

# NEAR EAST REPORT

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I.L. Kenen  
Founder, 1905–1988



# Iran Continues Malign Activities

Iran continues to violate international law and destabilize the Middle East despite the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Below is a compilation of Iran's malign regional activities since mid-Oct.:

## **Bahrain Says Foils Plans For Attack by Iran-Linked Terrorist Group**

*Reuters*

*Nov. 4, 2015*

On Nov. 4, Bahrain said it arrested 47 members of a group believed to have links to "terrorist elements in Iran" who were planning to carry out attacks in the immediate future. A Bahraini Interior Ministry statement said a large number of explosives and weapons had been found in secret caches in residential areas of several villages.

## **U.S. Detects Flurry of Iranian Hacking**

*The Wall Street Journal*

*Nov. 4, 2015*

Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard military force hacked email and social-media accounts of Obama administration officials in recent weeks. These attacks are believed to be tied to the arrest in Tehran of an Iranian-American businessman, U.S. officials said.

## **Iran Officially Marks 36 Years of Loathing for U.S.**

*CBS News*

*Nov. 4, 2015*

At a state-organized rally, thousands of Iranians burned the American flag and chanted slogans including "Death to America" on Nov. 4 as they marked the anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by militant students 36 years ago. An Iranian official also announced the arrest of an unspecified number of allegedly pro-American writers.

## **Iran State Media Claims Another U.S. Spy Arrested**

*Reuters*

*Nov. 3, 2015*

On Nov. 3, Iranian state media claimed that a Washington-based Lebanese citizen missing in Tehran since September is actually an American spy now in the custody of the Iranian authorities. The report is the first official announcement about Nizar Zakka, who holds permanent-resident status in the United States.

### **Khamenei: Regional Instability Caused by U.S. Support for Israel, Terror Groups**

*The Times of Israel – Raoul Wootliff and Agence France Presse*

*Nov. 1, 2015*

Supreme Leader Khamenei discounted negotiations over the fate of Syria and blasted the idea of cooperation with the United States in a fiery foreign policy speech. “The main factor of insecurity in the region is U.S. support for the Zionist regime and terrorist groups,” said Khamenei. “The Americans seek to impose their own interests, not solve problems. They want to impose 60, 70 percent of their will in negotiations. So what’s the point of negotiations?” Iran seeks to ensure the survival of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

### **Iranian-American Executive Arrested in Iran**

*The Wall Street Journal – Farnaz Fassihi and Jay Solomon*

*Oct. 29, 2015*

Iranian security forces aligned with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—which reports directly to Supreme Leader Khamenei—arrested Iranian-American oil executive Siamak Namazi as he was visiting relatives in Tehran. This arrest is part of a broader intimidation effort against Iranian businessmen with links to foreign companies whom the IRGC fear may interfere with its economic monopolies. Namazi is the fourth American citizen to be detained by Iran since August 2011.

### **Exclusive: Russia Flying Iranian Weapons Shipments Into Syria, Sources Say**

*Foxnews.com – Jennifer Griffin*

*Oct. 28, 2015*

Iran, with Russia’s assistance, has violated a U.N.-imposed arms embargo by delivering weapons to the Assad regime in Syria, according to Western intelligence sources. Over a ten day period in October, these sources reported that Russian cargo planes transported Iranian weaponry into Syria twice daily.

### **U.N. Rights Investigator Highly Critical of Iran**

*The New York Times – Rick Gladstone*

*Oct. 27, 2015*

The U.N. recently released a report highly critical of Iran’s human rights record. Despite President Rouhani’s promises of moderation, Iran has shown no signs of improving the human rights of Iranian citizens. According to the report, at least 694 Iranians have been executed this year, mostly for non-violent drug offenses, making Iran the world’s most prolific user of the death penalty per capita.

## [Insight - Conglomerate controlled by Iran's supreme leader a winner from nuclear deal](#)

*Reuters – Yeganeh Torbati and Babak Dehghanpisheh*

*Oct. 21, 2015*

Once implemented, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will lift sanctions on an Iranian business conglomerate, Setad, which is controlled by Supreme Leader Khamenei. This action will further enriching Khamenei and his hardline allies, enabling them to further tighten their grip over Iranian society and potentially fund Iranian military adventurism abroad.

