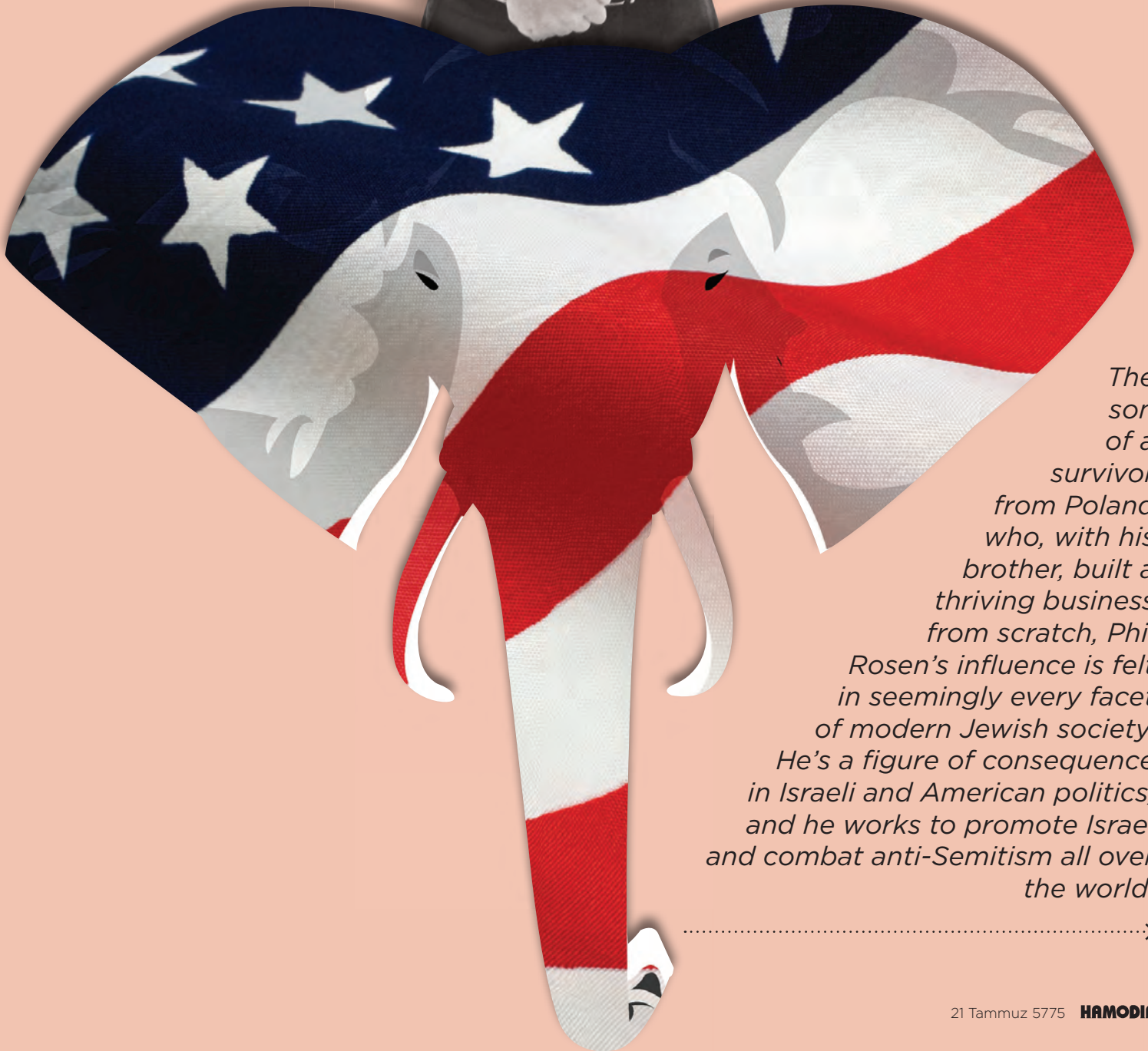


BY YOCHONON DONN

PHIL ROSEN



ISRAEL'S BIGGEST CHEERLEADER IN THE GOP?



