

The week ending February 21, 2014

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

U.S. and Israeli Surgeons General Sign Agreement

The surgeons general of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) signed an [agreement](#) on to enhance collaboration between their two countries. The Air Force Medical Service and IDF Medical Corps will expand cooperation in aerospace medicine, training, academics and research. "The IDF is a valuable partner, and their work in the field of trauma care has been phenomenal," said USAF Lt. Gen. Dr. Thomas Travis. "Their extensive operational experience in treating trauma has been invaluable and contributed greatly to the U.S. Joint Theater Trauma System during the war in Afghanistan. I am very excited about the huge potential for collaboration in other areas of training and research, such as critical care evacuation, fatigue management, and aerospace medicine." IDF Brig. Gen. Dr. Yitshak Kreiss echoed his sentiments. "In my 25 years of experience in the IDF Medical Corps, the collaboration between us and the U.S. military is the deepest it has ever been," he said. "Our collaboration is based on true partnership, friendship, and most importantly, on shared values." The new agreement also involves a program where officers serve in exchange fellowships at partner research organizations.

IRAN

Iran and World Powers Agree on Framework for Talks

Iran and six world powers have agreed upon a timetable and framework for negotiating a comprehensive agreement to end the confrontation over Iran's nuclear program, the European Union's foreign policy chief and Iran's foreign minister [said](#) on Thursday. While details were vague and the two delegation leaders refused to take any questions at a closing news conference, they said that expert groups would meet early in March and the full delegations would meet here again on March 17, with the expectation that they will meet monthly. Officials refused to describe the topics for the expert meetings, but a senior American official said that "every issue of concern to us is on the table," from uranium enrichment and Iran's heavy-water reactor project to the country's alleged past nuclear military research and its ballistic missile program. All these issues, the official said, including clarifying the issue of Iran's past military research, are at least referenced in a joint plan of action agreed upon with Iran last November in Geneva.

Lawmakers Discourage French Business Trip to Iran

Reps. Steve Israel (D-NY) and Ted Poe (R-NY) sent a [letter](#) to French President Francois Hollande expressing their concern over a French business delegation to Iran. Representatives of over 100 French business leaders have visited Iran seeking to explore potential future business opportunities. Reps. Israel and Poe state in the letter that although Iran has been granted limited sanctions relief as a result of the Joint Plan of Action signed by Iran and the P5+1 in Geneva, "Now is not the time to explore

broader trade opportunities nor increase business ties with Iran." In a press release announcing the letter, Reps. Israel and Poe highlighted the need for continued pressure on Iran, "Time and time again, Iran has threatened the safety and security of both our nations, and as partners and friends, I would hope that France would take these threats seriously," Rep. Israel said. "Iran," added Rep. Poe, must know there are consequences for its actions. Keeping economic pressure on Iran is in the best interest of France, the United States and our allies." While hosting President Hollande in Washington earlier this month, President Obama vowed that the sanctions still in place against Iran will be vigorously enforced and that the United States will "come down on [sanctions violators] like a ton of bricks." Earlier this month, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) sent separate letters to EU Foreign Affairs Chief Catherine Ashton and several EU ambassadors that discourage business trips to Iran. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

SYRIA

Israeli premier meets wounded Syrians

[Associated Press](#) reported that Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with wounded Syrians treated at an Israeli hospital. Netanyahu visited a hospital in the Golan Heights where Israeli doctors treat Syrians wounded in the civil war raging across the border. Although Israel and Syria are enemies having fought several wars, Israel provides medical treatment and humanitarian aid for wounded Syrians that reach its border. Netanyahu's visit came as Iran and world powers are meeting in Vienna over a deal regarding Iran's nuclear program. "Israel is saving the lives of those who have been wounded in the daily slaughter that is being perpetrated in Syria," Netanyahu said. "This is the true face of Israel," he said. "The bad part is that Iran is arming those who are carrying out the slaughter. This is the true face of Iran. All of the children who have been injured, to say nothing of those who have been killed, were injured as a result of Iran's arming, financing and training the Assad regime in the massacres that it is perpetrating."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel-Jordan sign \$500 million natural gas deal

Israeli and Jordanian officials signed a deal Wednesday under which Israel will supply \$500 million worth of gas to the Hashemite kingdom from the Tamar natural gas field in the Mediterranean. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the supply is set to start in 2016, and to continue over a 15-year period. Ultimately, however, the deal may be expanded to a \$30-billion mammoth partnership, under which Israel would become the major supplier of Jordan's gas needs. It said that a key broker of the deal was Amos J. Hochstein, the U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for energy diplomacy, a child of Israeli parents, who made 14 visits to Jordan to help pave the way for the agreement. The TV report said Israel's President Shimon Peres also helped the deal along. Under the deal, Tamar will supply 66 billion cubic feet to Jordan's Arab Potash and its affiliate, Jordan Bromine, at their facilities near the Dead Sea, according to a statement issued by Texas-based Noble Energy, which owns 36 percent of the Tamar field. The Jordanians turned to Israel because their supply of natural gas from Egypt had been halted by repeated terrorist attacks on the gas pipeline from Egypt, the TV report said. Israel decided last year to export 40 percent of the country's offshore gas finds. Israel is also exploring possible gas exports to Turkey, the TV report said Wednesday, despite the current strained relations between Jerusalem and Ankara.