



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 11, 2014

PEACE PROCESS

Eyes on the April 29 Deadline April 29 will mark the end of the nine month negotiating window Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas agreed to in exchange for the release of prisoners, many with blood on their hands, from Israel. Abbas had previously refused to meet directly with Israel for more than four years. While talks are continuing until the deadline, the future of this negotiating window is still unclear. The United States is working with both parties to find a path forward that would extend the negotiations past the April deadline. On Wednesday, Secretary of State John Kerry reiterated that goal stating, "We are working hard to try to find a way forward and both parties indicate they would like to find a way to go forward in the talks." Israel has yet to release the final wave of prisoners until the talks were assured to extend beyond the April deadline. The Palestinians meanwhile filed paperwork to join 15 UN treaties and conventions, in violation of the nine-month agreement.

IRAN

Congress Passes Legislation Barring Entry to Terrorists as UN Representatives

The Senate and the House overwhelmingly adopted bipartisan legislation to bar entry into the United States to any proposed U.N. representative who has engaged in espionage or terrorism or who may pose a threat to national security. The legislation addresses Iran's outrageous selection of Hamid Abutalebi — one of the Iranian students involved in the 1979 takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran — as ambassador to the United Nations. The appointment reflects the long history of Iranian terrorist activity throughout the world, which continues to this day.

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

U.N. Envoy Samantha Power Testifies Before House Panel

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power told a House panel that America strongly opposes "unilateral efforts at enhancement of status and unilateral efforts at statehood" by the Palestinians. Power testified on April 2 before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs in a hearing to review the president's fiscal year 2015 funding request for the U.S. Mission to the U.N., which plays a vital role in advancing U.S. interests in the international community. At the hearing, Power

fielded questions from lawmakers regarding the U.S.'s strategy at the U.N. on the Israeli Palestinian peace process, Iran's nuclear program, and combating anti-Israel bias and the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. Commenting on Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's decision to apply to 15 U.N. bodies, Power noted, "Efforts that attempt to circumvent the peace process ... are only going to be counterproductive to the peace process itself." Speaking about efforts to delegitimize Israel at the U.N., Power said, "The United States will stand with Israel, we will defend it, and we will challenge every instance of unfair treatment throughout the U.N. system."

Reps. Request Increased Missile Defense Funding

Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Grace Meng (D-NY) on April 3 urged the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense to [increase funding](#) for Israel's missile defense systems. The lawmakers requested \$350.9 million for Iron Dome and \$268.7 million for the Arrow, Arrow 3, and David's Sling systems. If the request is granted, it would mean a combined increase of \$348 million from 2014 funding levels. "Missile defense cooperation with Israel is one of the smartest, most mutually beneficial security investments," Roskam said. "The unprecedented success of Iron Dome has been a game-changer for Israel by shielding its people from incessant rocket fire from terrorist organizations within the Gaza Strip. We must also continue to work with Israel to co-develop Arrow-3 and David's Sling in order to confront increasingly sophisticated missile threats from Iran, Hezbollah, and others." Meng added: "The continued threat of a nuclear Iran and its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah as well as the ongoing rocket and missile attacks against Israel make increased funding for the anti-rocket systems essential. It is imperative that Israel have the ability to defend itself, and boosting funding to these programs would further illustrate America's commitment to stand by its dear friend and ally. I urge the subcommittee to approve this additional money."

HEZBOLLAH

House to Introduce New Sanctions against Hezbollah

Reps. Mark Meadows (R-NC), Brad Schneider (D-IL), House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) plan to introduce legislation that toughens [economic sanctions](#) against Hezbollah. The Hezbollah International Financial Prevention Act will impose severe new sanctions on Hezbollah's fundraising channels and restrict its ability to use its funds to support global terrorist activities. "The United States must deal with Hezbollah firmly and decisively with unyielding resolve by crippling its extensive, illegal financial network. Hezbollah's days of unhindered criminal operations and terrorist activity are numbered," Meadows said. Schneider added: "Hezbollah continues to represent a threat to the United States, Israel and the entire region. Right now, Hezbollah uses its global financial connections to launder money and help fund terrorist activities. This bill will help stifle that financial network and give the United States more tools to crack down on Hezbollah's global terrorist activities."