

RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Date/Time Stamp

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building. **This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

Certification: *In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:*

Private Sponsor(s):

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD)

Travel Dates:

6/12/25-6/13/25

Name of accompanying family member (if any):**Relationship to Traveler:****Total Expenses**

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
\$2760.51	\$0	\$0	\$0

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- The final **Employee Pre-Travel Authorization** (Form RE-1)
- The final **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form** with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

11 July 2025

Arden Hooper

Date

Printed Name of Traveler



Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

11 July 2025

Date



Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
Meals	\$0	My flight did not land in Israel and was instead diverted to Rome. The Israeli airspace remained closed indefinitely, and thus, I returned to the U.S. the same day.
Lodging	\$0	My flight did not land in Israel and was instead diverted to Rome. The Israeli airspace remained closed indefinitely, and thus, I returned to the U.S. the same day.
Other	\$0	My flight did not land in Israel and was instead diverted to Rome. The Israeli airspace remained closed indefinitely, and thus, I returned to the U.S. the same day.
Transportation	\$2760.51	After being diverted to Rome, I booked a flight home to the U.S. which FDD reimbursed me for, as the Israeli airspace was closed and El Al was unsure when they could book me on a return flight.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Explanation:

While I was slated to arrive in Israel on June 13, my flight was diverted to Rome while I was en route due to Israel's strike on Iran's nuclear assets. After the strikes began, the Israeli airspace was closed indefinitely, so I purchased a return flight (for which I was later reimbursed by FDD) and returned to the United States and did not otherwise participate in the trip.

**See attached updated agenda reflecting changes to the trip.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Explanation:



FDD's Barish Center for Media Integrity Trip to Israel – AS EXECUTED
June 12-June 13, 2025

Thursday, June 12

Time	Activity
06:05 ET	Arrive at Washington Union Station (WAS)
07:05-10:17 ET	Take Amtrak 172 from Washington Union Station (WAS) to Newark International Airport (EWR)
13:30 ET	Flight on El Al 28 from Newark International Airport (EWR) to Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV) **While this flight was scheduled to land in Israel, it was diverted to Rome due to Israel's strike on Iran's nuclear assets.

Friday, June 13

Time	Activity
Roughly 03:40 CEST	Land at Leonardo da Vinci International Airport in Rome, Italy
10:20 CEST	Flight on United Flight 885 from Leonardo da Vinci International Airport (FCO) to Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD)
14:20 ET	Arrive at Washington Dulles International Airport

Trip Name: FDD's Barish Center for Media Integrity Trip to Israel

Organization Information

Organization Name:

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD)

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?☒ Yes ☐ No**If Yes, §501(c)(3) Organization Type:**☐ Private Foundation ☒ Public Charity**Address:**

1800 M St NW, Suite 800S

City, State, Zip:

Washington, DC 20036

Phone Number:

202-368-0539

Organization URL:<https://www.fdd.org/>

History of Congressional Travel

Describe your organization's history of sponsoring congressional travel.

FDD has been running educational national security focused trips to Israel for mid-career U.S. national security practitioners since 2011. Congressional staff have participated on a number of our trips throughout the years. These trips to Israel provide a case study in how a robust democracy navigates constant threats to the homeland and unique strategic communications and public diplomacy challenges.

Educational Activities

Describe the educational activities performed by your organization other than sponsoring congressional travel.

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) is a Washington, DC-based nonpartisan 501(c)(3) research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy. FDD conducts in-depth research, produces accurate and timely analyses, identifies illicit activities, and provides policy options – all with the aim of strengthening U.S. national security and reducing or eliminating threats posed by adversaries and enemies of the United States and other free nations.

FDD's National Security Network is comprised of nearly 600 bipartisan mid-career national security practitioners who have completed FDD's National Security Fellows Program (NSFP), Media Fellows Program, the National Security Trip to Israel and/or the Military Trip to Israel. Participants are not FDD employees but enjoy year-round educational programming and professional development opportunities, which includes invitations to exclusive briefings, policy-related events, international trips and other VIP opportunities. Alumni are also provided with a platform to further connect, network, and collaborate with their peers in the national security community as well as with FDD experts.

More information can be found here: <https://www.fdd.org/projects/national-security-network/>

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status (Select one):☒ I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and does not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist.☐ I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist but does retain or employ one or more federally registered lobbyists.**Foreign Agent Registration Status (Select one):**☒ I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and does not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.☐ I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal but does retain or employ one or more agents of a foreign principal.

