

The week ending October 11, 2013

IRAN

Freshman congressmen call on Obama to enforce sanctions

A bipartisan group of 78 freshmen congressmen [called on the administration](#) to use all the sanctions passed by the House of Representatives against Iran to stop it from obtaining nuclear weapons. Many of the legislators who signed the Oct. 4 letter returned recently from the Middle East and “are deeply concerned about the prospects of a nuclear-armed Iran,” they said in the two-page letter. “Time is running out,” the lawmakers wrote. They called on the Obama administration to enforce the sanctions, but added that “we stand ready to use force if necessary.” The congressmen noted that they saw no changes in Iran’s nuclear weapons policy despite the recent election of President Hassan Rouhani, who has made gestures about making his country’s nuclear weapons program more transparent. “History will judge our actions with Iran by one simple question: Did we prevent it from acquiring a nuclear weapon?” said Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL), who along with Rep. Luke Messer (R-IL) organized the letter. “I welcome a dialogue with Iran,” Messer said, “but America must continue the pressure of sanctions and be clear force is an option unless Iran dismantles its nuclear program.”

Ya’alon: Easing Pressure will Collapse Iran Sanctions

[Haaretz](#) reported that Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon met with his U.S. counterpart, Chuck Hagel, at the Pentagon on Tuesday for meetings about dismantling Syria’s chemical weapons arsenal and Iran’s nuclear program. With regard to sanctions against the Islamic Republic, Ya’alon expressed concern that international sanctions against Tehran would collapse if world powers agreed to ease the pressure. Plenty of interested parties would be glad to start doing business with Iran should the sanctions be lifted, Ya’alon said, which would alleviate the economic pressure while allowing the Iranians to continue enriching uranium. Ya’alon urged the United States to avoid falling into the “trap” of relieving the sanctions as a confidence-building measure until Iran has fulfilled the conditions set for it. The meeting comes days after Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif insisted that his country possessed the “absolute right” to enrich uranium—an assertion that has no legal backing in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This information is an update to the information contained in this week’s [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

U.S. Temporarily Freezes Some Military Aid to Egypt

The Obama administration on Wednesday announced a temporary freeze on military assistance to Egypt, even as U.S. officials emphasized their desire to avoid rupturing a security relationship that stretches back more than three decades, [The New York Times](#) reported. To signal its displeasure at the Egyptian military’s bloody crackdown on the

Muslim Brotherhood, officials said, the United States would withhold the delivery of several big-ticket items, including Apache attack helicopters, Harpoon missiles, M1-A1 tank parts and F-16 warplanes, as well as \$260 million for the general Egyptian budget. Senior officials said the United States would continue aid for counterterrorism programs as well as for Egypt's efforts to protect its borders and secure Sinai.

Second Team to Bolster Syrian Arms Destruction

The international agency overseeing the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons said it is deploying a second team of inspectors to Syria to supplement the work of those already there. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), has said its first team, which arrived in Syria on Oct. 1, has left the country. But some of the 19 OPCW experts remained behind. Ahmet Üzümcü, the OPCW's director-general, told the agency's 41-member Executive Council on Tuesday that the Syria mission has enjoyed a constructive beginning but that it still faced "a long and difficult process." According to [The Wall Street Journal](#), the first team's mission was essentially to lay the groundwork for the inspection and destruction activities. The deployment of a second team suggests those activities are well under way. Under an expedited schedule being followed by the agency, Syria's production, mixing and filling facilities are to be entirely eliminated by the end of October, and the country's entire chemical arsenal is to be destroyed within the first half of 2014. That scheduled was initially adopted in a U.S.-Russia agreement in September and was later ratified by the OPCW and the United Nations Security Council.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Hamas leader calls for P.A. to end to talks with Israel

The head of the political wing of Hamas, Khaled Meshal, called on the Palestinian Authority to [cease peace negotiations](#) with Israel immediately, claiming that continuing the talks would endanger the status of Jerusalem. Meshal was in Ankara this week, where he met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss Palestinian reconciliation efforts and regional issues. Also in Ankara, he spoke by video to a rally in Beirut saying only armed struggle against Israel could achieve the right of return and protect Jerusalem. Meshal attacked P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas, for renewing talks with Israel. 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

2 Israeli professors share 2013 Nobel Prize in chemistry

Israeli professor Arieh Warshel on Wednesday won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, along with fellow Jewish professors Michael Levitt (who also holds Israeli citizenship) and Martin Karplus. Warshel, 72, is a distinguished professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he has been since the 1970s. Fellow winner Michael Levitt, a South Africa-born professor, immigrated to Israel in 1979 and taught at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot for most of the 1980s. Vienna-born Martin Karplus fled the Nazi occupation of Austria as a child in 1938. Of the 23 chemistry Nobels awarded in the past decade, 11 of the winners were Jewish and six of them were Israelis. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the trio won the award "for the development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems," the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced.