

The week ending December 13, 2013

IRAN

Israeli officials: Iran will get \$20b from sanctions relief

Israel officials and senior administration officials have agreed that the value of the economic sanctions relief to Iran could be much higher than originally thought. [Haaretz](#) reported that the Israelis assessed that in exchange for signing the Geneva interim agreement, Iran's economic relief would be at least \$20 billion. The sources mentioned that the Iranian stock exchange is already rising significantly and many countries are standing in line to renew economic ties with Iran. China has expressed a desire to renew contracts worth \$9 billion to develop the Iranian oil industry and the interest some German companies are also interested in deals with Tehran. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

Poll: Most Americans want no Iranian uranium enrichment

The majority of Americans on both sides of the political aisle agree that Iran's nuclear program, whether for energy or weapons, is the biggest threat facing the United States in the Middle East. According to [The Washington Times](#), a survey of 900 likely voters found that 93 percent of Republicans and 81 percent of Democrats want the U.S. to prohibit Iran from enriching uranium for any purpose. "Finally, we have found an issue of substance that both Democrats and Republicans agree on," said strategist Frank Luntz, whose firm conducted the survey. "The fear of Iranian nuclear weapons unites just about everyone." LuntzGlobal conducted the poll Saturday to Monday. Ariel Cohen, an Iran expert at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, said the survey shows a trend of increasing opposition to the deal. Cohen agreed with 95 percent of Republicans and 78 percent of Democrats in the poll who predicted that Iran will break the interim deal during negotiations on a long-term agreement to prevent Iran from processing uranium or plutonium to the strength needed to build a nuclear bomb. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

House Unanimously Adopts Legislation to bolster Israel's Qualitative Military Edge

On Thursday, the House of Representatives passed the Israel Qualitative Military Edge (QME) Enhancement Act (H.R. 1992). Authored by Rep. Doug Collins (R-GA) and Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL), this key legislation is designed to strengthen Israel's QME over neighboring countries. The bill requires the president to submit an assessment of Israel's QME more frequently. Specifically, the President will prepare this report every two years,

rather than every four years under current law. The measure also broadens the definition of QME to consider the impact of cyber warfare threats on Israeli defense.

House Panel Backs U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Bill

A key House panel approved new bipartisan legislation that would strengthen [energy cooperation](#) between the U.S. and Israel. In a voice vote, the House Energy and Commerce Committee backed the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Enhancement Act (H.R. 3683), which was spearheaded by Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and Ranking Member Henry Waxman (D-CA). The legislation seeks to capture the opportunities afforded by recent energy developments in the United States and Israel to improve the two allies' shared energy security and energy independence. The bill would also establish a strategic dialogue group on issues of energy security; authorize the creation of a U.S.-Israel Center of Excellence to promote the development of advanced energy technologies; promote academic linkages; and expand joint programs into renewable energy, natural gas and water technologies. Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Mary Landrieu (D-LA) have introduced a similar bill (S. 1491). The legislation awaits floor action in the House and committee consideration in the Senate.

THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

Detained at sea, Syrian refugees stranded in Egyptian limbo

More than 1,500 Syrian refugees have been [arrested](#) since August for trying to enter Egypt illegally by sea. The attempted exodus underscores how unwelcoming Egypt has become to Syrians since the military ousted former President Mohamed Morsi. A public prosecutor later dropped the charges against at least 615 of the detained refugees and ordered them released. Police initially defied the order and continued to hold hundreds of refugees in crowded police stations while pressuring them to leave Egypt. So far, authorities have deported more than 1,200 refugees to countries including Turkey, Lebanon, and even Syria, where they face possible arrest and torture. On Monday, authorities released most of those who were still detained, leaving 35 still in detention, according to activists. More than 2.2 million Syrians have fled the war raging in their country, and around 325,000 of them have come to Egypt. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

CERN research center accepts Israel as its 21st member

The governing council of CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, voted in favor of Israel to become a [full member](#) of the world's leading atomic research center. The upgrade to full membership has great significance. Until now, Israel hasn't had power to influence the institute's research priorities and only limited access to CERN tenders. Full membership will change this. "Full membership in an organization like this is a very impressive calling card, and it reflects Israel's high scientific and technological level," said Ilana Levi, head of the Science Ministry's foreign relations department. "Acceptance as a full member would grant greater access to the most advanced and unique research labs and facilities." Prof. Eilam Gross of the Weizmann Institute's particle physics department, who is a member of the CERN team said, "It's a great thing for a country like Israel to see its flag waving over the European nuclear research lab...Science ought to cross borders, and I think it's very important that the scientific community not repudiate us, because the road to peace goes through science."