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status (Must select all):☒ I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.☒ I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.☒ I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

FDD's Barish Center for Media Integrity Trip to Israel offers a fact-based, nuanced understanding of a country that faces unique strategic communications and public diplomacy challenges. Throughout the week, trip participants will travel around Israel to participate in off-the-record high-level meetings with Israel's top national security brass; current and former Israeli, Palestinian, and American national security decision makers; journalists; military officials; and leaders in the private sector.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

FDD believes that Israel serves as a useful laboratory for teaching the next generation of U.S. national security leaders best practices in national security, public diplomacy, and counterterrorism. Participants will leave the trip with a nuanced understanding of regional challenges and the practical skills to counter 21st century security threats. It is part of FDD's strategic mission to provide educational opportunities for the next generation of U.S. national security communications and media practitioners.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If No, describe your organization's role in planning the trip.

FDD recruited, selected, and confirmed the trip participants. We worked together with our additional sponsor on organizing the itinerary, trip speakers, site visits, and content.

If there are multiple sponsors, each sponsor must submit Organization Information (Page 1 of the Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form) and a Signature Page Form.

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

If you have a Grantmaking Organization, you must attach a Grantmaking Organization Certification Form.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

With or Without Regard to Congressional Participation (Select one):

- ☒ The trip is arranged or organized without regard to congressional participation.
- ☐ The trip is arranged or organized with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

- ☒ The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing (Must select all):

- ☒ The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
- ☒ No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations (Select one):

- ☐ The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations (Select one):

- ☒ No sponsor retains or employs a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principle, the trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Required if selecting the third option in either column - Please explain why the second overnight stay is practically required and necessary to accomplish the purpose of the trip.

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol (Must select all):

- ☒ Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.
- ☒ Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees list

- ☒ A list of all Senate invitees is attached to this form (required).
- ☒ Members and staff from the House of Representatives will also receive invitations.

Travel Details (Submit additional pages as needed)

Trip Start Date/Time:
June 12, 2025



Trip End Date/Time:
June 20, 2025

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Transportation (Member/Officer/Employee: \$^{2,557.96} Accompanying Family Member: \$_____)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Round trip airfare + Group escort at airport	Coach	\$1,935.21
Round trip train to EWR	Coach	\$228.00
Bus transportation in Israel		\$208.00
Transportation to the Syrian border		\$137.83
Details (optional) Cab fare to hotel from airport - \$22.10 (EST only; will utilize meter) Cab fare to Sderot - \$26.82, (EST only; will utilize meter)		

**see additional details section regarding group escort

Lodging (Member/Officer/Employee: \$^{2,150.00} Accompanying Family Member: \$_____)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country
6/13/25	6/15/25	Dan Panorama Hotel	Jerusalem		Israel
Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem (Yes/No)	If Yes, please explain why expenses over the per diem rate are reasonable and necessary.		
2	\$412.50	No	**While the nightly rate is \$330, the hotel will charge 50% extra on June 13 for early check in.		
Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country
6/15/25	6/16/25	Gomeh Hotel	Migdal		Israel
Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem (Yes/No)	If Yes, please explain why expenses over the per diem rate are reasonable and necessary.		
1	\$310.00	Yes	The \$310 rate slightly exceeds the \$305 State Department per diem rate. We have been unable to locate a reasonable and secure hotel near the site that could accommodate our full group.		
Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country
6/16/25	6/18/25	Dan Tel Aviv Hotel	Tel Aviv		Israel
Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem (Yes/No)	If Yes, please explain why expenses over the per diem rate are reasonable and necessary.		
2	\$320.00	No			

**Please see addendum for additional lodging night

Meals (Member/Officer/Employee: \$ \$932.00 Accompanying Family Member: \$ _____)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem (Y/N)
6/13/25	N/A	On Own	\$200		\$200.00	Jerusalem		Israel	Yes
6/14/25	Included	On Own	\$160		\$160.00	Jerusalem		Israel	No
6/15/25	Included	On Own	\$67.00		\$67.00	Migdal		Israel	No
6/16/25	Included	\$55.00	On Own		\$55.00	Jish		Israel	No
6/17/25	Included	On Own	\$135.00		\$135.00	Tel Aviv		Israel	No
6/18/25	Included	\$52.00	\$77.00		\$129.00	Tel Aviv/Sde Boker		Israel	No
6/19/25	Included	\$55.00	\$131.00		\$186.00	Tel Aviv		Israel	Yes

If costs exceed the federal per diem, please explain why expenses over the per diem rate are reasonable and necessary.

We are having a Friday night dinner on Israel's Sabbath (Shabbat) on 6/13/2025. Due to the holiday, prices in Israel are increased on Friday evenings.

The cost of meals on the final day is a bit higher as costs have risen due to the ongoing war at restaurants throughout Israel and we are providing participants with two meals.