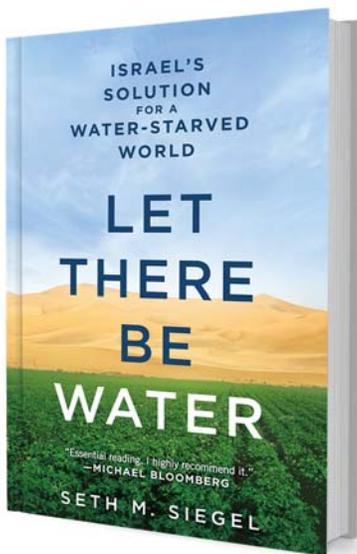
## [Iranian underground missile bases enable ‘surprise launches’](#)

*The Jerusalem Post – Yaakov Lappin*

*Oct. 16, 2015*

On Iranian state TV, the IRGC recently showcased an underground missile launch base. According to an Israeli air defense expert, “The cave system enables the Iranians to prepare their missiles for firing secretly, and to carry out a surprise missile barrage attack.” 

## Water and Israel: An Interview with Seth M. Siegel



The newly released book *Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World* explores Israel's water challenges, innovations that led it to global prominence in water science and technology, and how the Jewish state can help the world adapt to and mitigate the effects of water-shortages. Author Seth M. Siegel joined NER for a conversation:

***What inspired you to write *Let There Be Water*, and why do you feel Israel's water story needs to be told?***

A few years ago, before awareness of the California drought became commonplace, I learned that there was a global water crisis coming. I became convinced that our elected officials, media and community leaders either weren't aware of it or weren't taking adequate steps to prevent the worst of what was going to hit us and the rest of the world. I began doing research on what needed to be done and discovered, much to my amazement, that Israel has the world's most sophisticated water management system and had become essentially independent of weather conditions.

***Why were you amazed?***

I had been to Israel many times and didn't realize what Israel had been doing quietly to assure its own water future. Beginning in the 1930s, even before there was a state, Israel focused on how to assure a dynamic water future. They did this even though the country is mostly desert, has a rapidly growing population and declining rainfall. It is the best unknown story about Israel. And *Let There Be Water* may be the most inspiring story we can tell today about Israel.

***You highlight how Israeli water and agricultural technology could reduce poverty worldwide. How might U.S. policymakers bring Israel's technologies and techniques to subsistence farmers?***

There would be no more important act U.S. policymakers could take than to encourage the use of drip irrigation equipment, a technology invented in Israel. There are more than 500 million subsistence farmers in the world today. When they get a chance to begin watering their fields with drip irrigation instead of flood irrigation, they save on water and their yields improve. Water pollution levels drop. But this isn't important just for the poorest of the poor. We still widely use wasteful flood irrigation in the United States. It is a big part of why we have water problems here.

***How might America—given its significant, longstanding water problems in the West—look to Israel for guidance on water policies and technologies?***

To be frank, it is unlikely that the western states will switch over to a governance model like Israel's where all of the water is taken out of the hands of politics and into the control of an apolitical, technocratic government agency. Even so, those same states would benefit greatly by developing a long-term water plan as Israel does. In addition, Israel charges a real price for water and not a mostly fanciful one as we do in America. One-hundred percent of the money that Israel gets from its water fees is spent on water, also something rare in the United States. In terms of technology, Israel not only utilizes remarkable water technologies like desalination and also the re-use of treated sewage for agriculture, but they are constantly trying out new water technology ideas. Many of them fail, but enough work to assure that Israel is always ahead of the water-innovation curve.

***Many American cities are simultaneously dealing with aging water infrastructures and shrinking budgets. How can Israeli companies help American cities deal with this perfect storm?***

Technology, technology, technology. It would cost trillions to replace all of our broken pipes. Israeli technology can help minimize leaks or even to predict them before they occur. As I show in my book, Israel uses its cities

and farms as beta sites for Israeli water technology companies. By the time a water technology is ready for export it has been field tested in a variety of conditions in Israel.

*You discuss at length the Israeli culture of conservation and respect for water. How can we raise awareness and adopt a similar culture in the United States?*

Our mindset here is mostly to think of water as a limitless resource similar to the way we think about sunshine or air. In Israel, from nursery school on, citizens are taught to use all of the water they need but to be mindful of the water they use. Israelis aren't supermen and superwomen. Everything they do there, we can do here. It is a question of will, vision, commitment and, at times, of sacrifice.

