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## COVER: A Thicker Blue Line

*With its finances secure, the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange concentrates on strengthening global security*

**Michael Jacobs**

Managing Editor

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Traffic police officers are among the contacts local officers have made through the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange.



Robbie Friedmann (fourth from left) visits Israel this spring with the 15th delegation of the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange. Georgia. Some 470 law enforcement leaders and other executives from 27 states and seven

It was a weekend morning in mid-December 2005 when most people out and about were winding up Chanukah or Christmas shopping at the malls. But the 100 or so men and women at the Georgia Power headquarters downtown had more serious issues in mind than spinning dreidels and frying latkes.

Avi Dichter, the former head of Israel's Shin Bet security agency, had flown into Atlanta for one day only. He carved time out of his busy schedule to present a special briefing on terrorism to a select group of law enforcement officials and other community leaders. His talk ranged from the threat Iran posed to Israel, dramatically driven home with a simple map showing how small Israel is, to suicide bombers, assassinations of terrorist leaders, and the fact that Israeli police avoid the kind of public shootouts in which American officers too often engage.

In other words, it was just another day for the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange.

Fifteen years after Georgia State University criminal justice professor Robbie Friedmann founded GILEE in May 1992, the program has secured its place in the hearts and minds of senior law officials in Israel and in the Southeast and, with the creation of a \$1 million endowed chair this year, has secured its own future in a world where international law enforcement cooperation is growing in importance.

"It is a unique opportunity and an outstanding training partnership," said Cobb County Chief Deputy Sheriff Lynda Coker, who was part of the 14th delegation to Israel in May 2006. She traveled with top law officers from Georgia and Florida. "It's a premier program that fosters communication and cooperation."

The numbers alone are impressive: GILEE has taken 15 delegations to Israel and 12 delegations from Israel to

countries other than the United States have participated in 97 GILEE programs, and that doesn't count 21 special briefings, such as Dichter's 2005 appearance at Georgia Power. Hundreds of officers from Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and elsewhere have taken intensive trips to Israel under the nonstop schedule of Friedmann, which some participants referred to as "Robbie time."

Along the way, GILEE has exceeded the goals set at its launch:

- To enhance cooperation between police in Israel and Georgia.
- To train senior Israeli law officials in Georgia, mostly about community policing.
- To train senior Georgia law officials in Israel, primarily about stopping terrorists and drugs.

Two events, the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, drove home the need for the cooperation and cross-training at the heart of GILEE and made its success predictable if not certain.

The same factors, along with Friedmann's connections and force of will, led to the likes of Dichter and terrorism experts from the Interdisciplinary Center-Herzliya coming to Atlanta to speak.

What may be more of a surprise is that along the way Jewish Atlanta has benefited from education Georgia police leaders have gained about Israel, Judaism and global anti-Semitism.

"Until they went to Israel, they didn't realize how vulnerable Israel was and how vulnerable the Jewish community was," Friedmann said.

That knowledge comes through an intense trip that takes the visitors to every corner of Israel. They sit through high-level briefings from the Foreign Ministry, the Israel National Police, the secret service and other agencies. They partner with their Israeli counterparts to see how they do their jobs. They visit cultural landmarks, from Yad Vashem to churches and other Christian holy sites (Bethlehem is no longer among them because of security concerns).

All of it serves a dual purpose of training the Americans on law enforcement and anti-terrorism techniques and of teaching them about Israel and the Jewish people.

The stop at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum, is important not just to drive home the reality of the Holocaust, but to show how the German guilds, including the police, supported Hitler and thus freed him to carry out genocide.

The Christian holy sites make a life-changing impact on the Christians officers making their first trips to Israel. They get to connect the vision of Jerusalem in their heads with the reality on the ground. Friedmann said he had a typically cynical Israeli attitude until the third or fourth GILEE delegation, when he realized that the life-changing power of the trips was real.

The cumulative effect of the trips is amazing, he said. "They come back and their heads are bloated for a while, but then it all sinks in."

Vernon Keenan, the director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, was part of the first GILEE delegation in 1993 and has remained an active part of the program. (Friedmann invites all past participants to GILEE briefings and other events to keep the law enforcement network growing.)

Keenan said it took eight years for one aspect of that initial trip to sink in, but it's something he has never forgotten: A terrorism expert warned the Americans in 1993 that it was only a matter of time until radical Muslims struck hard in the United States. "The terrorism expert told us we wouldn't be able to fully appreciate all he was talking about because we had not been through an attack in the United States. ... It was very true. I've thought about that briefing many times since

the 9/11 attacks."

Georgia law enforcement agencies have benefited in concrete ways from the exchange. One area of cooperation has been between the crime labs in Israel and Georgia. Keenan said Georgia sent six crime lab technicians to Israel last year, and the labs are cooperating on research and the creation of a joint database.