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses

(Member/Officer/Employee: \$ 169.00 Accompanying Family Member: \$ _____)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
Insurance	\$90	
Beverages and Snacks on the bus	\$24	
Entrance Fees (Yad Vashem, Kalia Beach, Qaser el Yahud)	\$55	

Additional Details (optional)

Regarding the group escort at the airport, participants will receive an escort after arriving at Ben Gurion and when departing to ensure a smooth and expedited experience through border control to maximize time for additional programming.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

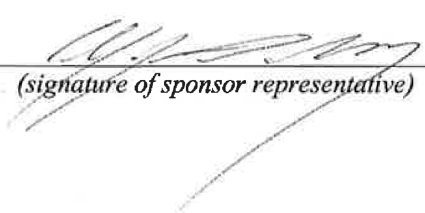
Trip Name: FDD's Barish Center for Media Integrity Trip to Israel
June 12-20, 2025
Travel Date(s): Israel
Travel Destination(s):
Sponsor: The Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD)

Clifford D. May

Founder and President

(printed name of sponsor representative)

(title)

X 
(signature of sponsor representative)

X 4/30/25
(date)

Lodging (Member/Officer/Employee: \$_____ Accompanying Family Member:
\$_____)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country
6/18/25	6/19/25	Kedma Hotel	Sde Boker		Israel
Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem (Yes/No)	If Yes, please explain why expenses over the per diem rate are reasonable and necessary.		
1	\$375	Y	This is the price of a reasonable hotel in the South of Israel that can accommodate our full group. The south is more remote with limited options as most hotels do not have accommodations for a large group. Staying in the South is in close proximity to military installations and site visits that are an integral part of our trip		

Senate Invitees:

- Arden Hooper, National Security Legislative Aide, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)
- Patrick McCann, Press Secretary, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)

****Please note that the events on the pre-submitted itinerary did not take place due to the airstrikes.**



**FDD's Barish Center for Media Integrity Trip to Israel
June 12-June 20, 2025**

Note: This is our optimal itinerary and is flexible according to federal travel restrictions and speaker availability.

*****Please do not circulate*****

Guides: Noam Savion, Dr. Jonathan Schanzer, Enia Krivine, Shannon Walsh

Thursday, June 12

Time	Activity
08:30	Meet at Washington Union Station (WAS)
09:30-12:30	Take Amtrak 182 from Washington Union Station (WAS) to Newark International Airport (EWR)
15:30	Flight on United Flight 0084 from Newark International Airport (EWR) to Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV)

Friday, June 13

Time	Activity
08:55	Arrive at Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV)
08:55-10:30	Travel by taxi to the Dan Panorama Hotel in Jerusalem
10:30-10:45	Check-in to the hotel
10:45-12:15	Travel by car to Sderot
12:15-12:45	Lunch on own in Sderot
12:45-13:20	Travel by bus to Nova Music Festival Memorial in Reim
13:20-14:30	Battleground walkthrough of the Nova Music Festival Memorial in Reim with Amir Goren Lt. Col. (Ret.) Amir Goren , veteran and security expert, offers 42 years of military insights. CEO of GSA Security Group and founder of the International Institute for Migration and Security Research, Goren's lectures blend

	personal stories with practical lessons, equipping audiences to face modern challenges. Goren's years in the military were spent on the IDF's High Level Negotiation Team, where he specialized in combat roles and counterterrorism. He has instructed at the IDF School of Counterterrorism.
14:30-16:30	Travel by bus to Jerusalem
16:30-18:30	Prep for dinner
18:30-19:00	Travel by bus to dinner
19:00-21:30	Traditional Shabbat dinner with Yisrael Klistner and discussion on his experience serving in the IDF in Gaza Yisrael Klitsner is a fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute. He served as Diaspora Affairs Advisor to Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. Prior to his time in federal government, Yisrael worked for AIPAC as Director of Strategic Engagement. Yisrael, on full scholarship, was studying public policy at Carnegie Mellon University when October 7 hit and he decided to move back to Israel and then spent many months in reserve duty. Yisrael holds a BA from Queens College. He is married and has four children.
21:30-22:00	Travel by bus to the hotel
Overnight	Dan Panorama Jerusalem 39 Keren Hayesod St., Jerusalem, 94188 +972-2-5695695

Saturday, June 14

Time	Activity
07:00-08:00	Breakfast at the hotel
08:00-08:15	Travel by bus to Haas Promenade
08:15-09:00	Strategic Depth Overview of Jerusalem with Noam Savion at Jerusalem Overlook Jerusalem is of immense strategic importance for the State of Israel's national security posture. At this briefing, participants will receive an overview of Israel's topography, border threats, and security imperatives with respect to the greater Jerusalem envelope.
09:00-09:15	Photo at Jerusalem Overlook
09:15-09:30	Travel by bus to the Old City of Jerusalem
09:30-11:45	Explore the diversity and security installations of the Old City of Jerusalem with Noam Savion