*As you look to the future, what are your hopes for the U.S.-Israel relationship as it relates to water cooperation?*

Already, Israel is being used as a model for countries all over the world as they grapple with water scarcity problems. Just as America has done so much to help Israel, Israel can do so much to help America assure itself of a secure, robust water future. On our current course, we will be having severe water shortages within ten years, and as we see, this has started. Israel can help us to blunt the worst of the coming problems. I have no doubt that the U.S.-Israel partnership will deepen due to water-sharing technologies and practices. 



*Seth M. Siegel, author of The New York Times bestseller **Let There Be Water** (St. Martin's Press, Sep. 2015), is a businessman, activist, writer, member of the Council of Foreign Relations and AIPAC board member. His essays have appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times and other publications around the world on business, political and cultural issues.*

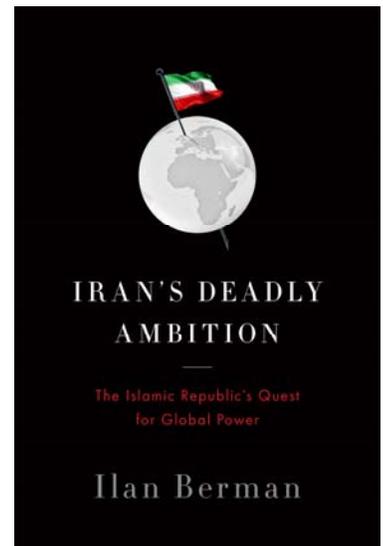
## *Book Review: Iran's Deadly Ambition: The Islamic Republic's Quest for Global Power*

With the acceptance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA or “the Iran Deal”) there is a tendency in some quarters to believe that the Iran issue has been resolved, allowing the United States to “pivot” to the Far East or turn to urgent domestic issues. Ilan Berman’s Iran’s Deadly Ambition puts any such notions to rest. His book dwells neither on the technical nor the geostrategic aspects of the Islamic Republic’s nuclear program, and

touches only in passing on the regime’s repressive domestic politics and its deplorable human rights record. Instead, Berman analyzes Iran’s foreign policy, focusing specifically on how it works ceaselessly to weaken Israel and to challenge U.S. interests throughout the world.

Berman’s thesis is that “Iran, a regime in profound demographic crisis and political flux, is still animated by an uncompromising religious worldview that sees itself at war with the West.” The main corollary is that, notwithstanding the JCPOA, the Iranians are “busy translating their vision of world influence into action.” The book, written in clear prose devoid of any academic jargon, carefully documents how Iran’s tentacles have spread throughout the Middle East and beyond, including Africa, Latin America, and parts of the Far East. Berman devotes little space to the ideological and religious sources of Iranian expansionism, preferring to let the facts on the ground speak for themselves. He makes clear, however, that Iran’s goals are not exclusively religious. Tehran is active in many areas (including North Korea and Latin America) where there are few Muslims to mobilize in favor of Iran’s Islamic revolution but many anti-Western forces ready to collaborate with Iran’s anti-American geostrategic goals.

An important secondary theme of Iran’s *Deadly Ambition* is that Tehran’s foreign policy strategy has remained remarkably constant during the 36 years since Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini deposed the Shah. From the start, Tehran’s global agenda has had three distinct but interlocking fronts: promoting sectarian Shia interests throughout the Islamic world, positioning Iran to displace Saudi Arabia as the world’s pan-Islamic champion and backing Third World populism to weaken U.S. and Western interests. Berman shows how early on the Islamic Republic created an elite force—the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)—to implement Iranian expansionism. The IRGC quickly became a “state within a state” that now dominates at least one third of Iran’s economy, runs the nuclear and ballistic missile programs, controls most of its major naval assets, and commands the Qods Force, a sophisticated and deadly special operations cadre devoted exclusively to “exporting” the Iranian revolution. Berman concedes that Tehran frequently makes tactical shifts to adjust to changing circumstances—such as adopting a less strident rhetoric after Khomeini died and the Iran-Iraq War ended—but correctly warns that we should not confuse such shifts with changes in Tehran’s basic strategy. He shows that the occasional conciliatory statements and actions by “reformist” presidents such as Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005) and current president Hassan Rouhani have never softened the contours of Iran’s aggressive foreign policy, mainly because the unelected Supreme Leader and the IRGC—not Iran’s elected presidents—control the levers of power.



