



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 25, 2014

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Hamas-Fatah Unity Would Cripple Peace Efforts

The announced formation of a Hamas-Fatah unity government represents a direct affront to Secretary of State John Kerry and a severe blow to Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. Hamas is an Islamist terrorist organization that seeks Israel's destruction and attacks innocent civilians. Any Palestinian government that includes Hamas cannot be a negotiating partner unless it meets longstanding Quartet demands enshrined in U.S. law: recognize Israel, reject violence, and accept previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

To read the full **AIPAC Memo**, please click [here](#)

Waiting for the Palestinian Godot: Why are we repeatedly surprised every time Mahmoud Abbas fails to sign a peace agreement with Israel?

Journalist and author **Ari Shavit** published a powerful commentary on Mahmoud Abbas and the peace process in Haaretz.

To read the column, please click [here](#).

Lawmakers Condemn Hamas-Fatah Unity Government

In separate statements released on April 23, several House and Senate members from both parties strongly rebuked the proposed Hamas-Fatah unity government. The lawmakers questioned whether Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas is serious about peace in light of his decision. "This is an unwelcomed development and is not constructive," said Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX), chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. "Not only does this action potentially derail any hope of a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, it puts in jeopardy future U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority. This is an irresponsible path forward and this agreement should be abandoned immediately if the Palestinian Authority is serious about the peace process."

Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, expressed similar sentiments. "It is unclear how negotiators can agree to a long-term peace deal – or even extend the talks beyond April 29th – when one of the parties refuses to recognize the State of Israel or renounce the use of violence. If President Abbas' expressions of his desire for peace with Israel and prosperity for all Palestinians are sincere, he should abandon this reckless course and recommit to direct talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu and make the tough choices necessary for peace." Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, said she believes this move will have grave repercussions for the

Palestinians. “The Administration must halt aid to the Palestinian Authority and condition any future assistance as leverage to force Abu Mazen to abandon this reconciliation with Hamas and to implement real reforms within the PA,” she said. “U.S. law is clear on the prohibition of U.S. assistance to a unity Palestinian government that includes Hamas, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and President Obama must not allow one cent of American taxpayer money to help fund this terrorist group.”

According to Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL), ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, “President Abbas now stands at a pivotal crossroad – does he want peace with Israel or reconciliation with Hamas? Hamas is committed to Israel’s destruction and actively targets and murders innocent civilians. Hamas will never be a partner in peace unless it renounces violence, recognizes Israel’s right to exist, and abides by all previously recognized agreements. Be certain that the Palestinian Authority will face significant consequences if a unity government is formed that includes terrorist members of Hamas.”

HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah Passover Attack Thwarted in Thailand

As Jews around the world celebrated Passover this month and Iran continued nuclear negotiations with the West, Tehran’s proxy Hezbollah was preparing to launch an attack on Israeli tourists in Bangkok. Reports on April 18 revealed that Thai authorities thwarted a major terror plot orchestrated by the Lebanese terror militia, which sought to attack Israelis visiting a popular Bangkok vacation center. According to the *Bangkok Post*, two terrorists—Daoud Farhat, a French-Lebanese national, and Youssef Ayad, a Lebanese-Filipino national—were arrested by law enforcement agencies in Thailand after Israeli intelligence uncovered a plan to target visiting Israelis. Authorities told Thai journalists that Ayad admitted to entering the country with the intention of carrying out a bomb strike during the holiday of Songkran, which coincides with Passover. “If we had been unable to arrest the men during Songkran, a bomb attack would certainly have taken place,” said Thailand’s assistant national police chief. Both suspects were arrested with foreign passports in their possession, though officials have yet to determine whether or not the travel documents are authentic. Investigators also believe at least nine suspected foreign terrorists connected to Hezbollah are currently operating throughout the country.

The Passover plot is not the first time Israeli tourists in Thailand have been targeted by the militant Shi’ite terror network. A similar attempt, reportedly carried out by Iran and Hezbollah, was disrupted in early 2012 with numerous suspects arrested by Thai police. A report published by *TIME* noted that the previous Iranian-driven attack fit into a broad range of Hezbollah’s global terror activities targeting innocents worldwide: “Phone records and other evidence gathered by four governments in a joint report detailed by the *Washington Post* link the Bangkok plan to Iranian plots against Israeli targets in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and India,” the report [said](#). “Other plots were thwarted in Kenya, South Africa, Cyprus and Bulgaria—and Texas, where an Iranian-American used car salesman tried to plot the assassination by bomb of Saudi Arabia’s ambassador in Washington D.C.” While the latest incident reinforces analysts’ growing concerns about Hezbollah’s international operations, Iran’s main subsidiary also continues to pose a mounting threat to Israeli national security.