

## Heard on the Hill

**House Panel Passes Bill Conditioning U.S.-Russia Nuclear Deal.** The House Foreign Affairs Committee passed legislation by voice vote that conditions approval of the U.S.-Russia nuclear cooperation agreement on U.S. certification that Moscow has ceased all support for Tehran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The bill, introduced by Chairman HOWARD BERMAN (D-CA) and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN (R-FL), also states that the administration must certify that Russia "is fully and completely supporting United States efforts to achieve effective international and United Nations Security Council sanctions on Iran in response to Iran's nuclear program." For years, Russia has provided key support to Tehran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and has been hesitant to impose tougher sanctions on Iran. [See page 53 for more information on Russian-Iranian relations.]

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**Lawmakers Decry Hizballah's Influence in Lebanon.** Senior House leaders denounced the terrorist army Hizballah's growing power in the Lebanese government. "I cannot, and will not, accept that the future of Lebanon is with a gang of vicious thugs hiding in clerics' robes awaiting instructions from Tehran and Damascus," said Rep. GARY ACKERMAN (D-NY), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

Ranking Member MIKE PENCE (R-IN) echoed Ackerman's sentiments. "The problem with Hizballah in the [Lebanese] cabinet is not that it will radically alter how the Lebanese government operates, but that it has a seat at the table," Pence said. "Its presence is legitimized in the Lebanese government, all the while it's continuing to wage war on its internal and external rivals. Rather than downplaying this egregious fact, our policy should be one of total isolation of Hizballah, as is our approach toward Hamas and Gaza." •NER•

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# NEAR EAST

## Report

AUGUST 1-31, 2008

**AIPAC'S BIWEEKLY ON AMERICAN  
MIDDLE EAST POLICY**

### EDITOR'S COMMENTS

#### Berlin Must Decide

The German government has an important decision to make. How will Berlin respond to the news that German energy company Steiner-Prematechink-Gastec (SPG) is planning to proceed with a \$150 million deal with Iran that will provide the Islamic Republic with equipment for liquefying natural gas?

Last month, Germany's export control agency granted SPG an export license for the deal. "Because the equipment would be built here and sent to Iran, that does not fall under any existing sanctions involving Iran," an agency spokesman said.

The proposed deal may not be in technical violation of existing sanctions, but it would seriously undermine the U.S.-led international campaign to force the Iranian regime to comply with the three U.N. Security Council resolutions requiring it to suspend its efforts to enrich uranium—a key step toward developing atomic arms.

Germany's granting of the export license for this deal could not have come at a worse time. On the day the German decision was announced, the Norwegian energy company StatoilHydro confirmed ...see *Editor's Comments cont'd* on pg. 54

## Eye on the Sky

**AMERICAN RADAR TO HELP MAINTAIN ISRAEL'S QUALITATIVE MILITARY EDGE**

The United States will soon link Israel to an advanced missile detection system as a precaution against an attack from Iran. The powerful radar, known as the forward-based X-band, will be posted in Israel "before the new administration arrives" in January, according to Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

"In a few months, Israel will be stronger and more prepared in the realm of protection against long-distance threats," Barak said. The X-band system can track an object the size of a baseball from about 2,900 miles away, allowing Israel to engage an Iranian Shihab-3 ballistic missile about halfway into its 11-minute flight to Israel.



Photo by the Associated Press

**Israeli Minister of Defense Ehud Barak said that Israel will be more secure with the new radar.**

The U.S. Department of Defense said it understood Israel's position in the Middle East. "Like the Israelis, we see the Iranians racing to build a ballistic missile capability, and so we are working to help the Israelis fortify their defenses as quickly as possible," Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell explained.

Reps. Jane Harman (D-CA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) played a critical role in ensuring that Israel was given access to the X-band. Last May, the two lawmakers spearheaded a letter to President Bush—signed by nearly 70 House members—that called on him to share the system with Israel.

"Given the Iranian president's threat to 'wipe Israel off the map,' we should put the full weight of the U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense system behind our democratic ally," the letter stated. •NER•

## Anglo Amity

THE FIRST BRITISH PRIME MINISTER TO ADDRESS THE KNESSET, GORDON BROWN HIGHLIGHTS UK-ISRAEL TIES AND EMPHASIZES HIS PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING PEACE AND SECURITY FOR THE JEWISH STATE

Everyday you meet in this Knesset you live out the hopes—the promises—of centuries. And I am especially pleased—as the first British prime minister to address the Knesset—to congratulate you at this sixtieth anniversary on the achievement of 1948: the centuries of exile ended, the age-long dream realized, the ancient promise redeemed—the promise that even amidst suffering, you will find your way home to the fields and shorelines where your ancestors walked.