The son of a survivor from Poland who, with his brother, built a thriving business from scratch, Phil Rosen's influence is felt in seemingly every facet of modern Jewish society. He's a figure of consequence in Israeli and American politics, and he works to promote Israel and combat anti-Semitism all over the world.

HE'S THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF. But for a generation, Philip Rosen, a New York-based real estate attorney, has traveled the globe seeking Oriental markets for Israel's growing economy and has educated Republican presidents and senators on the nuances of Israel policy.

In an exclusive interview with *Hamodia*, Rosen, 58, opened up on a poignant conversation that brought President George W. Bush to tears, his father's social club in wartime Shanghai, a memorable *shalosh seudos* with Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and conversations with Arab sheiks and industry captains in the heady post-Oslo days.

But, alas, much of his work must remain hidden, awaiting a memoir or future biographer to unveil the behind-the-scenes work he does.

Since joining the Republican Jewish Coalition two decades ago, Rosen has become one of the Jewish world's biggest campaign bundlers, raising millions of dollars for Mitt Romney's presidential campaign in 2012. For the current cycle he is supporting — well, read the interview to find out.

You're not the typical American lawyer. You have one foot firmly planted in the Republican Party, the other foot firmly planted in the Likud. You had a hand in advancing Oslo. ...

No, I didn't help advance Oslo. Oslo, I'm dead set against. I was dead set against it from the very beginning. From the very inception I felt that it was a failure and that it was a big mistake for the Israeli government. Let me backtrack and we'll go all the way back.

I grew up in a Beitar home — 100 percent *shomer Shabbos* and *mekayim mitzvos* [Beitar is a Revisionist Zionist movement founded by Ze'ev Jabotinsky]. My father grew up in Warsaw, Poland, and everything starts with my father and mother. Everything I do is only because they laid the groundwork and pointed me in the right direction and gave me the guidance and the ability to do what I do. And the motivation, I guess, even more than the ability.

So my father grew up in a chassidische family in Warsaw. They were Sokolover Chassidim. Chassidish, but also Zionist. So the mornings they were in yeshivah and the afternoons they were either in high school or the Beitar club in Warsaw. My grandfather and all of his sons and his daughter were

My father grew up in Warsaw, Poland, and everything starts with my father and mother. Everything I do is only because they laid the groundwork and pointed me in the right direction and gave me the guidance and the ability to do what I do.

Phil Rosen holds up a picture of himself meeting President Bush, for whom he feels a "deep personal love."



involved.

My father's name was Irving; Itzik in Poland. So Itzik rose and grew up in this chassidische/Zionist household. The bombs started falling on Warsaw, and my grandfather gathered together his kids. Two of his children, the two oldest, had children of their own — wives and children. The youngest was 12 years old, and he said to the three in-between who didn't have wives and families yet — they were 22, 21 and 20...

And your father was —

My father was the oldest of the three not married.

My grandfather said, "The three of you have to run. You have to get out." Actually, the day that he did it was a day that a bomb fell on a man with a cart who was selling fruits and vegetables, who my grandfather used to buy from, right down the block. We were on 32 Mila street. Right down the block. The bomb fell on this cart and the man died, and my grandfather said that's it. That's the last straw. All three of you go. Go in the direction of Lithuania, because we had relatives in Lithuania. And he said, "Who knows? Maybe you'll be saved."

So they ran away. They ran through the forest, and the three of them, in the forest, they had heard about this crazy story that in Lithuania, there's this Japanese consul general who is issuing visas. And my father turned to his brothers and he said, "This is our shot. We've got to go. We've got to try. We've got to see if it's true." Nobody even knew the Japanese existed back in Warsaw.

One of the brothers, the youngest of the three — his name was Pinchas — I'm named after him — said, "I can only go to Palestine. I can't go anywhere but Yerushalayim. And the other brother said, "We need to survive." So in the middle of the night, the third brother went off. Eventually he ended up in an internment camp in Siberia, and then from there to Cyprus, and eventually he made it to Palestine.

He signed up for the war and unfortunately he was killed in the last week of the war in '48.

So going back now, the two other brothers go to this consul general's house, this Sugihara, amazing man. They stand outside with the other Jews and they get the visas, and end up in Japan and then Shanghai.

Obviously, all these people had their flight [visas as] going to Curacao. That's how they got the Japanese visas.