	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, 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 these sites and others, educating trip participants about their historical impact and their role in today's political discussions.
11:45-12:30	Lunch on own in the Old City of Jerusalem
12:30-13:30	Travel by bus to Qaser El-Yehud , traditional site of Jesus' Baptism.
13:30-14:00	Explore Israeli-Jordanian military cooperation at Qaser El Yahud, traditional site of Jesus' Baptism According to Christian tradition, Qaser El-Yahud is the site where John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan. It is one of the holiest sites in the Christian world. The site includes monasteries, churches, and lands belonging to eight different Christian denominations. The site sits along the Jordan river, which serves as the border between Israel and Jordan. The border is so narrow, that while standing on the Israeli side of the site, one can speak with Jordanian soldiers on the Jordanian side. Participants will learn about Israeli-Jordanian military cooperation and border security while visiting this site.
14:00-14:30	Travel by bus to Kalia Beach
14:30-16:00	Explore water and border security dynamics along the Jordan Valley at Kalia Beach, at the Dead Sea For decades, Israel has been developing the agricultural potential of the desert. While the Middle East is suffering from water shortages, Israel, through modern technology and water conservation policies, including the recycling of over 80 percent of water used for domestic purposes and transferring it to agriculture, has "made the desert bloom." The key regional players also face serious environmental issues in the Dead Sea region. One of the major environmental concerns is the receding of the Dead Sea and the appearance of sinkholes, which cause the earth above to collapse. Participants will receive a briefing on these issues, which has led to unprecedented cooperation between Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians and serves as a model for regional cooperation.
16:00-17:00	Travel by bus to the hotel

17:00-18:00	Prep for dinner
18:00-18:30	Travel by bus to dinner at the American Colony Hotel
18:30-19:00	Briefing on the PLA, PLO, and Hamas by Dr. Jonathan Schanzer at the American Colony Hotel Dr. Schanzer will discuss the various differences between the Palestinian entities with respect to their histories, policies, and current political standing. This will help provide helpful background to participants before the evening discussions. Dr. Schanzer is the author of <i>Gaza Conflict 2021: Hamas, Israel and Eleven Days of War</i> (FDD Press 2021). His other books are <i>State of Failure: Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Unmaking of the Palestinian State</i> (Palgrave Macmillan 2013), <i>Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine</i> (Palgrave Macmillan 2008), and <i>Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror</i> (Washington Institute for Near East Policy 2004).
19:00-20:00	Dinner briefing on Palestinian statehood with Daoud Abulibdeh, Palestinian security consultant at the American Colony Hotel Daoud Abu Libdeh is a seasoned security professional with a keen focus on risk assessment and mitigation strategies. With a strong background in developing and supporting security initiatives, he excels in crisis management and driving continuous improvements across diverse teams. His career spans roles as a security consultant for political figures and non-profits, a procurement manager at Search for Common Ground, and a Palestinian Affairs advisor. He holds a masters in Counterterrorism and Homeland Security Studies from Reichman University and is fluent in Arabic, English, and Hebrew.
20:00-20:15	Short break
20:15-21:00	Dessert briefing on the Israeli Arab community with Khaled Abu Toameh, journalist and Middle East expert at the American Colony Hotel Khaled Abu Toameh is an awarding-winning journalist and TV producer who covers Palestinian affairs for The Jerusalem Post. He previously worked as a senior producer for NBC in the Middle East and has reported on events in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for several media outlets. Khaled will brief participants on Israel's Arab population, reporting and the media in Israel, and other topics of interest.
21:00-21:30	Travel by bus to hotel
Overnight	Dan Panorama Jerusalem 39 Keren Hayesod St., Jerusalem, 94188 +972-2-5695695

Sunday, June 15

Time	Activity
07:00-08:30	Breakfast at the hotel
08:30-09:00	Check out of the Hotel
09:00-10:00	Briefing at the hotel with Dr. Tal Becker on International Law and Israel's war with Iranian-backed proxies Dr. Tal Becker is a vice president and senior faculty member of the Kogod Research Center at Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, where he leads educational initiatives on Israel and the Jewish world. He served, until recently, as the Legal Adviser of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has been a senior member of the Israeli peace negotiation team in successive rounds of peace negotiations. He earned his doctorate from Columbia University and, among numerous scholarly awards, is the winner of the Rabin Peace Prize and the 2007 Guggenheim Prize for best international law book for his book <i>Terrorism and the State</i>.
10:00-10:45	Travel by bus to Yad Vashem
10:45-12:15	VIP tour at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial Museum To understand how Israelis view national security, one must understand the trauma of the Holocaust. Israelis view threats to Israel's destruction in light of the events of the 1930s and 1940s when the German Reich's threats to exterminate the Jewish people were not taken seriously by the international community. By visiting the museum, participants will better understand how Israelis interpret the threat of an Iranian nuclear program and Iran's commitment 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. A visit to Yad Vashem provides historical context for the Jewish state. A professional docent from the museum will guide the participants through the museum's main exhibit and the children's memorial.
12:15-12:45	Travel by bus to Beit Hakerem
12:45-13:45	Lunch on own at Beit Hakerem
13:45-14:15	Travel by bus to the Knesset
14:15-14:30	Security check at the Knesset
14:30-15:30	Briefing with Member of Knesset Prina Tamanu Shata on Israel's legislature and current national security concerns Pnina Tamano-Shata, a lawyer and journalist, is the first woman of sub-Saharan African ancestry elected to the Knesset or Israeli National

