Fifty Years after the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations
Are German-Israeli Relations Still “Special”?

Cosmos Club
Warne Ballroom
2121 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20006

Monday, June 29, 2015

Agenda

Seventy years after the end of World War II and the Holocaust, the depth of German-Israeli friendship is deemed miraculous. Israeli government leaders consider Germany Israel’s second best friend after the United States and a recent opinion survey sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has revealed highly positive Israeli attitudes toward Germany and Germans.

The German perspective is somewhat more nuanced. Chancellor Merkel has vigorously continued a tenet of postwar German chancellors by viewing Israel’s security and well-being a central part of Germany’s Staatsräson—a principal state interest. German public opinion toward Israel is more critical, particularly concerning Israeli policies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, such criticism also evokes significant demonstrations of solidarity with Israel on the part of other segments of German society.

This conference will assess the robustness of the German-Israeli “special relationship” today in light of two realities: domestic, regional, and global challenges and generational change. It will also offer comparisons with the U.S.-Israeli “special relationship” that is undergoing significant change.

12:30 – 1:00pm  Light Buffet Luncheon and Check-In
1:00 – 1:15pm  Welcoming Remarks
Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS
Lars Hänsel, Konrad Adenauer Foundation

This project is supported by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Transatlantic Program of the Federal Republic of Germany with funds from the European Recovery Program (ERP) of the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi).
1:15 – 2:00pm  **Opening Speech and Q&A**  
Ambassador Harald Kindermann

2:15 – 3:45pm  **Panel I: The Political, Security, and Societal Relationships between Germany and Israel**

- How deep and intense are political and security/intelligence ties between Germany and Israel?
- What are the guiding principles of political and security/intelligence cooperation?
- What is the nature and history of the bilateral institutions through which these relations are channeled?
- What is the role of individual German and Israeli leaders as handmaidens of the “special relationship”?
- How do German political and societal elites view Israel and the German-Israeli relationship today?
- How do Israelis view Germany’s commitment to Israel’s security, Germany’s Middle East policy, and Germany as an international actor?

*Speakers:  Mitchell Barak, KEEVOON Global Research  
Nora Müller, Körber Stiftung  
Shlomo Shpiro, Bar-Ilan University  

*Moderator:  Lars Hänsel, Konrad Adenauer Foundation*

3:45 – 4:00pm  **Coffee Break**
Panel II: The Domestic, Regional, and International Contexts and Challenges

- How do the current expressions of anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish sentiment in Germany and other parts of Europe affect the German-Israeli relationship?
- What is the two-way relationship between German-Israeli ties and the EU's policies toward Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in both political and economic terms?
- From the perspective of Israel and the United States, is the U.S.-Israeli relationship undergoing significant change?
- How does the U.S. assess the German-Israeli “special relationship,” as a complement to the U.S.-Israeli “special relationship,” or as a competitor?
- How does Israel assess the German-Israeli “special relationship,” as a complement to the U.S.-Israeli “special relationship,” or as a competitor?

Speakers:
Eric Fusfield, B’nai B’rith International
Michael Borchard, Konrad Adenauer Foundation – Israel
Jeffrey Herf, University of Maryland

Moderator: Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS

5:30 – 6:30pm  Light Buffet Dinner
6:30 – 7:00pm

**Welcoming Remarks:** Lars Hänsel, Konrad Adenauer Foundation

**Remarks:** Peter Wittig, Ambassador of Germany to the United States
Ilan Sztulman, Head of Public Diplomacy at the Embassy of Israel

7:30 – 9:00pm

**Civil Society, Youth, and the Future of the German-Israeli “Special Relationship”**

With their long history of engagement in German-Israeli ties, how do organizations that engage young people in this partnership view contemporary and future challenges? What are the consequences now and in the future of the passing of the “witness generation”? What are the institutional, societal, and educational tools needed to continue Germany’s “culture of remembrance” seventy years after the end of the Holocaust?

**Panelists:** Hadas Cohen, Israeli Political Scientist, Author and Germany Close Up Alumna
Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS
Katharina von Münster, former Israel Program Director and now U.S. Communications Director of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace

**Moderator:** Dagmar Pruin, Executive Director of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace and Germany Close Up