My father, many, many years



Phil Rosen with 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney, for whom he raised millions of dollars.

later, in the 1980s, he went on a vacation to Curacao, and he said, “I’m finally here.” Just to be there; just to say that he did it.

So he followed the Mirrer Yeshivah students’ path to Shanghai?

It was the same route as the [students] took. It wasn’t with the Mir but when eventually he got to Shanghai, when he got to the boat to Shanghai, he was with the Mir.

They were always part of the Jewish community, the yeshivah community in Shanghai. Never in the yeshivah itself, but always part of the community.

Interesting. Were there any other groups that were in Shanghai at the time but not part of the Mir community?

Yeah, there were actually four or five different groups. There was a Chabad group, the Amshinover Rebbe was a very important person, there was a group of Russians that had come earlier, and there was a group of Sephardic Jews that got to Shanghai separately, there were German Jews, among other groups. That’s, in fact, part of how the people in Shanghai survived. They got funds and food sent from the United States, but also there were people who had been in Shanghai before the war who provided for them.

How did your father identify during those days?

He felt a closeness to the yeshivah and he developed a lot of great relationships there. And I think that his friends from Shanghai were his closest friends his entire life. But my

father was a businessman, and he opened up a textile business there called PolTex, Polish Textiles. And he and his brother and two other sets of brothers, the Milrod brothers and the Rubenstein brothers, the six of them together owned this business. They sold textiles to anybody they could sell to.

My father was a great businessman, the best I’ve ever seen. In one of the stories he used to tell, when they were going from Lithuania to Russia, they were at the train station. And my father and my uncle were really starving. They hadn’t eaten in days traveling through the Polish forests.

He was in the train station, and he saw a Polish man who was selling watches. Who knew where the watches came from? It wasn’t relevant.

My father took one of the watches and started winding it. There were Russian soldiers on the platform. One of them saw my father winding the watch and asked in Russian for the price (Russian soldiers spoke no Polish; my father spoke both languages). My father sold the watch to the Russian soldier and suddenly he had a business!

He came back, and he said to my uncle — my uncle’s name was Henry. He said, “Henry, let’s eat.”

And throughout my life, my brother and I used that expression. Whenever we made a little bit of money, my brother and I would say to each other, “Henry, let’s eat.”

He left Shanghai in ‘47, and arrived in New York as a teacher in Ner Yisroel in Baltimore. He then started a business. First he was in the textile business. Then he was in the cultured

pearl business. The name of the business was Irving and Henry Rosen Cultured Pearls.

Then he met my mother when she was on vacation here in the United States visiting her brother. She grew up in England. She has another great story. My mother was one of six. She was the youngest. The oldest was 20 years older. They grew up in Frankfurt-am-Main. Her brother — his name was Isi Krieger — left in the ‘20s and got a job to be the supplier of lamps and Philips Lighting products in England.

He did very, very well. When Hitler took power, he came back to Germany and he said to my grandfather, “I need everybody to leave today.” This was my uncle Isi, my mother’s oldest brother. He said, “Hitler just took power. I believe this guy when he says he’s going to kill. I think we should all leave now.”

My grandfather was just as smart and he said, “Yes, let’s go.” And they left everything behind and they went to England. And that entire side of the family survived because my uncle was smart enough to come back to get them and my grandfather was smart enough to take the family out. Smart, and with the help of the *Ribbono shel Olam*, 100 percent.

You have quite a history on both sides. You never lacked for family dinner discussions.

Miracles on both sides. People talk about *nissim* and I lived it throughout my life. So I grew up realizing that my existence was purely in the hands of the *Ribbono shel Olam*, absolutely. And some nice people. This fellow, Sugihara, who gave us the visa, the people who helped all along the way, just miracles.

In any event, I grew up, very terrific childhood with two amazing parents, both of them just unbelievable. And went to law school because I’m color blind, so I couldn’t go into the cultured-pearl business. I worked there one summer and my father said that if I came into the business it would go bankrupt within a year, because my color blindness would eliminate the profits. So I went into law, and I started here at this firm. I’ve been here 33 years.

Do you specialize in real estate, or is this firm a real estate firm?