The bulk of Berman's book consists of a data-rich round-the-world survey highlighting Iranian subversion of legitimate governments, support for sundry terrorist groups, and alliances with anti-Western forces as varied as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and North Korea's Kim Jong-un. Starting with an overview of how Iran has used the chaos created by the Arab Spring to extend its influence throughout the Middle East, he concludes that Iran now calls most of the shots in Baghdad, Damascus, and Beirut, and is helping Yemen's Shia Houthi rebels fight that country's Sunni majority. He aptly quotes a senior aid to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as boasting that "Iran's border defense is [now] southern Lebanon's frontier with Israel and our deep defensive strategy has reached the Mediterranean above Israel's head." In his chapter on terrorism, Berman illustrates the global ubiquity and reach of Tehran's terror infrastructure and stresses how Iran's tactical flexibility enables it to work with Sunni groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad against Israel, and the Taliban against the United States.

Perhaps the book's biggest contribution to exposing Tehran's aggressive foreign policy is Berman's careful examination of Iranian penetration in Africa and Latin America—areas that one does not automatically associate with Iranian subversion. He explains how Iran uses proxies—most prominently Hezbollah in Africa and to a lesser degree in parts of South America—to advance its goals. In Africa, Iran has shipped weapons to Hamas in the Gaza Strip via Sudan, and has used Hezbollah to arm and train insurgents in Nigeria. Hezbollah has also been involved in suspicious activities in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal.

In Latin America, Iranian subversion dates back at least to the bombings of the Israeli Embassy and the headquarters of Argentina's Jewish Federation in Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994—acts of terrorism that remain unpunished to this day, and which as recently as this year led to the highly suspicious "suicide" of the lead Argentine investigator into these crimes. Berman also shows that Iran's activities in Latin America cannot be dismissed, as some have quipped, as a mere "axis of annoyance." In fact, Tehran has thrice used Latin American assets to target the United States: in 2007 Mohsen Rabbani, the mastermind of the Argentina bombings, sponsored a Guyanese national to try to blow up fuel tanks underneath JFK Airport in New York; in 2011 the IRGC tried to use Mexican drug cartels to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in Washington D.C. and to bomb both the Saudi and Israeli embassies in our nation's capital; and in the same year Tehran hired Venezuelan and Mexican hackers to penetrate U.S. defense and intelligence facilities and mount sophisticated cyber-attacks throughout America. The fact that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies thwarted all these attempts should not blind us to their serious nature and the danger that Iran will use Latin America, in the future, as a base to mount anti-U.S. terrorism.

In 2014, Dr. Phil Gordon, then Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf Region, and a prime architect of the Iran Deal, predicted that "a nuclear

agreement [with Iran] could begin a multigenerational process that could lead to a new relationship between our countries.” Berman’s book demonstrates conclusively that this hope remains in the realm of wishful thinking. There is not a shred of evidence that Iran is ready to jettison its huge domestic and foreign infrastructure of terror and subversion or relinquish its openly stated goal of destroying Israel in order to achieve a wider rapprochement with the West. Indeed, Supreme Leader Khamenei recently prohibited all negotiations between Iran and the United States that are not directly related to the recent nuclear agreement. There could be no better illustration of Berman’s conclusion that no nuclear agreement will eliminate Iran’s strategic threat “because the threat emanates not from Iran’s nuclear program but from the Iranian regime itself.”

This book should be read by all those concerned with the Iranian threat, and perhaps especially by those who are not. Its clear and concise text and wealth of detailed information make crystal clear just how flimsy the arguments are of those who allege that Iran’s foreign policy is purely defensive, that Tehran does not directly threaten the United States, and that Iran will become harmless now that it has achieved some of its nuclear goals. Thirty-six years after Ayatollah Khomeini founded the Islamic Republic, Iran remains “a radical expansionist and revisionist state” ready and eager to confront America around the globe. 