	Parliament, having served in Knesset from 2012-2015 and again since 2018. She is currently the chair of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality and chair of the National Unity Party.
15:15-18:00	Travel by bus to Israel's north and 90-minute briefing on Israel's narrow waistline with Enia Krivine In this 90-minute briefing, participants will learn about Israeli security considerations with respect to the West Bank, the Israeli settlement policy, and the calculations behind the location of the security barrier whilst driving alongside it.
18:00-19:30	Check into hotel and prep for dinner
19:30-21:00	Group dinner and debrief on key takeaways from the trip thus far We will use this opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to throughout the trip. We have found giving our participants the opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them as a group helps in their ability to understand Israel's complex realities.
Overnight	Gomeh Hotel 1 Derech Hamelonot, Migdal Beach, 149500 04-6798882/3

Monday, June 16

Time	Activity
07:00-08:15	Breakfast at the hotel
08:15-08:30	Check out of hotel
08:30-09:30	Travel by bus to Kibbutz Merom Golan
09:30-11:30	Briefing at the Syrian border with Ilan Shulman on the strategic security importance of the Golan Heights and confronting threats from Syria Captain (Res.) Ilan Shulman , a disabled IDF veteran, divides his time guiding geopolitical tours on the Golan Heights, lecturing to students, giving geopolitical 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 Paratroopers Brigade, rising to the position of company commander. He holds a B.A. in Israel and Middle East Studies.
11:30-12:30	Travel by bus to Jish

12:30-14:00	Lunch briefing in Jish with Shadi Khalloul and Neveen Elias on Christian military service in Israel and the Aramean Christian community Shadi Khalloul is an Israeli Aramaic Maronite from the village of Birem. He is Chairman of the Israeli Aramaic Christian Association and acts as a spokesperson for the Christian officers forum for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Shadi served in the paratrooper corps in the IDF. Shadi was recognized by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his success in encouraging Christians in Israel to join the IDF and integrate more smoothly into the Israeli Jewish society. He is the founder of a pre-military educational leadership program for Christian and Jewish youths. Shadi participates in several international conferences and college campus tours, discussing the Jewish – Christian Aramaic relations inside and outside of Israel. He holds a BA in international business and finance from UNLV. Neveen Elias is an advocacy fellow with the Philos Project and Deputy Director of the Israeli Christian Aramaic Association (ICAA) in Gush Halav. A native Aramean and devout Maronite Christian, Neveen invests all of her passion in the life of her community and its relationship with her Jewish neighbors in Israel.
14:00-14:45	Travel by bus to Mount Adir
14:45-15:45	Briefing at Mount Adir with Brig. Gen. (Res) Nitzan Nuriel on Israel's northern border and confronting the Hezbollah threat Brig. General (Res.) Nitzan Nuriel is currently a fellow at the International Institute for Counterterrorism at Reichman University. From 2007-2012, he was the director of the Counterterrorism Bureau at the Prime Minister's Office, where he implemented cyber, cargo, aviation, border protection, and public security technologies. During the Second Lebanon War, Nuriel served as a deputy division commander of the 91st division. Across his military career, he has held roles as a military attaché at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, D.C., J-3 of Northern Command, deputy director of the Gaza Strip division, and commander of a territorial brigade in the West Bank. He holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in political science and national security from the University of Tel Aviv and the University of Haifa, respectively.
15:45-18:45	Travel by bus to Dan Tel Aviv Hotel and en route 90-minute briefing by Enia Krivine discussing ongoing attacks from the Houthis and the impact on Israel's civilian population and U.S. military assets in the region The Houthis are an Iran-backed, Shiite Islamist movement that seized control of Yemen's capital in 2014 and instigated civil war. Driven by an explicitly antisemitic and anti-American ethos, the Houthis are part of Iran's "Axis of Resistance" that includes Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

	Following Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, the Houthis have escalated attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea. Despite a significant record of terror and human rights abuses, the Biden administration de-listed the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 2021 only to partially restore sanctions in 2024. The Trump Administration relisted the Houthis as a FTO in March 2025. Retrieved from https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/01/26/10-things-to-know-about-the-houthis/
18:45	Check into hotel, dinner on own and free night in Tel Aviv
Overnight	Dan Tel Aviv 99 HaYarkon St., Tel Aviv +972-3-5202525