No, the firm specializes in everything. It has 1,200 lawyers with 19 offices worldwide. I specialize in real estate and anything that emanates from real estate — mergers and acquisitions of real estate companies, restructuring of real estate, real estate finance. Really, anything that touches real estate. My definition is very broad, so a tunnel or an airport or a road, that’s all real estate. The only thing that’s really not real estate is intellectual property, patents and trade.

So, back to the politics. At some point, when I was a junior partner, we developed a practice representing Israeli companies in the United States, and as part of that, we

started hiring Israeli associates to work here for a year or two and then go back.

One of the Israelis happened to be [Israeli Army Chief] Rabbi Shlomo Goren's son Rami. And we became very good friends, and we're talking always family history. He has, obviously, a very interesting family history. And he started bringing people into the office, Israelis, important Israelis.

So he once brought one of the ministers in the Israeli government. Rami introduces me and he says, "My friend Phil is a member of Beitar his whole life. He's a real Beitari." And the minister said, "I don't believe there's any Beitaram in the United States." And he made me stand there and sing 'Shir Beitar,' which is the Beitar song. And once I finished he said to me, "Boy, do I have a lot of people to introduce you to."

As the ministers in the Israeli government would make their way to the United States, I'd be a stop along the way. One of the ministers I met was Prime Minister Netanyahu, who was then, maybe, a deputy ambassador. We became friends, and he asked me to form a group called American Friends of Likud, which would basically just help the Likud ministers, when they came to the United States, with speaking engagements. Really just spread the word. No money, absolutely no financial fund-raising, zero. Just spread the message. And spread the message of Israel, really, more than anything.

I was very proud to do that, obviously, with my history.

Your father's Beitar leader back in Warsaw was Menachem Begin.

Exactly. That was his leader and that was his good friend throughout his life. When I was a child, one of the highlights of my childhood was meeting Menachem Begin and spending time with him in his hotel room at the Waldorf Astoria. I was 13 years old, and I'll remember that my whole life. He gave me a kiss on my forehead when I asked him if I could help him with the party, with using some of my bar mitzvah money, which was a giant thrill of mine.

And then I met him again when I graduated from Yeshiva University; he was the guest speaker and the honoree at the graduation. And I met him one other time, which was after my graduation. I was in Israel for a summer between college and law school. My father called me up on Friday and he said to me, "Why don't you walk over to the prime minister's house shabbos afternoon?" I said, "Are you joking? I'm not going to walk and knock on the door to Prime Minister Begin's house. He's not going to open the door. He's not going to let me in. He's not going to say hello. It's a waste of my time and I'll be embarrassed. None of my friends are going to come with me."

And my father said, "I'm asking you to do it. Have a good Shabbat." And he hung up the



Phil Rosen with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who asked him to start the American Friends of Likud.

phone.

I never refused my father my entire life, and I never would then. So Shabbat afternoon I pick myself up, I walk over to the prime minister's house and I knock on the door. A giant Israeli soldier, muscles in all different places, three guns, answers the door, and says, "What can I do for you?" — in Hebrew, "*Mah atah rotzeh?*" — and I said, "I want to see the prime minister." And he said, "Who are you?" And I told him my name and I said, "Tell him I'm Itzik Rosen's son."

The door closes and of course I'm feeling very foolish, thinking that the door is probably never going to open again. The door opens and there he is, the prime minister. He grabs me by the hand and says to me, "Are you the little boy that I kissed on the forehead?" I said yes. And he said, "Come on in." He took me to the *shalosh seudos* table and he had a fascinating *shalosh seudos* with all sorts of people from all walks of Israeli society, from artists to painters to *chazzanim* to Rabbanim to politicians, to philosophers, all over.

He took me to sit right next to him and he said to everybody, "Either speak in English, or if you're going to speak in Hebrew, speak slowly and carefully, so that my friend Itzik's son can understand." Every *shalosh seudos* I think about that *shalosh seudos*, and how special it was. It was amazing.

Fast-forward a few years, I get involved with a lot of Likud politicians, and become friends with them. That's Politics 1.