But much of the emphasis has been on anti-terrorism.

"It's a very unique opportunity to learn firsthand from law enforcement officers working in this area for many years and dealing with it daily," Coker said.

The exchange of personnel and knowledge paid off during the 1996 Olympics, when a top Israeli expert spent a year in Georgia to ensure venues were as safe as possible. For example, Friedmann said, he made sure the Olympic stadium was not vulnerable to a sniper shooting the president from behind.

One of the impressive things Georgians have learned, Keenan said, is the way Israeli bomb-disposal teams are able to respond to threats without shutting down the country. "When you're dealing with the volume of bomb calls, you don't have the luxury of closing a shopping mall or highway," he said. "They've developed techniques to assess the situation quickly. We've adopted it over here so we don't spend hours dealing with a suspicious package that might turn out to be nothing."

Coker said Americans at all levels of law enforcement could learn two valuable lessons from the Israelis: how to secure the nation's borders and how to communicate among agencies.

She and Keenan said they were impressed with the ability of Israeli law enforcement to carry out anti-terrorist responsibilities - Friedmann said the Israelis prevent 95 percent of the attacks - without turning Israel into a police state. Despite what people see on the news, Israel operates as a democracy with full respect for civil rights.

Friedmann said the Israeli officers who come to Georgia also are impressed with what they see, from how much pride American officers show in the way they wear the uniform, to the care they take with civil rights, to the emphasis placed on community policing.

When GILEE began, Israeli police were excellent at fighting terrorism but couldn't match their American counterparts at fighting traditional crime. Now Israelis are demanding stronger efforts against corruption and organized crime, Friedmann said, and the knowledge gained through GILEE is making a difference.

Among the examples are a \$3.5 million database system Israel bought to catalog markings on gun shell casings after seeing it effectively used in Georgia and the \$1 million purchase Israel made of three patrol boats after spending time with the Miami Police Department, a GILEE participant, to see what works in south Florida.

The international exchange exposes both sides to new ideas, Keenan said, and it validates the things both sides are doing that are similar.

Friedmann and GILEE - as well as such longtime supporters as Perry Brickman, GILEE advisory board Chairman Jay Davis and Federation, which began an annual allocation to the program about five years ago - had their own night of validation April 12 at the Cox Enterprises headquarters in Sandy Springs.

That night, Georgia State announced the creation of the distinguished chair of public safety partnerships, endowed with \$1 million Friedmann had raised from private sources by February.

The speakers that night included Georgia State President Carl Patton, College of Health & Human Sciences Dean Susan Kelley, Israeli Consul General Reda Mansour, GILEE's Davis, and Col. Bill Hitchens, who heads the Georgia State Patrol and the Department of Public Safety. All took their turns praising GILEE and Friedmann, who are often hard to distinguish.

Friedmann is the first to hold the endowed chair, but part of the importance of its establishment is that there's now no reason to think he'll be the last head of GILEE. The endowment establishes long-term continuity and viability for the program, he said.

"After 15 years of doing it, it's really crystallized the program and allowed us to take it to the next stage," Friedmann said.

The endowment ensures a base of \$50,000 a year for the program - more than three times the \$15,000 Federation contributed as a one-time gift to seed the program when Brickman was president in 1992 - and should make additional fundraising easier, Friedmann said. Potential donors don't have to worry about the program being phased out by a future college administration that looks less favorably on the law enforcement exchange and the ties to Israel.

"I think it's super he's got the chair at Georgia State," said Coker, who attributed GILEE's success to Friedmann's organizational skills and energy.

If it means GILEE becomes a permanent part of Georgia law enforcement, the outcome should be super for the Jewish community.

"We learned a lot about Jewish culture and differences. That's a very important part," Coker said.

"Because of the GILEE program, law enforcement executives in Georgia are very sensitive to the issues in the American Jewish community," Keenan said. That means, for example, an awareness of what it means when swastikas are spray-painted on cars and the knowledge that hate crimes require a strong, direct response.

"When the director of the GBI comes to you and says, 'Do you think we're doing enough for the Jewish community?' " Friedmann said, that shows that the program is having an effect.

He said the support of the law enforcement community comes through whenever the Jewish community has a big event that requires heavy security, from special conferences such as the 1999 General Assembly of United Jewish Communities to such annual events as the Jewish Festival and the Yom HaZikaron observance. Law agencies never hesitate to go above and beyond the call of duty.

"They know the Jews are targets, and they know the Jews are in the cross hairs, and they know the Jews are vulnerable because of who we are," Friedmann said. "And they're more appreciative of it now."

That appreciation grows every spring when another GILEE class travels to Israel for some "Robbie time" and whenever an Israeli expert delivers another cutting-edge briefing to the ever-expanding GILEE network of officers.