Tuesday, June 17

Time	Activity
07:30-09:00	Breakfast at the hotel
09:00-10:00	Briefing at the hotel with Laura Cornfield, Head of MediaCentral, on media integrity and reporting standards throughout the Israel-Hamas war Laura Cornfield is a 30-year veteran of television news journalism-including positions of producer, editor and news anchor. She most recently worked at Kan Television as the liaison for the European Broadcasting Union - responsible for supplying all the video news coming out of Israel. Her background includes training with CNN, producing, newsroom management, and on-camera reporting.
10:00-10:30	Travel by bus to the Israeli Ministry of Defense
10:30-11:00	Security Check at the Israeli Ministry of Defense
11:00-12:00	Briefing with IDF representative from the Ministry of Defense on organizational structure and operational standards throughout the Israel-Hamas war Israel's Ministry of Defense is responsible for protecting and securing Israel and its civilians through political, military and social means. It provides solutions to tackle Israel's security challenges by strengthening the IDF, promoting the research and development of advanced technology, encouraging Israel's defense exports, supporting local industries and

	promoting social involvement. The mission of the Ministry of Defense is to shape and actualize the national security objectives under its responsibility, to support the IDF's force build-up and operations, and to contribute to areas of society, technology, industry and foreign defense relations. <i>Retrieved from:</i> https://english.mod.gov.il/About/Pages/Ministry_of_defense.aspx
12:00-12:15	Walk over to the Azrieli Mall
12:15-13:15	Lunch on own at the Azrieli Mall
13:15-14:00	Azrieli rooftop briefing with Benjamin Anthony, co-founder and CEO of the Miryam Institute, on West Bank topography and security concerns Benjamin Anthony is the CEO and Co-Founder of The MirYam Institute, an organization that specializes in substantive, policy-focused briefings on matters relating to Israel, the United States of America and the relationship between the two countries, with a particular focus on the alliance between the militaries of both nations. Benjamin is a combat veteran of service in The Israel Defense Forces and participated in Operation Swords Of Iron (2023-), Operation Protective Edge (2014), Operation Pillar Of Defense (2012) and The Second Lebanon War (2006). His military service continues to inform his policy outlook. He is a regular commentator in the international media on matters relating to Israel's security. Benjamin played an advisory role to the U.S. Administration on the subject of the Israel-Palestinian conflict and potential pathways to its resolution. He is a graduate of the University of Manchester in England where he earned his bachelor's degree with Honors. Benjamin earned his master's degree in international relations at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.
14:00-14:30	Travel by bus to Mahane Aviv
14:30-15:30	Briefing with Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, Head of the Arab Media Division of the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, on strategic communications during the Israel-Hamas war and connecting with Arab audiences. Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee has served as the Head of the Arab Media Division of the IDF Spokesperson since 2006. He has done over 800 interviews with Arabic media since October 7, 2023. He is widely considered the face of Israeli media in the Arab world.
15:30-16:15	Optional viewing of October 7 footage presented by IDF Participants may elect to view the Israel Defense Forces' footage of the October 7th Hamas massacre obtained from Hamas bodycam footage. The footage documents the inhumane cruelty of the attacks perpetrated on Israeli civilians on October 7, and provides a rebuttal to deniers of the

	atrocities on social media. Participants who do not wish to view the footage can return to the hotel early.
16:15-17:00	Travel by bus to Dan Tel Aviv Hotel
17:00-18:00	Prep for dinner
18:00-19:00	Briefing on Israeli security posture and the “Nagel Committee” with Brigadier General (Res.) Professor Jacob Nagel Brigadier General (Res.) Professor Jacob Nagel is a senior fellow at FDD and a visiting professor at the Technion Aerospace Engineering Faculty. He was a career Israeli civil servant official serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Defense Ministry and Prime Minister’s office for more than 40 years. From January 2016 to May 2017, Jacob served as the head of Israel’s National Security Council (NSC) and as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s National Security Advisor (acting). He led the negotiations and signed the agreement for 38-billion-dollar military aid to Israel from 2018 to 2027. From May 2011 to December 2015, Jacob headed the Strategic and Defense Policy Directorate at Israel’s NSC, where he led the Israeli experts team working with the countries that negotiated the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. From April 1996 to April 2011, Jacob held various positions at Israel’s Ministry of Defense, Directorate of Defense Research and Development, including the head of military R&D (acting), and Directorate’s Scientific Deputy, he headed the so-called “Nagel Committee,” which was responsible for Israel’s decision to develop Iron Dome as the nation’s short-range defense system. In January 2025, he released a final report from a second “Nagel Committee,” which developed recommendations for Israel’s security strategy and budget for the next decade.
19:00-19:30	Travel by bus to dinner
19:30-21:00	Dinner briefing with National Security start-ups on Israel’s defense tech landscape Israel is known as the “startup nation” due to their strong embrace of entrepreneurship across multiple sectors. As national security challenges evolve and the war against Hamas continues, this approach poignantly applies to Israel’s defense sector and has resulted in more firms developing new strategies and technologies to better protect the nation. With hundreds of businesses now in this field, this dinner briefing will feature representatives from multiple firms within Israel’s defense startup ecosystem, from traditional aerospace to cyber, robotics, and AI.
21:00-21:30	Travel by bus back to Dan Tel Aviv Hotel
Overnight	Dan Tel Aviv 99 HaYarkon St., Tel Aviv