Politics 2 was a few years later. I made a decision that I could probably help Israel and the United States, my two countries that

I love, if I got involved in politics here. And I started by joining the Republican Jewish Coalition. Rather than start at a low level and work my way up, I decided I could start at a higher level. Thank G-d I had some people who respected me and liked me and nominated me for the board.

And that's where I started in Republican politics, as a vice chair of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

Today it's a very accepted part of politics, but why do you think it started that the Likud and Republican party are so aligned?

The Republican party has become the party that supports the State of Israel. If you look at the numbers of the votes in Congress, who are the sponsors of the bills that are pro-Israel; if you look at the polls taken at the Republican National Convention and the Democratic National Convention, you see a large gap in terms of support of Israel.

In fact, at the Democratic National Convention, when they were discussing the party platform last time around, they had in the party platform things that were diametrically opposing the state of Israel. Things like just some horrible, horrible parts of their platform which they eventually took out, but they took out against the will of the public.

Members of my family were all Democrats, because the Democrats were pro-Israel: Scoop Jackson, Walter Mondale, Joe Lieberman — that was the pro-Israel party. And the Republicans way back when, it was catch-as-catch-can. Some were pro-Israel, like Jacob

Javits, and others were not.

Today, the gap is unbelievable, and the Republicans are solid pro-Israel throughout the ranks. It's almost impossible to find someone in the Republican leadership — I think it is impossible to find someone who is not strongly pro-Israel.

Are there any Republican candidates running for president now whom you cannot support because of their stance on Israel? Rand Paul?

Rand Paul is very pro-Israel.

So he's within the boundaries.

He is within the boundaries. His policy of isolationism, with the exception being Israel, aid to Israel, I'm not sure it flies. I'm not sure it really works. But his support is strong.

His supporters will be disappointed if he's elected.

I think pro-Israel supporters could be disappointed if he's elected, because I think it's going to be very hard for him to fulfill all the parts of his campaign platform because they're almost contradictory, being an isolationist and being pro-Israel. So that's the issue. But I sat with him, I met with him for a couple of hours. He's been very good to me and I think he's a solid pro-Israel candidate. I think compare him to anybody on the Democratic side, and he is a winner in terms of being pro-Israel.

I think the Democratic side, unfortunately, Hillary Clinton, just go back to when Suha Arafat accused Israel of poisoning the air, and she kissed her right after that. Her 45-minute tirade — yelling at Prime Minister Netanyahu when [Vice President] Joe Biden visited Israel, and, coincidentally, certain Jerusalem building permits were issued at the same time ... That turned into the crisis of all time, where Hillary Clinton felt that she had the right to demean the prime minister of Israel.

She was secretary of state of an administration that has been [anti-Israel], although on the defense side they've been very supportive of Israel. On every diplomatic position, the State Department which Hillary Clinton headed has been so anti-Israel it makes Jimmy Carter's government look pro-Israel, and that's scary.

So I think compare any one of the Republican candidates to Hillary Clinton, who is going to be the nominee on the Democratic side, and it's not even a comparison. Not even close.

Do you have a horse in this race?

I am going to support Marco Rubio. I will support him throughout.

And you're satisfied with his stances?

I've spent an enormous amount of time with Marco Rubio, and as one of the Israeli politicians said to me after we both were together with Marco Rubio, "Marco Rubio has the love of Israel in his *kishkes*." He said it's not just in his head, it's in his *kishkes*. And he said that when he wakes up in the morning, just like you and me, we think about the security and safety of Israel. He does the same.

I don't know why. All I can think is that his background of being a refugee from Cuba, or his family being refugees from Cuba, and his growth from there, has infiltrated his entire being with a love of Israel. And it's very impressive.

The others, by the way, some of them have an enormous love of Israel as well. Ted Cruz is just filled with that love. And I think some of the others — Carly Fiorina has a very strong admiration for Israel, as do Jeb Bush and Scott Walker, and I'm very impressed with them. I spent between two and four hours with almost all the candidates. I haven't spent time with Ben Carson yet, but I've known Donald Trump my entire working career practically. So I am pretty comfortable that he's a very strong Israel supporter as well.

Donald Trump.

He's running. (laughs)

Who was it — John McCain? — who said that he's the symbol of the American dream?

