



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending June 27, 2014

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Obama expresses concern for missing Israeli teens

[JTA](#) reports that President Obama expressed “deep concern” about three missing Israeli teenagers during a meeting with Israeli President Shimon Peres and American Jewish leaders. “They expressed their deep concern and reiterated our support for efforts to find the teens,” National Security Council spokeswoman Bernadette Meehan said of her boss, National Security Adviser Susan Rice, and Obama after the White House meeting. In addition to Peres and Rice, also attending the meeting were the ambassadors of both countries and Ben Rhodes, a deputy national security adviser. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused the terrorist group Hamas of abducting the teens. Jewish leaders peppered the president with questions about nuclear talks in Iran and the deteriorating situation in Iraq, where a terrorist army is making gains against the government. Jewish organizations represented included leaders of the Reform, Orthodox and Conservative movements, as well as the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, J Street, the Israel Policy Forum, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Center for Middle East Peace.

House Panel Adopts Bill Targeting Finances for Terrorist Organization

AIPAC commends the House Foreign Affairs Committee for adopting critical legislation to cut off the terrorist group Hezbollah from the international financing system. [The Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act of 2014](#) (H.R. 4411) was authored by Representatives Mark Meadows (R-NC) and Brad Schneider (D-IL), along with House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY). A key provision of the bill would force international financial institutions to choose between doing business with Hezbollah or the United States. The measure would sanction foreign financial institutions that knowingly facilitate the activities of Hezbollah, including through the provision of significant financial services. Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed terrorist group, poses a direct threat to American and Israeli security, dominates the Lebanese government, fights for the Syrian Assad regime, and possesses an arsenal of more than 100,000 rockets. The group has killed more Americans than any terrorist group other than al-Qaeda, and has recently carried out or attempted to carry out attacks in Bulgaria, Thailand, Azerbaijan and elsewhere. AIPAC urges the full House to adopt this important legislation. A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate, (S. 2329) by Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Marco Rubio (R-FL).

IRAN

Obama to Peres: U.S. will protect Israel's security in Iran talks

The United States will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon, and will continue to remain steadfast on topics central to Israel's security in the nuclear negotiations, US President Barack Obama assured Israeli President Shimon Peres during a Wednesday afternoon meeting at the White House according to [The Times of Israel](#). Peres is on his final foreign trip before leaving office next month. Obama told Peres that there were still gaps between the sides in the P5+1 talks with Iran, which are being held in the hopes of reaching a permanent agreement with Tehran by July 20 to curb its nuclear program. Briefing Peres on the current state of the negotiations, Obama promised that the US position would not change on Iran's breakout potential or on key aspects of its technological development, and said that the US will not compromise on Israel's security. After the meeting, Peres told journalists that he hoped the final agreement with Iran would be similar to the agreement by which Syria was forced to part with its entire chemical weapons stockpile and the dismantling of its related infrastructure earlier this year. With such a deal in place, he said, Israel would consider supporting the removal of some of the sanctions against Tehran.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Israel takes aim at PA payments to Palestinian prisoners

According to [YNETNEWS](#), the Israeli Security Cabinet agreed Wednesday evening to look into policies meant to discourage payments by the Palestinian Authority (PA) to current and former Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, which Israel says encourages terrorism. Details of the payments were presented in an official government memo released Thursday, which accused the PA of using "fungible" foreign aid funds to provide a financial incentive for Palestinians to commit acts of terror. According to the memo, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails (including many convicted of terrorism) all receive a monthly stipend from the Ramallah government, in addition to other benefits that continue even after their release from prison. It was unclear however, how officials reached the conclusion that at least part of the money was taken from foreign aid. The government memo cited official PA budgetary reports, noting that \$75.5 million had been paid out in stipends to convicted terrorists and their families in 2012. Excluding the \$786 million that the PA received in foreign aid in the same year, their total yearly budget amounted to \$2.3 billion - more than enough to cover the stipends. Bayit Yehudi Chairman and Economic Minister Naftali Bennett suggested to Ynet on Wednesday that the funds in question came instead from taxes that Israel collects (estimated to be in the vicinity of \$100 million per month) and then passes on to the PA. The memo expressed outrage at the practice, saying that, "Providing financial support for terrorists not only violates basic morality, it encourages further terrorist outrages. For example, it may tempt young Palestinians to seek an answer to familial financial difficulties through the use of violence." According to Israel, Palestinian prisoners serving longer sentences are given larger stipends, amounting to as much as \$3,500 per month, while the average wage among workers in the West Bank remains a mere \$641 per month.