

Gary Dreyer

**Sosland Family Fellowship Final Report: Gary Dreyer**

For eight weeks this summer, I lived and worked in Washington, D.C. as a Tower Tomorrow Fellow with The Israel Project, the largest and most prestigious strategic communications firm dedicated to information about Israel, the Middle East, and the U.S. - Israel Relationship. The cornerstone of my experience was a writing seminar, in which I worked with David Hazony, the Editor-in-Chief of The Tower Magazine (produced by The Israel Project) on writing and editing a 2,000-3,000 word essay every week. As part of the writing seminar, I substantially improved my long-form writing skills, which I look forward to applying in both my academic and non-academic work.

Concurrently, two of my articles for The Tower Magazine are currently pending publication, with one expected to be published in the coming days. My piece reflecting on Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein's visit to Moscow earlier this Summer, which culminated in his historic speech before the Russian Federation Council, will be published in The Tower's August-September 2017 edition. In addition to this article, which took on a more personal, historical lens, my second piece with The Tower (also pending publication in a later edition) focuses on Israel's relationship with Azerbaijan. This piece, which required extensive research into contemporary geo-politics, was in many ways the culmination of the writing seminar for me. Crafting a cohesive narrative with many moving parts, which weaved together a complex web of actors, including Turkey, Russia, the United States, and Iran, was a fascinating and highly challenging task, which also earned substantial praise from David Hazony.

Additional articles I wrote during the fellowship focused on Israel's internal politics, including one article analyzing the leadership ambitions and political journey of Israeli Defense Minister, Avigdor Lieberman. In this piece, I was able to utilize my Russian-language skills to explore Russian-language media in Israel, especially through the dimension of how it covers one of Israel's most prominent Russian-speaking politicians.

Concurrently, as part of the fellowship, I developed blogging skills, as every morning, all the fellows, including myself, were required to submit a 300-word blog post (for the fellowship's internal blog) summarizing a news item in Israel, the Middle East, or the U.S.-Israel Relationship which broke in the last twenty-four hours. Blogging is a skill which I had no knowledge of prior to beginning the fellowship, but since it's commencement, I have learned how to hone my writing to craft a more compact and simpler piece. Other aspects of the fellowship which I enjoyed were meeting with speakers from various think-tanks and journalistic outfits. This both expanded my horizons in terms of considering my career goals, but also informed me about the substantial reach and prestige which The Israel Project's network has.

I used the morning blogs to dig further into Israeli internal politics, and the events of this summer provided no shortage of news items to cover. Amongst the most memorable was the controversy over the egalitarian prayer space at the Western Wall and the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Temple Mount, which eventually resulted in the metal detectors controversy. Concurrently, I was also able to monitor the various angle of the U.S-Israel relationship and the Trump administration's peace push, covering events such as Nikki Haley's visit to Israel and Jason Greenblatt's brokering of the Red-Dead Sea pipeline project. Moreover, some longer-form blog posts that I wrote to were posted on The

Tower's public blog, all them covering current events. Further, as an additional part of my fellowship, I participated in a rotational program that allowed me to work alongside different departments of The Israel Project. As a result of this, I learned a substantial amount about non-profit management, marketable skills which I hope to utilize going forward in my professional career.

Finally, I have thoroughly enjoyed the various "field trips" and networking opportunities which being in D.C. has afforded me this summer. As part of the fellowship, all the fellows went on tours of the West Wing, the Capitol Building, the Israeli Embassy, and the Holocaust Museum. In addition, we also enjoyed a night out for a Washington Nationals baseball game and took an evening river cruise down the Potomac River, both of which were phenomenal bookmark experiences. Furthermore, during my time in D.C., I managed to substantially build my personal network and was able to attend a variety of very interesting events throughout my time in the city. I went to almost a half-dozen large and small events hosted by organizations ranging from AIPAC to The Heritage Foundation to Rice Alumni in D.C. The ability to interact with individuals in fields of great interest to me has been incredible, and would have simply been impossible without the support of the Sosland Family Fellowship, which has helped finance my housing at the campus of The George Washington University in Foggy Bottom.

Through my fellowship, I gained substantial expertise in strategic communications and became a much stronger writer and more effective leader. Furthermore, I return to Rice campus as a much better informed and effective advocate for Israel, Zionism, and the U.S.-Israel relationship. The opportunity to be a part of The Israel Project's team, and fight the de-legitimization of Israel in the public sphere in the United States and around the

world was among the most rewarding experiences of my time as an undergraduate. I hope to apply this knowledge and these skills to my work as leader in grassroots politics, student government, and the Rice Jewish community.