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Wednesday, June 18

Time	Activity
07:30-08:30	Breakfast at the hotel
08:30-09:00	Check out of Dan Tel Aviv Hotel
09:00-10:00	Briefing with Matti Friedman, Canadian-Israeli journalist and author, on the current war in Israel and an overview of regional security dynamics Matti Friedman is a Canadian-Israeli journalist and author of four works of nonfiction. He is a columnist for <i>The Free Press</i>. He was previously an op-ed contributor for the <i>New York Times</i> and a columnist for <i>Tablet</i> Magazine. Between 2006 and the end of 2011, Friedman was a reporter and editor in the Jerusalem bureau of the Associated Press. During his journalistic career, he also worked as a reporter in Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Moscow, and Washington, D.C. One of Friedman's most popular works was a 2014 essay on anti-Israel bias in the media, including sharp criticism of his former employer AP (Associated Press) News.
10:00-11:45	Travel by bus to Erez Border Crossing and 90-minute en-route briefing with Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jonathan Conricus on strategic communications during the Israel-Hamas war During this briefing, former IDF international spokesman Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jonathan Conricus will share about his experience as IDF international spokesperson during the Israel-Hamas war and the importance of effective and accurate communication during times of conflict. He will also discuss the intersection between media coverage and national security.
11:45-12:45	Briefing at the Erez Border Crossing with Lt. Col. (Ret.) Jonathan Conricus on border security and humanitarian aid during the Israel-Hamas war The Erez Border crossing is a security and humanitarian aid checkpoint between Gaza and Israel, located at the northern end of the Gaza strip. It was targeted and destroyed during Hamas' attacks into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023 and reopened in April 2024.
12:45-13:15	Travel by bus to lunch
13:15-14:15	Group lunch at Hummus shel Hathina

14:15-14:45	Travel by bus to Kibbutz Nahal Oz
14:45-16:15	Briefing at Kibbutz Nahal Oz with Amir Tibon on Israeli resiliency and life near the border with Gaza Amir Tibon is diplomatic correspondent for the Israeli newspaper <i>Haaretz</i>. He covers Israel's foreign policy, with an emphasis on the U.S.-Israel relationship and Middle East diplomacy. From 2017-2020 he was the Washington, D.C., correspondent for <i>Haaretz</i>, covering the Trump administration, Congress and the U.S. Jewish community. During the years 2013-2016, Amir was the diplomatic correspondent for <i>Walla News</i>, a leading Israeli news website. Prior to that, he was a producer for <i>Uvda</i>, the leading investigative news program on Israeli television. Amir is the co-author of <i>The Last Palestinian</i>, a biography of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, published in July 2017. In 2015, he was nominated for a National Magazine Award (in the reporting category) for an article on the latest round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Amir lives in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, the closest place in Israel to Gaza, with his wife and two daughters. He is regularly invited to speak on Israeli politics and the U.S.-Israel relationship, as well as on the subject of life on the Gaza border, in front of various audiences in the U.S.
16:15-17:15	Travel by bus to the hotel
17:15-20:30	Arrive at the hotel and prep for dinner
20:30-21:30	Group dinner at hotel
21:30-23:30	Group debrief on key takeaways from the trip We will use this opportunity to discuss the speakers and topics we have been exposed to throughout the trip. We have found giving our participants the opportunity to reflect on the topics and perspectives presented to them as a group helps in their ability to understand Israel's complex realities.
Overnight	Kedma Hotel Kibbutz Sde Boker, 8499300, Israel +972 08-623-8100

Thursday, June 19

Time	Activity
07:30-09:45	Breakfast at the hotel
09:45-10:00	Check out of Kedma Hotel
10:00-11:00	Travel by bus to Tzeelim Base and briefing with Dr. Jonathan Schanzer on Iran's overarching proxy strategy.

