

Israel Project launching projects in Latin America

By HILARY LEILA KRIEGER

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New Spanish Media Program to battle anti-Semitic sentiment in Latino community; pro-Israel organization making push in Arab world.

WASHINGTON – The Israel Project is expanding and overhauling its operations to include outreach to policymakers as well as journalists across the globe, with a new emphasis on Latin America and US Latinos.

“The need is so urgent,” declared Leah Soibel, director of the organization’s new Spanish Media Program, referring to trends both in the United States and among its neighbors.

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“There is anti-Semitic sentiment in the US Latino community,” she said, pointing to Cuban-born CNN reporter Rick Sanchez’s recent accusations about Jews controlling the media. He was fired following the broadcast of his comments.

And, according to Soibel, “Iran has made huge inroads in Latin America.”

She noted that Iranian-controlled Press TV just announced the creation of a 24-hour Spanish- language channel and that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has identified the cultivation of ties with South American countries as a key priority.

The Israel Project, a pro-Israel group that tries to provide the media with facts about Israel and Israel’s side of the story, will now also be working with diplomats, elected officials and other international leaders to get more information out.

Its European team is now traveling monthly to London, Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Vienna to hold events, and the organization has dropped “security, freedom

and peace” from its logo and replaced it with “facts for a better future,” so as not to alienate authorities in Russia, China and other countries wary of NGOs promoting a so-called freedom agenda.

The organization is also making a tremendous push in the Arab world and among Palestinians to combat the negative view of Jews and Israel in so much of the media. TIP has already generated hundreds of stories in the Arab press by arranging briefings with Israeli officials, tours in Israel and other outreach efforts, according to founder Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi.

TIP works closely with the Israeli government but can benefit from being an NGO rather than an official body, she said.

“We’re not trying to replace but to augment,” she said, noting that her organizations \$7 million budget has already surpassed the Israeli government’s allocation for public diplomacy.

“Our funding is now bigger than the entire Israeli government’s budget for hasbara,” Mizrahi said. “I say that with sadness.”



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