

The week ending February 7, 2014

IRAN

Clapper: Iran May Not Comply with Deal in the Future

National Intelligence Director James Clapper [said](#) before the House Intelligence Committee on Feb. 4, that even though Iran is currently in accordance with the P5+1 interim agreement, Tehran may not remain compliant in the future. Multiple U.S. agencies are monitoring Iran to see if it deviates from the interim deal. "That is not to say they won't take advantage of that which is not prohibited. They will," Clapper said. "And certainly, the combination of the more intrusive IAEA inspections and surveillance, coupled with what we are able to do, you know, we'll be watching for that." This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

IAEA awaits clarification on Iran military aspects

The International Atomic Energy Authority has said it is waiting for clarification this week on several technical issues relating to "military dimensions" to Iran's nuclear program, [Financial Times](#) reported. Speaking at the Munich security conference on Sunday, Yukiya Amano, IAEA chief, said a meeting had been scheduled with Iran for February 8 to discuss these outstanding, "more difficult" questions which the agency had left over from earlier negotiations. Among the outstanding questions is the production of polonium at a research reactor in Tehran. While the reactor is subject to full IAEA safeguard procedures, the small amount of polonium it is allowed to produce has both civilian and military uses. On the sidelines of the conference, Secretary of State John Kerry and his European counterparts met Javad Zarif, Iranian foreign minister, in a series of bilateral talks to discuss implementation of a final, complete deal that will supplant the interim agreement. Negotiations over a final deal will begin in Vienna on February 18, according to the P5+1's lead negotiator, Catherine Ashton, the E.U. foreign affairs chief. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

Iran: U.S. 'wishes won't come true' at nuclear talks

[Associated Press](#) reported, Iran's foreign minister said Wednesday that Washington's "wishes are unlikely to come true" in talks between the Islamic Republic and world powers over its nuclear program, the government's latest apparent attempt to deflect criticism from hard-line skeptics who say that President Hassan Rouhani will give up too much for too little in upcoming negotiations over a final comprehensive deal. Mohammad Javad Zarif indicated the U.S. wanted Iran to give up major parts of its nuclear program but said such demands won't be carried out. "America has wishes and those wishes are unlikely to come true and that's why they are negotiating with the Islamic Republic of Iran to achieve a solution based on realities," he told a news conference in Tehran.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Attacks from Gaza skyrocket in January

The first month of 2014 saw a drastic [increase in attacks](#) from Gaza-based terror groups. These groups fired three times as many rockets at Israel than an average month in 2013. These included 20 mortar and rocket attacks on Israel's southern communities, two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) set off on the Gaza-Israel border and two incidents where the IDF stopped militants attempting to launch rockets. Most of the attacks were carried out by fringe groups operating in Gaza who sought to undermine the Hamas regime, the security establishment determined. Moreover, Last week two Grad rockets were fired from the Sinai Peninsula at the southern city of Eilat. The Iron Dome missile defense system shot down at least one of them. An al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group that operates in the Sinai and Gaza, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, claimed responsibility. The group said in a statement that the rocket attack was prompted by "the cooperation between Egypt and Israel and the bombing of Gaza residents."

THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

Russia opposes a humanitarian resolution on Syria

Russia said Wednesday it [opposes](#) a new U.N. Security Council resolution on the humanitarian plight in Syria, an announcement that is likely to torpedo a Western and Arab-backed draft that would pressure the government and opposition to allow desperately needed aid into the country. Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin told a press briefing that "hard, pragmatic and purposeful work is necessary" to resolve specific humanitarian issues—not a council resolution which will almost certainly aim "to politicize the problem." Council diplomats said they expect to circulate a draft humanitarian resolution this week, following the failure of peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition to achieve any concrete results, especially on possible humanitarian aid convoys to besieged parts of the city of Homs. "We are against moving to a resolution now in the Security Council," Churkin told reporters at Russia's U.N. Mission. "We believe that it's a wrong move. It's not a good time to have any resolution discussed in the Security Council." Russia and China, which support the Syrian government, have vetoed three previous Western-backed resolutions that would have pressured President Bashar Assad to end the violence.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Peres, Guinness record holder

Israel President Shimon Peres, in addition to his many other accomplishments, is now an official Guinness World Record holder for delivering the largest-ever online civics course. He broke the previous record of 5,000 students by broadcasting a lecture to over 9,000 students in 215 high school classrooms throughout the country. Peres said "it was a privilege" to teach the students and field their questions. Israeli students "have to excel," he said, because "Israel is a small country and as young people you are in competition with young people all over the world." According to [The Times of Israel](#), Senior Vice President of Guinness World Records Marco Frigatti was in attendance to monitor the proceedings, and noted that not only Peres, but "all the students are Guinness World Record holders." Peres, a person "who has seen the country from its origins to today," was the perfect person to speak to the students and to demonstrate the technological innovation that makes such teaching possible, Frigatti said.