And your sixty-year journey from independence is evidence for all to see that good can come out of the worst of times, and that the human spirit is indeed indomitable.

And let me tell the people of Israel today: Britain is your true friend. A friend in difficult times as well as in good times; a friend who will stand beside you whenever your peace, your stability and your existence are under threat; a friend who shares an unbreakable partnership based on shared values of liberty, democracy and justice. And to those who mistakenly and outrageously call for the end of Israel, let the message be: Britain will always stand firmly by Israel's side.

For two thousand years, you had history—but not a home. For two thousand years, you lifted the artistic and cultural life and the scientific and political development of every continent—but had no home. For two thousand years, you endured pogroms—and then the horror of the Holocaust—because you had no home.

Yet for two thousand years, nothing—no prison cell, no forced migration, no violence, no massacres, not even the horror of the Holocaust—could ever break the spirit of a people yearning to be free. And you proved that while repression can subjugate, it can never silence; while hearts can be broken, hope is unbreakable; while lives can be lost, the dream could never die; that—in the words of the prophet Amos—“justice would roll down like a river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Never free of trouble, always facing adversity, yet what remarkable success Israel has achieved during these last few years.

You have created modern Hebrew as



BRITISH PRIME MINISTER  
GORDON BROWN

• EXCERPTS FROM  
ADDRESS TO  
MEMBERS OF KNESSET •  
JULY 21, 2008



Photo by the Associated Press

**British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that his government would stand against boycotts of Israel.**

the language of your daily life. Eight of your citizens have been awarded Nobel prizes—and alongside Silicon Valley, you now have ‘Silicon Wadi.’ You have world-famous hospitals, like Hadassah, and leading centers of learning and research, like the Weizmann Institute for Science. With eight percent of your national income spent on education, you have one of the highest skilled populations on earth. From draining the swamps in the 20th century to pioneering electric cars in the 21st, your history of ingenuity is a lesson in the boundless capacity of mind and spirit.

No nation has achieved so much in so short a period of time. And to have accomplished all this in the face of the

war, the terror, the violence, the threats, the intimidation and the insecurity is truly monumental.

And I am proud that the British Jewish community—and the British people—have had a distinguished place and a part in your great endeavor.

And today our partnership is strong and getting stronger. The best minds in our two countries are working together in academia and the arts, in sport and music, in science and technology—and Prime Minister Olmert and I were able to announce yesterday path-breaking academic and cultural partnerships. And I want to make clear that the British government will stand full-square against any boycotts of Israel or Israeli academics and their institutions.

And today and in the future, the people of Britain and Israel will continue to stand together in believing that history sides with those who fight for liberty—and if the great conflict of ideas of the 21st century is between those who believe in closed societies who would turn back the clock of progress and those who believe in open societies, then we are together on the side of openness—moving the world forward to what Winston Churchill called the “sunlit uplands” of prosperity, justice and democracy.

The British people see the threat your people encounter every day when they climb aboard a bus, have a cup of coffee at the café, or buy a sandwich. In our homeland—two thousand miles from your streets—we too have learned the grief when lives are lost through terror on a bus or at the airport or on a crowded underground train on the way to work.

So to those who question Israel's very right to exist, and threaten the lives of its citizens through terror, we say: The people of Israel have a right to live here, to live freely and to live in security.

To those who are enemies of progress we say: We condemn anti-Semitism and persecution in all its forms. And to those who believe that threatening statements fall upon indifferent ears, we say in one voice: that it is totally abhorrent for the president of Iran to call for Israel to be wiped from the map of the world. •NER•

## Troubling Behavior

AS THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES SEEK TO ISOLATE IRAN, RUSSIA MAINTAINS STRONG RELATIONS WITH THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC AND HINDERS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO PERSUADE TEHRAN TO END ITS ILLICIT ATOMIC WORK

Reports last month that Russia was preparing to supply Iran with the S-300, one of the world's most versatile anti-aircraft missile systems, put the Russian-Iranian relationship back in the spotlight.

Not only has Russia long been Iran's largest conventional arms supplier—selling it fighter jets, tanks and long-range missiles, but Moscow has also partnered with Tehran to develop sensitive nuclear technology. This Iran-Russia atomic cooperation comes while much of the world is trying to isolate Tehran for its rejection of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions demanding that it end its nuclear work.

