

The week ending November 29, 2013

IRAN

Senators draft new sanctions in case Iran reneges

Democratic and Republican senators are drafting legislation to increase sanctions on the Iranian regime in the event that it reneges on its commitments agreed upon in Geneva. According to the [Associated Press](#) the new bill would require the administration to certify every 30 days that Iran is abiding by the six-month agreement and is uninvolved with acts of terrorism. If these measures are not met, the new legislation would reinstate economic restrictions and bar companies in violation of the sanctions from doing business with the U.S. Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Mark Kirk (R-IL) plan to have the bill ready for consideration on Dec. 9. Also in the aftermath of the agreement made in Geneva, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will send his top security aide to Washington to discuss next steps for a comprehensive deal to end Iran's nuclear program. "This accord must bring about one outcome: the dismantling of Iran's military nuclear capability," Netanyahu said. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

Iran will continue construction at Arak nuclear site

According to [Reuters](#), Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif said that Iran will press on with construction at a nuclear reactor site at Arak, despite an agreement with Western powers to halt activity. The uncompleted heavy-water research reactor emerged as one of several crucial issues in negotiations in Geneva. Iran said it would not make "any further advances of its activities" on the Arak reactor, according to text of the agreement. "The capacity at the Arak site is not going to increase. It means no new nuclear fuel will be produced and no new installations will be installed, but construction will continue there," Zarif told parliament in translated comments broadcast on Iran's Press TV. But experts have said an apparent gap in the text could allow Tehran to build components off-site to install later in the nuclear reactor. Tehran has said it could open the reactor as soon as next year. It says its purpose is only to make medical isotopes, but Western countries say it could also produce plutonium, one of two materials, along with enriched uranium, that can be used to make a nuclear bomb.

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

IAF hosts largest international military exercise in Israel

On Sunday the Israel Air Force launched—for the first time in Israel's history—the [Blue Flag international training exercise](#) at the Ovda airbase in southern Israel. The large-scale international exercise, a joint exercise of the US, Italian and Hellenic air forces, continued through Thursday. This is a part of the IAF's elite training program. "For us, it is about training together," a U.S. Air Force soldier explained. "We have been leading up to this exercise for a couple years now. We're here to continue to work together." The

goal of the exercise is to improve Israel's general air defense capabilities while learning together and cooperating with global allies. U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro was present at the opening of the exercise. "Israel lives in a dangerous neighborhood. We need the best equipped, best trained forces as possible to protect our people and our security," he said. "We also need allies and we have great allies here...all training together and reinforcing a partnership that gets stronger with each passing year."

THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

Report: Israel's geostrategic status in Mideast improves

According to an annual [report](#) on Israel's geostrategic status in the Middle East, Israel's status in the region has improved over the past year, in light of developments in the region, including Syria's loss of chemical and ballistic capabilities, inner conflicts in Lebanon between Hezbollah and other factions, and the halt to the development of the Egyptian army as a result of Egypt's focus on domestic affairs. Security sources noted that though Gazans are discontented, Hamas rule is aggressive enough to keep citizens from taking down Hamas. Following the disarmament of over 50 percent of Syria's chemical weapons, sources estimate that in case of war, the Israeli army will now be capable of reaching the Syrian capital in under a day. As a result of chaos in Syria, however, terror groups have grown stronger, posing risk to regional stability. The Lebanese group Hezbollah has also grown stronger, but the Islamic Republic of Iran has essentially become Israel's most dangerous enemy due to its nuclear program.

Egypt Cracks Down on Protesters

Egyptian police used batons, water cannons and fire hoses to disperse three separate demonstrations on Tuesday, arresting activists who had turned out to voice opposition to a new law that curbs protests. [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that a law, which took effect on Sunday, requires organizers to seek approval for protests and gives the Interior Ministry a wide berth to reject applications and use force to clear unapproved demonstrations. The law, the first major piece of legislation passed by the interim military-backed government since it came to power, has come under fire by local civil rights groups, the United Nations and Western governments as being a tool of political repression. It was the second week in a row that groups opposed to the military regime had protested publicly, signaling that dissent was growing beyond the ranks of the Islamist supporters of Egypt's former President Mohammed Morsi.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

IDF treats 2,000th patient in the Philippines

Israel's medical team working to treat patients injured in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan treated its [2000th patient](#) over the weekend in Bogu City. One out of every three patients at its field hospital is a child, according to an IDF spokesperson. "You feel as if you've returned life to someone and that feeling is unbelievable," said Reuven Gelfond, head operating room nurse at Israel's Hadassah Medical Organization. "We are a light in the darkness of this poor, badly damaged region." The Israeli doctors and nursing staff have been treating all Philippine patients wanting to see a doctor—whether they were affected by Typhoon Haiyan or not. For many, this was the first medical care they ever received. The IDF team successfully treated four patients with Pterygium, and restored their sight. News got out about the eye operations and the IDF reported that two other candidates arrived at the field hospital for surgery.