



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 4, 2014

IRAN

Lawmakers Angry Over Iran's U.N. Selection

Lawmakers expressed outrage over Iran's choice for its next ambassador to the United Nations, [Reuters reported](#). Tehran announced on April 1 that it appointed Hamid Abutalebi, who has ties to the group that took over the U.S. embassy in Iran in 1979. "That really has got to be a serious question, as to whether or not the State Department gives ... a visa to him," said Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) expressed similar sentiments. "We shouldn't accept him," he said. "We should change our rules or laws if we have to so that somebody who is guilty of that kind of behavior should not be allowed in the United States of America."

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Lawmakers Express Support for U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation

Reps. Brad Sherman (D-CA), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Michael Grimm (R-NY) and Bill Johnson (R-OH) led 80 of their House colleagues in [a letter](#) that urges continued backing for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Program. The letter marks the most significant demonstration of support for the initiative in the history of the program. Originally created through the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, the program marries small dollar U.S. and Israeli grants to facilitate new private sector partnerships and leverage additional investments in the development of critical new energy technologies. The letter was addressed to Reps. Mike Simpson (R-ID) and Marcy Kaptur (R-OH), the chairman and ranking member respectively of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. "U.S.-Israel projects currently underway include advancements in energy production over water reservoirs, lowering energy consumption for water treatment, energy optimization for manufacturers," among other key areas of importance, the letter states. U.S.-Israel energy cooperation has emerged as a key area of growth for the bilateral relationship, including, but not limited to, renewable technologies, natural resource development, the geopolitics of energy flows, alternative fuels and the nexus between energy and water – an emerging area of critical importance in parts of the United States and around the world. The United States has provided \$9.7 million for the program to date, matched dollar-for-dollar by Israel, and leveraging nearly \$20 million in private sector cost-share, a number that is expected to grow.

Dempsey Visits Israel to Talk Regional Security

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey discussed security cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbors in a March 31 meeting with Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Benny Gantz, [Haaretz reported](#). The two leaders praised the relationship between the two countries. "The world is complicated enough without our speaking in parables to each other," Dempsey said. "This is a time for great clarity and candor, and we can always count on our Israeli partners to do that." Gantz echoed his sentiments. "There is no doubt that the relationship is as solid as ever," he said.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Kerry Urges Israel and Palestinians to Avert Breakdown in Peace Talks

[The New York Times](#) reports that Secretary of State John Kerry delivered a pointed warning on Thursday to Israeli and Palestinian leaders, saying they must "lead" if they want to preserve the chances for a historic Middle East peace. It was Mr. Kerry's first public comment since he canceled a trip on Wednesday to the West Bank to meet with Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority. The visit was canceled after the Palestinian leadership formally submitted applications to join 15 international conventions and treaties despite opposition from the United States and Israel, a move that reflected a deep crisis in the peace talks. But Mr. Kerry emphasized it was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Mr. Abbas who shouldered the ultimate responsibility for salvaging the peace talks. "In the end, my friends, as all of you know, you can push, you can nudge, but the parties themselves have to make fundamental decisions and compromises, the leaders have to lead, and they have to be able to see a moment when it is there," Mr. Kerry said. "There is an old saying, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink," he added. "Now is the time to drink and the leaders need to know that." The Maan News Agency quoted unnamed Palestinian sources Thursday who described the nine-hour meeting as a "fierce political battle" in which Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, announced that he represented "the U.N.-recognized State of Palestine," not the Palestinian Authority, "whose inputs and outputs are controlled by Israel."