That's it. And you know what? Donald happens to be a wonderful person. I've spent an enormous amount of time with him. I represented him for many years. He's just a wonderful person, and a very strong supporter of Israel, and he'd be a great supporter [of Israel] if he was president of the United States.

Do you get involved in local politics, on the state level?

I was a very strong supporter of George Pataki. I'm very close with Mr. [Edward] Cox, who is chairman of the state Republican Party. He's become a friend. On the local level I've actually gotten to know Kath-



leen Rice, who is a congresswoman [from Long Island]. She happens to be a Democrat, but I think she's a very strong supporter of Israel, and I'm a big fan.

And I've gotten to know some of the local politicians like [New York State Assemblyman] Todd Kaminsky and some of the others.

So yeah, I do. Not as much as I do on the national level. I'm a very strong supporter of a lot of the senators and congressmen who are great helpers of Israel, and I will continue to support them.

Getting back to what we spoke about before: According to reports, Shimon Peres asked you to get involved in talks with Arab nations.

Let me tell you about that.

This was after the Oslo Accords were signed — and I was vociferous and loud against the Oslo Accords. In fact, I was invited to go to the

White House lawn with all of the other Jewish leaders. I was a member of the Conference of Presidents, and I was invited to go [to the signing], and I said no. I said, it's an absolute horror and I think this is going to end up in Jewish death and tragedy. And I think the main thing is, bringing Arab terrorists from Tunisia and moving them inside of Israel, hundreds of them, thousands of them, is a tragedy.

Imagine if we, today, took the people from ISIS, who are slaughtering their countrymen and slaughtering Americans and others — imagine if we took them and put them on a plane and brought them to New York. Maybe Staten Island, because rather than bring them into Jerusalem proper, maybe bring them to [Yehudah and Shomron], like they did, or the Gaza Strip, which is as close to Jerusalem as Staten



Phil Rosen and Hamodia's Yochonon Donn talk in Rosen's Midtown Manhattan law office.

Island is to Manhattan. Would that be smart? Would that be a legitimate government operation?

That's what Israel did. So I was dead set against Oslo and made it very clear.

A few weeks after Oslo, I got a phone call from the ministry of foreign affairs in Jerusalem, which was Shimon Peres' office, saying that the minister would like to talk to [me]. And I get on the phone and it's Shimon Peres. I thought it was some kind of prank that one of my friends was doing, but it wasn't. I could tell by the voice. He's got a very solid voice.

Mr. Peres said, "I'd like you to go as a representative of the Israeli people and Israeli government. I'd like you to go to the Arab countries. We'll work with the State Department in setting up the meetings, but I'd like you to meet with every major businessman and every major business leader in the Arab world and talk to them about doing busi-

ness with Israel. Israelis can't go because they can't get in. Eventually I hope they will, but right now we can't, so I'd like you to explore it."

I said, "Why me?" And he said, "Because if I asked somebody who was a supporter of Oslo and who came back and said that 'everything is good, let's go, they're ready for us,' nobody would believe them. If Phil Rosen comes back and says they're ready to do business, that's a story."

So I said, "I'm very honored that you're asking me," and he set up [all] the ... meetings and I went for seven days. One of my partners went with us. It was a fascinating seven days. I met with every real businessman. I met with Mr. 10 Percent. That's one of the sultans in Saudi Arabia who gets 10 percent of everything the government does.

We have a Mr. 10 Percent in every country.

There has to be. This guy is even more. He's a billionaire, and a billionaire because he's Mr. 10 Percent. We met with members of the government in Saudi Arabia. Two days in Saudi Arabia, and then visits to Bahrain, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Egypt, Jordan. Fascinating trip.

I came back with the conclusion that other than some people that we met in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, they are so unprepared to open up their arms to Israel, and that it will be a long time before that happens.

Many of them said, "Until the Palestinians accept you, and every single part of the Palestinian people, we're not ready to accept the Israeli people." They said, "We'll do business with American Jewish businessmen, and that's perfect. We'll do that, and we're doing that. But not Israelis."

I came back and told that to Shimon Peres. The one exception to the rule was, on one of my planes — it was a flight from Bahrain to Jordan — on the flight there was a guy sitting next to me who asked me, "What's an American doing in Bahrain?" I told him the story. I was very open.

