



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending November 22, 2013

IRAN

Bipartisan initiative backs Iran sanctions bill

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) [announced](#) a bipartisan initiative to impose new sanctions on Iran when the Senate returns from its Thanksgiving break. This announcement is an important statement about the resolve of Senate Democrats and Republicans to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. "I believe we must do everything possible to stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons capability," Reid said. It is the hope that the administration's efforts lead to a diplomatic resolution of this matter. "We all strongly support those negotiations, hope they will succeed, and want them to produce the strongest possible agreement," Reid said. "However, we are also aware of the possibility that the Iranians could keep the negotiations from succeeding. I hope that will not happen." This new bipartisan legislation will further press Iran to end its nuclear weapons development and enhance America's negotiating leverage. A nuclear weapons capable Iran is a grave threat to American national security and to that of our allies around the world. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

Khomenei: Israel is an 'illegitimate regime'

Senior leadership from six world powers (P5+1) met in Geneva on Wednesday to begin the latest round of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. At the same time, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, the ultimate authority over Iran's foreign policy decisions including its illicit nuclear program, launched new [incitement](#) towards the Jewish state calling Israel an "illegitimate regime" led by "untouchable rabid dogs." The latest vitriol came in a speech delivered to members of Basij, a hard-line Iranian paramilitary organization. Also earlier this month, Iran celebrated the 34th anniversary of the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, a day celebrated in Iran as "Death to America Day." 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

David's Sling Intercepts Missile in Trial

The U.S. and Israeli militaries held a successful test of the David's Sling air defense system on Wednesday, [The Jerusalem Post](#) reported. David's Sling is expected to become operational next year. It is designed to intercept intermediate and short-range missiles, which make up a majority of Hezbollah's arsenal. Yair Ramati, of the ministry's Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure, said the trial was a "very complex procedure," adding that David's Sling is slated to become a defensive "workhorse" against large, powerful rockets and missiles that threaten Israel's major cities. Ramati said that radar systems act as the system's eyes, the command and

control center are its brain, and the interceptors are its arms. "What's special about it is that it knows how to intercept from a low altitude to a fairly high altitude in the atmosphere, covering a wide range of territory which I can't unfortunately cite," Ramati stated. Describing David's Sling as a new and revolutionary system "in the family of interceptors and the world of missile defense systems," the ministry stressed that once operational, it would form a layer in Israel's growing multi-layered missile defense shield.

THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

West Faces Challenge in Moving Syrian Chemical Arms

A plan announced over the weekend for getting the bulk of Syria's chemical weapons out of the country in coming weeks has raised major concerns in Washington, because it involves transporting the weapons over roads that are battlegrounds in the country's civil war and loading them onto a ship that has no place to go. Security for the shipments is being provided entirely by Syrian military units loyal to President Bashar al-Assad, who has surprised American officials with how speedily he has complied with an agreement brokered by Russia to identify and turn over his chemical weapon stockpiles. Intelligence analysts and Pentagon officials [say](#) the shipments will be vulnerable to attack as they travel past the ruins of a war that has raged for two and a half years. A senior American official was asked what the backup plan would be if the chemical weapons components were attacked by opposition forces linked to Al Qaeda, or even elements of Assad's own forces. The official responded, "no one has attempted this before in a civil war, and no one is willing to put troops on the ground to protect this stuff, including us." Another official noted that the choice now facing the United States and other nations was to "either leave the stuff in place and hope for the best, or account for it, get it out of there, and hope for the best. That's the 'least worst' option."

Beirut Blasts Near Iranian Embassy Kill 23

[The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that two blasts that struck near the Iranian Embassy in Beirut on Tuesday killed 23 people, among them an Iranian diplomat, in what Iranian and Lebanese officials described as a direct assault on the embassy. The attack broke three months of relative calm in an area of southern Beirut, much of it a stronghold of the Shiite group Hezbollah, that was the target of a series of rocket and car bombs this summer. The targeting of an embassy would mark an escalation in the sporadic violence that has rocked Lebanon since the war in neighboring Syria has bled over the border and drawn Hezbollah into the fight. Lebanon's health ministry said 23 people were killed and 147 were injured. Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Ghazanfar Roknabadi, said the Iranian embassy was targeted by two bombings, five minutes apart, and blamed "the Israeli project, in the region and the world." However, Israel denied any involvement. The explosions have introduced a new tactic of violence in Lebanon: suicide bombers.

U.S. Official to Lebanon: Keep Money from Hezbollah

A senior U.S. official asked Lebanon on Nov. 15 to stop financial dealings with Hezbollah, [The Daily Star](#) reported. Daniel Glaser, assistant secretary for terrorist financing at the Treasury Department, said before an Arab banking conference in Beirut that Hezbollah's ties with Iran and Syria call into question all monetary transactions with the group. "The risks of engaging in such relationships will only increase as more countries apply sanctions on Hezbollah, which continues to engage in destabilizing military activity in Syria and attacks in Europe," Glaser said. He added that Lebanese financial institutions play an important role in isolating the sanctioned regimes in Iran and Syria.