*Ilan Berman, author of **Iran’s Deadly Ambition: The Islamic Republic’s Quest for Global Power** (Encounter Books, August 2015), is Vice President of the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, DC. An expert on regional security in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Russian Federation, he has consulted for both the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Department of Defense, and provided assistance on foreign policy and national security issues to a range of governmental agencies and congressional offices.*

## Washington Brief: A Recap of News from the Hill and Beyond

### **Congress Calls for an End to Palestinian Incitement**

Since the recent outbreak of Palestinian violence began in mid-September, Congress has made clear to Palestinian leadership that terrorist attacks and incitement to violence must stop.

The first two weeks of November saw three congressional actions addressing Palestinian violence that has left 11 Israelis dead and more than one hundred injured.

On Nov. 2, the House of Representatives unanimously adopted bipartisan resolution [H. Res. 293](#), condemning Palestinian incitement to violence and the recent wave of Palestinian terrorist attacks in Israel.

Authored by Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Ted Deutch (D-FL), the resolution urges President Abbas and other PA officials to discontinue all incitement and exert influence to discourage such activity within Palestinian civil society. The resolution also expresses support for individuals and organizations working to encourage cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, and directs the State Department to monitor and publish information about incitement by the PA.

On Nov. 5, 369 members of the House of Representatives sent a [bipartisan letter](#) to Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas on Nov. 5 urging him to stop Palestinian incitement to violence.

The letter, which calls on President Abbas to take “concrete steps to avoid further violence,” was spearheaded by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY).

“Now is the time for the Palestinian Authority to take concrete steps to avoid further violence,” wrote the representatives. “This starts with a sustained effort to publicly and officially repudiate these attacks, ending the unacceptable incitement to violence emanating from Palestinian Authority officials and institutions, continuing important security cooperation with Israel and agreeing to unconditionally renew direct talks with the Israelis.”

On Nov. 10, the Senate passed bipartisan resolution [S. Res. 302](#), expressing support for Israel and condemnation of Palestinian terror attacks. The resolution was authored by Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH). 

### **Obama and Netanyahu Vow to Strengthen U.S.-Israel Ties**

On Nov. 9 at the White House, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with President Barack Obama to discuss increased security cooperation between their two countries.

The meeting focused on expediting talks on a new 10-year U.S. security assistance package to Israel. The current memorandum of understanding, which is set to expire in 2017, provides the Israel Defense Forces with \$3.1 billion annually. An American team will travel to Israel in early December to continue the negotiations, which are expected to last for several months.

Prior to the meeting, President Obama said, "A lot of our time will be spent on a memorandum of understanding that we can potentially negotiate. It will be expiring in a couple of years, but we want to get a head start on that to make sure that both the United States and Israel can plan effectively for our defense needs going forward."

While sitting next to President Obama, Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed "... the appreciation of the people of Israel to you for your efforts...and what you're engaging in right now -- how to bolster Israel's security, how to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge so that Israel can, as you've often said, defend itself, by itself, against any threat."

The president and prime minister both condemned the recent wave of Palestinian violence in Israel and emphasized the need for a peace agreement. "I want to be very clear that we condemn, in the strongest terms, Palestinian violence against innocent Israeli citizens. And I want to repeat, once again, it is my strong belief that Israel has not just the right, but the obligation to protect itself," Obama said. He also stated his desire to see peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

"We'll never give up our hope for peace," concurred Netanyahu. "And I remain committed to a vision of peace of two states for two peoples, a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state." 

### **Congress Overwhelmingly Authorizes U.S.-Israel Missile Defense Funds**

On Nov. 10, the Senate voted 91-3 to advance the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), including substantial U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense funding.

The House of Representatives voted 370-58 to approve the measure on Nov. 5.

Overall, the NDAA authorizes \$474 million for U.S.-Israel missile and rocket defense programs. The legislation also authorizes \$25 million in R&D funding to develop a joint U.S.-Israel anti-tunneling defense system, which could be used to protect Israel and U.S. forces from terrorist attacks.

In addition, the bill requires a report on the military power of Iran and expresses the sense of Congress that Iran continues to conduct a range of malign activities that threaten U.S. national security interests.

The bill now heads to President Obama's desk for his signature.

The authorization is part of a two-step process. The actual funding will be allocated through an appropriations bill, which is expected to be voted on before the end of the year. 