### Moscow Blocks Diplomatic Efforts to Isolate Tehran

For years now, the United States has been working with its allies to isolate Iran through sanctions, divestment and other financial and diplomatic means. Russia has hampered these efforts, using its veto power to water down U.N. sanctions resolutions and drawing out negotiations when Iran has failed to meet deadlines.

Russia remains a problem outside the Security Council as well. Recently, at negotiations with Iran in Geneva, Russia neglected to censure Iranian diplomats for their stalling tactics. Instead, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that there should be “no artificial limits” imposed on Iran. Downplaying any sense of urgency, Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, later added, “We haven't set any deadlines for their response.”

As Russia continues to protect Iran from more stringent international sanctions, Moscow has also strengthened its business ties with the Islamic Republic. Last month, the Russian energy company Gazprom signed a major deal with Iran to enhance cooperation in Tehran's oil, gas and refining sectors. The Gazprom deal comes as major Western companies, such

as the French energy giant Total, have announced that they will not develop gas fields in Iran at this time.

### Russia Shares Nuclear Technology With Iran

The light-water reactor in the southern Iranian city of Bushehr represents the centerpiece of Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation. Moscow first agreed to help Iran construct the reactor in 1995. Since then—and especially in the years following the 9/11 attacks—the Bushehr project has raised con-

Some scientists fear that Iran could one day extract weapons grade plutonium from the Bushehr reactor. In addition, some U.S. officials worry that the Russians and Iranians are using Bushehr as a cover for the transfer of other sensitive technology.

There are also concerns that knowledge gained by Iranian scientists working at Bushehr could further Iran's illicit nuclear program at other sites in the country, such as Natanz, Isfahan and Arak. As part of Russia's work with Iran, Russia has trained about 700 Iranian nuclear engineers.

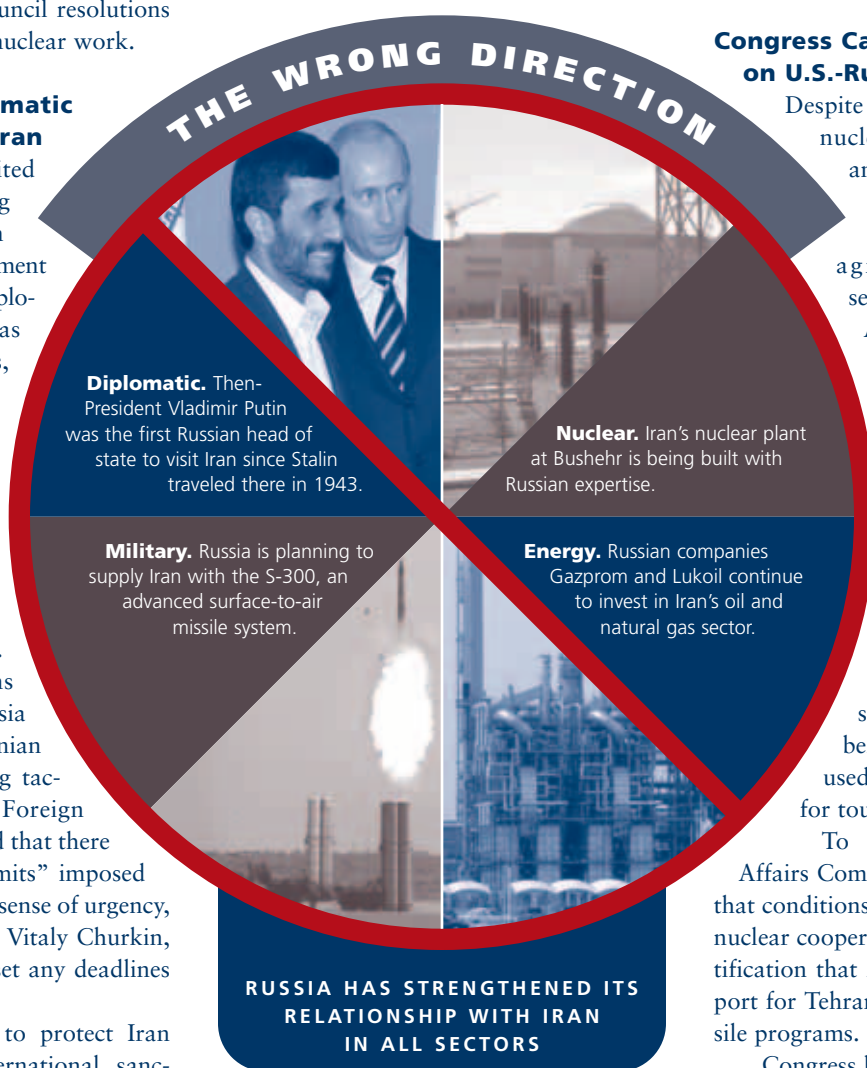
### Congress Calls for Conditions on U.S.-Russia Nuclear Deal