An "American" or a "Jewish American"?

I think that's what he meant. He said to me, after I told him the story, "What's your conclusion?" I said, "It's going to be a very long time before the Arab world is accepting of Israel." So he said, "On the government level?" And I said, "Government and big business."

He said, "How about small business?" I said, "I don't know. I only met with big businessmen." He said, "Let me show you something." And he asked me to pull down his gym bag, which was in the baggage compartment. I pulled it down and he said to open it up. I opened it up and he pulled out a can. It's filled with cans, very heavy. He pulls out a can of soup, and I could only tell it was soup because there was a picture of soup on the cover of the can, but everything else was in Arab writing.

He takes out a knife — remember, this is pre-9/11. He slits open the wrapper and there's another wrapper underneath, and it says Osem [an Israeli company]. He says, "I am the largest supplier of soup in the Arab world, and obviously I get some of it from Osem. I thank G-d every day for my partners at Osem."

I said, "That's amazing. Is it always wrapped like that? Don't you get into trouble?" And he said, "No, it's always a separate wrapper, but this time we needed to do something very quick, so we did it this way."

He said, "Don't ever think that things aren't going on behind the scenes."

I told that story to Mr. Peres — that was the only part of the trip that he announced publicly, with the Osem soup. Not the rest. Not the bad parts.

You're saying that the hard line that Arab governments take against Israel is only a show?

No, I think it's more than a show. They really did take a very hostile approach. Some businessmen have snuck through the door, but for the most part, the hostility, particularly among the Saudis, was very strong. I actually think the world today is a lot different, and I think because of the common enemies that we have, meaning ISIS and al-Qaida, etc., and Iran, because of those three common enemies, I think the world has now developed a whole new paradigm, where Saudi Arabia and some of the Emirate countries are now closer to Israel than they are to some of their compatriots in the Muslim world, like Iran. And you'll



Phil Rosen in his office, a rolling view of Midtown behind and to the right of him.

find that hopefully developing even further over time.

People like Dore Gold have written about it and participated in some of the relations between the Arab world and Israel.

Just a couple of weeks ago he met with a Saudi minister.

Exactly. I don't think that was the first meeting, by the way.

Are you still involved in these diplomatic missions in Israel with the Arab world?

A lot of the things that I do are things that I'd like to keep private. Thank G-d I have very good friendships in the Arab world and if I can use those contacts and relationships to help the United States or Israel, I will.

The past few weeks, people are talking about campus anti-Semitism, and I know one of your clients, Sheldon Adelson, has taken a lead on fighting the BDS — Boycott, Divest, Sanction — movement. Are you involved in this?

Yeah, a couple of things that I'm involved with. First of all, I'm on the board of Birthright, which is, I think, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, counter to the unfortunate loss of many Jews away from Judaism. I think, in fact, the two great oppositions to the intermarriage and indifference of Jews to their Jewish heritage and Jewish connection

are Birthright and Chabad.

When you say *Kaddish* and you travel, there's nothing more important than Chabad. Wherever you go there are some wonderful, beautiful people. But the Birthright movement is pretty amazing.

So Sheldon and I became friendly both through the Republican Jewish Coalition and some Republican efforts, but also I love what he does with Birthright.

The BDS movement is a monster. It's not as much of an existential threat as Iran is, but it's the second-biggest existential fear and threat that Israel faces and the Jewish people face. The BDS threat is pure, absolute, unequivocal anti-Semitism. It's the same anti-Semitism as you had in Germany before Kristallnacht and throughout World War II; it's just dressed up in a different format.

What they're doing is, they're calling themselves anti-Israel, anti-Zionist. It's absolutely the same thing. They would try to destroy the Jewish people in whatever way they can, and that's what they're trying to do. And any effort that I can give against it I will do.

These two things, campus anti-Semitism and the BDS movement, have been around for a long time. Do you see the Israeli government, this new Adelson thing, making any headway?

We have no choice. We have to beat it. It goes campus by campus, and every campus is different, and there are a lot of forces fighting

against it. The Adelson initiative is fantastic. I'm very excited that they're going forward with it, and I think it's great.

