

Worldwide Media Continues to Bash 'Brand Israel'

Operation Protective Edge between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs was different than any other war in recent history. This wasn't a guerrilla battle, nor was it about any disputed territories.

The "territories" involved were the entire State of Israel, where rockets were fired at every city, and Israel's fight was against Hamas, an organization that the United States, European Union and every other civilized nation in the world deems an illegal terrorist organization. Despite it, Israel saw worldwide condemnation and media coverage was tremendously biased against Israel.

Similar to other Israel supporters worldwide, I am deeply concerned about Israel's image. The difference between me and others is I own a major NY PR Agency, and make a living practicing public relations.

Having represented some of the world's largest corporations, a number of foreign governments and advocacy organizations throughout the world and others, I am aware of what it takes to succeed in media. I consult regularly with senior Israeli government officials, advocacy organizations and embassies and consulates worldwide, and have discussed these issues on a 1-on-1 basis with each of the past three prime ministers, as well as the mayors of Jerusalem & Tel Aviv.

While Israel's public relations strategies have improved, Israel still does not have a proper public relations strategy. While undoubtedly Israel's professional foreign ministry diplomats work hard, English isn't their first language, and Israel's public relations campaign remains on the defensive, as they stand alone on the global media front.

Even with a brilliant communicator, Benjamin Netanyahu at the helm, Israel continues to lose the image war. There have been bright spots. The Israeli marketing company, GNS Digital had a smart campaign which depicts the Statue of Liberty, the Mona Lisa, Leonardo da Vinci's "David," and others, warning Westerners that they will be "next" if the Islamic State (formerly ISIS), Hamas and other Middle East terror groups are permitted to run rampant. They are right that Israel needs to stop being so defensive.

Unfortunately, these campaigns are a mountain against a molehill.

The Arabs have liberal allies in the media, and The Emir of Qatar wisely started *Al Jazeera* with a \$150 million grant some years ago. While Israel has *Fox News*, and Evangelical Christian allies, the media remains woefully biased against Israel.

In Israel, Jewish-American billionaire Sheldon Adelson founded *Israel Hayom*, the free daily which has changed the media landscape in Israel. One wonders, will Israel—or a Pro-Israel ally—ever invest sufficiently in the public relations battle as Israel does on the ground for military battle?

Public relations is a big business, not a hobby or Zionist endeavor, and millions should be invested. A few years ago, the Pentagon admitted spending millions upon millions to shape media coverage around the Iraq war, and the U.S. pays significant sums of money to win public opinion.

It's big business, and while "Brand Israel" has improved, there's a long way to go.

Ronn Torossian is the founder of 5WPR, a top 25 U.S. PR Agency. He is a proud supporter of the State of Israel.