## Senate Letter Presses the President to Prioritize New MOU with Israel

A group of 16 senators sent a [letter](#) to President Barack Obama urging him to prioritize a new security assistance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during his Nov. 9 meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington D.C.

Authored by Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), the letter states that a robust MOU will “deepen the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership based on a shared understanding of the threats Israel faces in the region.”

“As threats in the region continue to evolve, we urge you to engage at the highest levels to continue a process to develop a shared understanding of the threat environment confronting Israel, and to take bold steps to strengthen the MOU that serves as the foundation of our bilateral security efforts,” wrote the senators. “The United States and Israel have an unparalleled history of friendship and cooperation.”

The letter was co-signed by Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Robert Casey (D-PA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Edward Markey (D-MA), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Jon Tester (D-MT), Mark Warner (D-VA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and Bill Nelson (D-FL). 

## Congressional Committees Examine Iranian Support of Terrorism

Congress recently held three hearings to assess Iran’s increased support of terrorism.

On Nov. 4, the House of Representatives’ Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight discussed implications—stemming from the Iran nuclear agreement—on restricting U.S. taxpayers from receiving foreign tax credits for business completed in Iran.

In his opening [statement](#), subcommittee Chairman Peter Roskam (R-IL) called on the administration to continue enforcing anti-terror provisions in the U.S. tax code.

“The tax provisions we are discussing today are in our jurisdiction and are related to Iran’s support for terrorism, not nuclear proliferation. It is that support for terrorism which triggers them, so they can and should remain in effect outside of the framework of the nuclear agreement. I hope that we can work on a bipartisan basis to fight and defeat terrorism, and examine how we can strengthen these tax provisions to achieve that goal,” Roskam said.

In a separate Nov. 4 [hearing](#), the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight deliberated on the federal government's failure to support American victims of Iranian and Palestinian terror.

According to Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), the committee's chairman, "Americans ... have fought hard to ensure that justice is done in these situations, only to see their own government more often than not stand against them." Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE), the committee's ranking member, agreed that the federal government needs to improve its compensation to victims, and called for laying the groundwork for a bipartisan bill to fix shortcomings.

On Nov. 5, the House Oversight Subcommittee on National Security held a [hearing](#) on Iran's power projection capability.

Subcommittee Chairman Ron DeSantis (R-FL) warned that sanctions relief tied to the Iran nuclear agreement could facilitate increased Iranian support for terrorism and malign activities in the Middle East. Ranking Member Stephen Lynch (D-MA) concurred that Iran is a destabilizing force in the region, and "would continue to be so in the future." 

### **Members of Congress Oppose New EU Guidelines on Labeling Israeli Products**

Lawmakers from both parties are opposed to the European Commission's adoption of guidelines calling on European Union (EU) member states to impose a new labeling policy on certain products made by Israeli companies imported into the EU.

On Nov. 12, Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA) sent a letter to U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Michael Froman, urging him to utilize the anti-boycott provisions in the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation "to express opposition to these new labeling guidelines and any further actions they might be contemplating to restrict commerce with Israel, isolate Israel and exert unilateral economic pressure on Israel to make political concessions outside of the negotiating process."

On Nov. 9, a bipartisan group of 36 senators sent a letter to European Commission Vice President Federica Mogherini condemning the new labeling guidelines which were adopted by the European Commission on Nov. 11. The letter, authored by Sens. Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), called the new procedure "unwarranted, dangerous, and damaging."

"As allies, elected representatives of the American people, and strong supporters of Israel, we urge you not to implement this labeling policy, which appears intended to discourage Europeans from purchasing these

products and promote a de-facto boycott of Israel, a key ally and the only true democracy in the Middle East,” wrote the senators.

On Nov. 10, 36 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to Vice President Mogherini arguing that the new guidelines support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

The letter, led by Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO), states that the “policy of labeling Israeli good will not be helpful in bringing peace to the region.”

“It is our belief that the BDS movement and its effort to smear Israel are connected with the recent rise in acts of anti-Semitism,” the representatives wrote. “We believe it would be ill-advised to endorse a policy that likewise singles out Israel and holds it to different standards than any other country. What’s more, such policies seem extremely ill-fitted and discriminatory at a time when Israeli citizens are under daily attacks, stemming from the malign incitement of the Palestinian leadership.” 