli writer and lecturer. He is the Director of Alumni Relations and the Tourism Project at the Regional Organization for Peace and Economic Security (ROPES). Abu Ahmed regularly speaks to various groups including students, journalists, elected officials, and policymakers. His field of expertise includes the challenges of the Arab minority in Israel, the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, the war in Syria, the instability in Lebanon, and Iranian intervention in the region, among others.

- 7:45 PM Depart for dinner
- 8:00 – 9:30 PM **Dinner and Discussion**  
– at Magdalena

We will use this dinner as an opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to thus far. We have found giving our participants an opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them assists in their ability to understand Israel's complexities.

- 9:45 PM Return to the Magdala Hotel
- 10:00 PM Overnight at the Magdala Hotel

**Sunday, February 23, 2025**

- 7:30 AM Breakfast on own  
– at the hotel dining hall
- 8:00 AM Depart

8:00 – 9:00 AM            En route briefing:  
**The History of Hezbollah**

During the drive to Israel's border with Lebanon, the guide will provide an overview of Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed terrorist group based in Lebanon that is dedicated to Israel's destruction. The terrorist group's influence in Lebanese politics, massive weapons arsenal and use of Lebanese civilians as human shields make the Iranian proxy a serious threat to Israel.

9:00 – 10:00 AM        **The Civilian Impact of Hezbollah's War on Israel**  
– at Kibbutz Sasa

When Hezbollah started to fire on Israel on October 7, just hours after Hamas terrorists fired thousands of rockets and infiltrated the country, northern Israeli communities were immediately at risk. The visit to Kibbutz Sasa, with an IDF spokesperson and a local resident, will demonstrate the impact on one such community and highlight for participants the displacement of tens of thousands of Israelis who were forced to evacuate while their homes are under fire from Hezbollah.

10:15 AM                Depart

11:00 – 12:00 PM      **Israel's Northern Front, Part II: Lebanon**  
Strategic briefing with Lt. Col. (Res.) Sarit Zehavi  
Founder and Director, Alma Research Center  
– at the Alma Research and Education Center, Tefen

Lt. Col. (Res.) Sarit Zehavi served 15 years in the IDF in Military Intelligence –first in the Research and Analysis Branch, and later in the Northern Command. During her military service she briefed hundreds of delegations, ranging from U.S. Senators, Congressmen and politicians to global military commanders, senior journalists and visiting VIP delegations. She is the founder/director of Alma, an educational research center focusing on the security issues of Israel's northern border. Zehavi has authored many position papers focusing on Lebanon, Syria and Israel's national security challenges, and continues to brief delegations on these topics. She holds an MA in Middle East Studies from Ben Gurion University and is a resident of the northern Galilee region. Lt. Col. Zehavi will brief the delegation on security threats coming from the Lebanese border, and the role Iran plays in supporting Hezbollah terrorism against Israel. As a lifelong resident of the North, she will also share her experiences living on the border with Lebanon.

12:15 PM                Depart

1:45 – 2:30 PM        Lunch  
– at the Yulek Café

2:45 – 3:15 PM      **Israel’s Narrow Waistline**  
Strategic briefing  
– at Alfei Menashe overlook

Alfei Menashe is a Jewish community located on the western edge of the West Bank. Less than 10 miles from the Mediterranean Sea, Alfei Menashe provides a unique vantage point to discuss Israeli settlement policy, the routing of the security barrier, as well as Israel’s narrow waistline. The sliver of Israeli land west of the West Bank is often referred to as the Hadera – Gadera rectangle, with the city of Hadera denoting the northern point, and the city of Gadera the southern point. The Hadera – Gadera rectangle is home to over 50 percent of Israel’s population, as well as civilian infrastructure. The area is also home to Israel’s “silicon valley”, as well as Ben Gurion international airport. The discussion at Alfei Menashe will allow participants to see firsthand the proximity of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods in both Israel and the West Bank; as well as the strategic threats faced by the Israeli population living in Israel’s narrow waistline.

3:15 – 3:45 PM      **Life as a Hostage Family**  
Meeting with Sarit Rosenthal,  
Aunt of 20-year-old hostage, Agam Berger

Agam Berger was kidnapped by Hamas from Israel's Nahal Oz base just 24 hours after starting her very first job in the military as a border surveillance officer. She remains in captivity with four other female soldiers. Her Aunt, Sarit Rosenthal, who lives at the Alfei Menashe settlement, will share with the group the latest efforts of the hostage family community to bring Agam and the rest of the hostages home.

4:00 PM              Depart for the Sheraton Hotel, Tel Aviv

5:00 – 6:45 PM      Prepare for departure and check-out

7:00 – 9:30 PM      **Closing Dinner and Reflections**  
– at the Sheraton hotel, Tel Aviv

The closing dinner provides an opportunity for participants to process the scope of the week, from the religious center of the Judeo – Christian world in Jerusalem, to the bustling economic powerhouse of Tel Aviv; and the conflict plagued borders with Gaza, Syria and Lebanon. We will process the range of topics explored, including the U.S. – Israel strategic partnership, prospects for Arab – Israeli peace, the experience of minorities in Israel, as well as greater existential threats throughout the region. Participants will also have the opportunity to share their takeaways and ask any lingering questions that weren’t covered during the week.

Late night            Depart for Ben Gurion Airport  
Flights depart for the United States

**Monday, February 24, 2025**

All Day Flights arrive in the United States