Despite Russia's role in aiding Iran's nuclear program, Washington and Moscow recently signed a nuclear cooperation agreement. The so-called 123 agreement, named after a section of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, allows spent nuclear fuel, currently under U.S. control, to be stored in Russia. It also allows the United States and Russia to jointly design and market the next generation nuclear power reactor.

With the agreement potentially worth tens of billions of dollars to Russia, some members of Congress believe that the deal should be used to leverage Russian support for tougher sanctions against Iran.

To date, the House Foreign Affairs Committee has passed legislation that conditions approval of the U.S.-Russia nuclear cooperation agreement on U.S. certification that Moscow has ceased all support for Tehran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Congress has said that it has no objections to the 123 agreement itself, but some members would like to see a change in Russia's relationship with Iran. After all, they say, the United States should not be signing a nuclear deal with Russia while Moscow cooperates with Iran, a nuclear outlaw. •NER•



that under U.S. pressure, it would stop making new investments in Iran. And last month, French energy giant Total announced it would cease investing in Iran. Berlin's authorization of the SPG deal slowed the positive momentum created by these other Western companies shunning stronger Iran ties.

Israel reacted harshly. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the decision "contravenes the spirit of [the U.N.] sanctions," and said it was "worrying" that Germany would adopt a position that "harms the international effort to considerably toughen sanctions against Iran." The Israeli Ambassador to Germany, Yoram Ben-Zeev, added, "The message this deal sends is very negative."

Senior German officials reportedly said Chancellor Angela Merkel disapproves of the deal, and they would discuss the matter with SPG.

To date, the German government has made progress in joining the U.S.-led campaign to isolate Iran. While still Tehran's largest trading partner in Europe, Berlin has reduced government insurance guarantees for exports to the Islamic Republic, leading to a 25 percent decrease in German exports to Iran from 2006 to 2007. If the SPG deal goes through, much of this progress will be undermined.

Tehran is paying close attention to what Berlin decides. Does the West have the resolve to isolate Iran, or will the lure of business deals sweep all other concerns under the rug? •NER•

## Summer Schooling

### STUDENTS ON SUMMER VACATION CONVERGE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL TO LEARN HOW TO BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE PRO-ISRAEL ADVOCATES

Three hundred hand-picked students from more than 100 campuses across the country gathered in Washington, D.C., from July 27 to 30, to participate in the 13th Saban Leadership Seminar, hosted by AIPAC's Schusterman Advocacy Institute and the Diamond Summer Intern class of 2008.

Participants in the premier advocacy training event included activists from AIPAC Showcase Campuses, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Christian campuses and Hispanic-serving institutions, as well as dozens of other campuses beyond AIPAC's traditional base.

Top policy makers, including Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Rep. Robert Wexler (D-FL) and Rep. Mark Kirk (R-IL), held interactive forums with Saban participants. In addition, White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten delivered the keynote address at the final session of AIPAC's 2008 Summer Seminar Series, held on the third night of the Saban conference.

Saban participants were briefed by a number of Israel advocacy professionals, political insiders and Middle East analysts, including former U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross, *Wall Street Journal* editorial board member and columnist Bret Stephens

and Israel21c Executive Vice President Larry Weinberg.

More than 30 AIPAC professionals taught Saban participants the basics of political activism through legislative briefings, lobbying labs and role-playing exercises. These seminars prepared the students for their visits to Capitol Hill, where they conducted more than 100 lobbying appointments with their members of Congress. In

their meetings, students emphasized the threat of a nuclear Iran and pressed for more stringent international sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Saban provides the best opportunity for AIPAC to present its student agenda, which for 2008-2009 includes the goal of delivering the campus as a tangible asset to the wider pro-Israel community.

Seminar participants left Washington with specific action plans for implementing AIPAC's three new fall campus initiatives: creating a government affairs portfolio within mainstream, pro-Israel campus groups; broadening the base for pro-Israel student activism by capitalizing on the surge in youth involvement in politics; and involving greater numbers of pro-Israel students in Campaign '08. •NER•



Photo by AIPAC  
Pro-Israel student activists mingle in between sessions at Summer Saban.

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