There are other efforts that are also fighting very nicely against the BDS movement. The Christians United for Israel are doing a fantastic job. And the fact that the Birthright kids come back and fight intensively against the BDS movement in every college that they come back to, that's a big effort as well.

We have no choice. We have to win, because we can't let this country devolve into what Germany was like pre-World War II. We can't let that happen. The government obviously has to play a role in it, and I think it's fantastic that some of the states in this country are coming out. South Carolina and now New York — South Carolina did, hopefully New York will — with laws against the BDS movements on campus. That has to happen. And we, as Jews, we can't remain silent. *She-tikah k'hodaah* (silence is acquiescence), and that's not going to be possible.

I think the biggest fear is what's happened in Europe. Europe is moving slowly, but it's moving on an official level, to boycott Israel.

Horrible.

Is anything being done over there?

Yeah, there's a lot of efforts. I spent some time after the horrible killings in the grocery store in France with French Jewish lead-



Phil Rosen (L) meeting with a Saudi minister.

ership. I've also been to England and spent time. I just got back yesterday from England. I spent some time on one of my trips with the U.K. Jewish leadership. They are trying their best to influence the government and to influence the leadership in each of these cities.

In Paris, you've got a tremendous effort that seems to be anti-Semitic, and then you've got a prime minister who is not just pro-Israel, but he's an enormous resource and help to the Jewish community there. So you've got forces fighting both ways, and my view is that, to the extent that people feel that France is no longer for them, they should move to Israel. And I'm glad that the prime minister opened up his arms and said, please come.

But I'm also a believer, as is Natan Shtronsky, the head of the Jewish Agency, that to the extent that people stay in Paris and provide the assistance to Israel by influencing the government there, that Israel will stand behind them. And so would I.

George W. Bush was the first president you were involved with.

I love President Bush. It's a deep personal love of that man. When President Bush started out his term, his first term, I'm not sure he was the strongest supporter of Israel. But his approach evolved as he became more knowledgeable as to what's going on in Israel, and he became an unbelievable friend to Israel and the Jewish people.

When I went with him on the 60th anni-

versary trip to Israel [in 2008], I cried more than probably my entire life out of love and admiration for somebody who cared so much and so deeply about us and our people.

I was lucky enough to be invited to the White House for seven different dinners, and each dinner you go to you get pictures taken with the president. So on one of the trips, it was after something very intense had happened in Israel, and I walked in. I was very early. I was like the third in line.

The president remembers everybody's name, but more than that, if he's seen you a few times he develops a nickname. So I walked in and he said, "Philly." And I said, "Mr. President, it's great to see you again." And he said, "Phil, you seem a little sad. Is something bothering you?" And I said, "Mr. President, there's a lot bothering me, but there's one thing in particular that worries me, and that's the state of Israel." And he said, "But Philly, I'm the president and I love Israel." I said, "Mr. President, I have tears in my eyes for two reasons. Out of sadness and out of joy." And he said, "Start with the joy."

He actually pulled me into another room, and there's like a thousand people waiting on line behind, and he pulls me into another room to talk. And he said, "Tell me the happiness. Tell me the joy." I said, "The joy is that you're the president of the United States, and you're a friend of Israel." And he said, "Okay, so tell me the sadness." And I said, "Mr. President, you're 70 years too late."

He had tears in his eyes. And he said to me after he composed himself, "I'd have bombed Auschwitz, no doubt." So I said, "It's true."

Would today's president have done that?

No, not a shot in the world. But every one of the Republican candidates, if they're elected, I promise they will never let something like that happen to the Jewish people, ever. *Baruch Hashem* that we have those people out there.

We just have to be smarter as Jews and we have to vote as Jews, rather than voting because we care about what happens if the president gets the opportunity to nominate someone to the Supreme Court. That should be the concern of an 80-year-old grandmother down in Florida rather than the safety and security of the state of Israel, or the BDS movement fighting to kill all Jews in the United States and Israel? Think about that. Think about what's more important to the Jewish people.

You're involved in educating the Republican leadership, from President Bush to today's candidates, on or about the security of Israel.

Yes. And I will continue to do that. It's an honor and privilege to be able to help in whatever way that I can. And Senator Rubio has asked me to serve as a senior foreign policy advisor to his administration, please G-d. ■