



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending July 18, 2014

ISRAEL & THE PALESTINIANS

Senate Panel Approves \$350 Million in Iron Dome Funding

According to [JTA](#), a key U.S. Senate panel approved a spending bill that would double President Obama's request for funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system. The defense subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved the \$620 million missile defense package for Israel, which includes \$350 million for Iron Dome, a short-range missile interceptor that is being credited with keeping Israelis safe during the current Israel-Gaza conflict. The funding was already in the pipeline and had been approved last month by the U.S. House of Representatives as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, the same overall \$549 billion spending bill approved by the Senate panel on Tuesday. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), the chairman of the subcommittee, indicated that Iron Dome's success during the recent hostilities helped spur support for the package, telling The Associated Press that the anti-missile system "works." Israel contributes its own funds to the missile cooperation programs, and the United States maintains a proprietary claim to the technologies.

There is No Moral Equivalency between Israel and Hamas

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) published a powerful analysis on the moral differences between Hamas and the Israeli Government during the recent fighting.

Amid the recent troubles between Israel and the Palestinians, many Americans and media commentators are drawing disturbing lines of parallelism between the two societies, asserting a false moral equivalency to the actions of each. In essence, the claim goes like this: "Both sides are fighting each other with similar degrees of violence; both treat each other equally badly; each side is equally to blame for the violence, and they just can't come together." That notion that there is a moral equivalency between the defensive and targeted actions that the rule-of-law-based Israel is compelled to take, and the proactive and indiscriminate actions that hate-based organizations like Hamas takes, is completely unfair, unfounded and infuriating to supporters of Israel — with good reason. In fact, there is no moral equivalence between the actions and reactions of Israel and Hamas and the Palestinian community to the violence that has occurred.

To read Senator Schumer's full analysis of the conflict, please click [here](#).

For the latest information on the situation in Israel please click [here](#).

IRAN

Obama Likely to Seek Additional Time for Nuclear Negotiations with Iran

President Obama said on Wednesday that he believed the United States had “a credible way forward” in its nuclear negotiations with Iran, and strongly suggested that after consultations with Congress, which has been threatening additional sanctions, he would seek an extension of the talks beyond Sunday’s deadline. “There are still some significant gaps between the international community and Iran,” he said in the White House press room, before announcing additional sanctions on Russia, “and we have more work to do.” According to [The New York Times](#), the Iranian proposal Mr. Kerry brought back to Washington from Vienna, where he spent three days haggling with his counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, is widely judged as insufficient by American officials and intelligence experts. They argue that it would not give the West the minimum Mr. Kerry said last year was acceptable: at least a year’s warning time that Iran was racing to produce enough bomb-grade fuel for a nuclear weapon — even if fabricating the weapon itself would take longer. There are many pathways to a bomb. Iran could manufacture it in a covert facility; so far, two such facilities have been discovered over the past dozen years, and American intelligence agencies have compiled a long list of “suspect sites” they would like to know more about. Because the United States has such a technological edge in intelligence gathering, and such a military capability to destroy Iran’s facilities, it has more risk tolerance than Israel or Saudi Arabia has. Moreover, administration officials argue that continuing the talks has a much greater likelihood of success than the other two options on the table: ramping up sanctions even more, in hopes Iran will be forced into deeper concessions, or taking military action. But Congress is less willing to accept any risk at all, if letters to the president from both the Senate and the House are any measure; they call for ironclad guarantees that Iran’s capabilities are broken forever. One such letter said nuclear concessions alone would not be enough for the House to lift sanctions: There had to be “permanent and verifiable termination” of missile programs and support for terrorism, subjects that are not even part of these negotiations.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israeli Lacrosse Team Competes Well with Grave Issues on its Mind

[The Denver Post](#) reports that Israeli forward Noach Miller is leading his team on quite a run at the world lacrosse championships, even if his mind is thousands of miles away. His squad, which was formed only four years ago, advanced to the quarterfinals with a 15-1 win over Germany on Tuesday. However, it's hard for him and his teammates to bask in the moment as loved ones back home deal with rocket attacks from Gaza. Soon after this tournament, some of the team members will join the Israeli Defense Forces and may be in the middle of the conflict. There are already several players who couldn't make the trip because they were either called up for the reserves or are going through basic training. He said the threat of rocket attacks is real on a normal day. "I'll paint a picture for you: With a lacrosse coach in the United States, a parent may come up and say, 'What's your plan if there's thunder?' "When we're coaching, we have parents come up to us and say, 'What are you going to do if there's a rocket attack?' "But you have to go on living your life — it's the Israeli way."