	In this 60-minute briefing, Dr. Jonathan Schanzer will discuss how the ongoing Israel-Hamas war and Operation Iron Wall in the West Bank are influenced by Iran's broader proxy strategy. Other proxies covered will include Houthis in Yemen and militias in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan.
11:00-12:45	Briefing on urban warfare at Tzeelim Training Base The Urban Warfare Training Center is a mock city located in Israel's Tze'elim military base in the Negev desert. It was built by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and supported by U.S. military aid. Participants will receive a briefing from the IDF regarding the logistical considerations and difficulties with respect to urban warfare and how this facility equips soldiers to navigate in an urban environment.
12:45-13:30	Travel by bus to lunch
13:30-14:30	Group lunch at Alma food truck
14:30-15:10	Travel by bus to Ziquim
15:15-16:45	Briefing at the IDF's 8105 Battalion Headquarters within the Nahal Oz Base on recent operations in Gaza The Nahal Oz Base is an IDF military compound located 850 meters from the Gaza border. During Hamas' October 7 attack, Nahal Oz was systematically targeted by terrorist cells, resulting in the deaths of 53 IDF soldiers and the abduction of ten into Gaza. In March 2025, the IDF published its report on the "systemic failure" of understaffing the base so close to Hamas, along with more details of the attack.
16:45-18:15	Travel by bus to dinner
18:15-20:30	Closing dinner and briefing on the U.S.-Israel relationship with Ambassador Michael Oren , former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Ambassador Michael Oren is an American-born Israeli historian and author and was Israel's ambassador to the United States from 2009 to 2013. As a member of Knesset and deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Office, he interacted with foreign leaders and defended Israel in the media. He also spearheaded efforts to strengthen Israel-diaspora relations, develop the Golan Heights, and fight BDS. He will brief participants on the future of the U.S.-Israel strategic relationship and other topics of interest.
20:30-21:00	Travel by bus to Ben Gurion Airport
23:25	Depart Israel on United Flight UA0091

Friday, June 20

Time	Activity
04:10	Arrive to Newark Liberty International Airport on United Flight UA0091

8:31-11:39	Group train on Amtrak 141 from Newark International Airport (EWR) to Washington Union Station (WAS)
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7/9/25, 2:42 PM

Mail - Shannon Walsh - Outlook



Outlook

Congratulations: FDD's 2025 Media Fellows Program

From Shannon Walsh <swalsh@fdd.org>

Date Thu 2/20/2025 4:00 PM

To ArdenRHooper@gmail.com <ArdenRHooper@gmail.com>

Dear Arden,

On behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected to participate in FDD's 2025 [Media Fellows Program](#).

As a Media Fellow, you will have the opportunity to participate in educational programming and professional development opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of the intersection between media, strategic communications, public diplomacy, misinformation, disinformation, and national security. Media fellows also participate in a seven-day national security trip to Israel, offering a fact-based, nuanced understanding of a country that faces unique strategic communications and public diplomacy challenges.

By accepting a place in FDD's Media Fellows Program, you agree to:

1. *Consent to the program and trip to Israel being strictly **off-the-record**.*
2. *Participate in one pre-trip and one post-trip session taking place at FDD's Washington, D.C. office from 6:00pm to 8:30pm ET on **Wednesday, May 14, 2025** and **Wednesday, July 30, 2025**. Participation in the trip is contingent upon participating in the pre- and post-trip sessions. If you are not local to DC and are unable to travel, please be in touch with Shannon (swalsh@fdd.org) ASAP.*
3. *Participate in the Media Fellows sessions taking place in the evening on **Wednesday, March 19, 2025 (Zoom)** and **Tuesday, May 20, 2025 (FDD's office)**. Please email Shannon at swalsh@fdd.org ASAP if you are not able to join the Media Fellows sessions.*
4. *Participate in FDD's Barish Center for Media Integrity Trip to Israel, taking place **June 11-20, 2025**.*
5. *Cover up to four independent meals on the ground in Israel. FDD will cover the cost of your roundtrip coach travel from Washington, D.C. to Israel, hotel accommodations, transportation on the ground in Israel, all entrance fees, security, tour guide, and at least two meals per day in Israel.*
6. *Have a passport that expires after **December 21, 2025**. (if your passport expires before December 21, 2025, you must renew it ASAP). Israeli/American regulations require that passports must be valid for at least six months after the trip.*
7. *Complete a pre-trip survey. This survey will be sent at a later date.*

To confirm your participation in the program, please [submit](#) the below information by 5pm ET on Thursday, February 27, 2025 by visiting <https://forms.monday.com/forms/611630bd5854e76ac095cdad2d740b22?r=use1>

1. **Confirmation you will participate in the trip June 11-20, 2025, and agree to the above information.**

7/9/25, 2:42 PM

Mail - Shannon Walsh - Outlook

2. **A paragraph-length narrative bio.** You can reference an example [here](#). Please use language that you will be comfortable having us share with speakers in Israel and include on our website.
3. **If applicable, any information or documents you might need to gain formal approval to travel from your employer.** Given that the approval process may take some time, **please let us know what information you need as soon as possible** to allow us sufficient time to provide you with the necessary information and forms.
4. **Which passport you will be traveling on (official or civilian).** If you are required to use an official passport, you will need to get a visa from the [Israeli embassy](#) in Washington, D.C. Please go through the official channels to do this. We will get everyone pre-screened through the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs in advance of the trip to reduce wait times at border control.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions. We look forward to your participation in the program.

Best regards,

Enia Krivine

Senior Director, FDD Israel Program & Senior Director, FDD National Security Network

Shannon Walsh

Deputy Director of FDD's National Security Network

Alex Weinberg

Program Associate, FDD's National Security Network

Abbie Barkan

Alumni Associate, FDD's National Security Network