



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending March 7, 2014

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

U.S. House declares Israel a ‘major strategic partner’

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the United States-Israel Strategic Alliance and Security Act, which is aimed at further enhancing the two countries’ already strong defense relationship. [The Times of Israel](#) reported, the bill names Israel a “major strategic partner” of the U.S.—no other nation has the status—and includes measures that would expand cooperation on areas such as missile development, homeland security, energy and agriculture. The measure also calls for expanding the reserve of U.S. weapons stockpiled in Israel and asks the secretary of state to look into whether Israel has satisfied requirements to join the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, which would allow for unfettered travel between the countries. The final vote was 410-1, and the legislation now moves to the U.S. Senate, where a similar bill is already being formulated. The House bill would dramatically strengthen the relationship between the two allies as they work to confront new threats and challenges in the Middle East. This information is an update to the information contained in this week’s [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

IRAN

Netanyahu: Iran should face more pressure

Iran should face more intense pressure during international negotiations—and not be given further respite from sanctions—to force it to completely dismantle its nuclear program, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday. “You know how you get that agreement from Iran? Not by relieving pressure but by adding pressure,” Netanyahu said in a speech to the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which has advocated imposing new economic sanctions on Iran during international nuclear negotiations. According to [The Washington Post](#), Netanyahu warned against any long-term deal that would allow Iran to retain the ability to enrich uranium. Officials from the United States and their negotiating partners have indicated that enrichment is likely to be part of a final agreement that they say would prevent Iran from ever developing a nuclear weapon. “We must get rid of Iran’s centrifuges and its stockpiles of enriched uranium,” Netanyahu said. Netanyahu also praised Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry for their commitment to Israeli security. This information is an update to the information contained in this week’s [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Kerry defends diplomacy at AIPAC

[The Jerusalem Post](#) reported that Secretary of State John Kerry appealed trust and

compassion on peace with the Palestinian people in a forceful address to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on Monday night. "It is no mystery what the endgame really looks like," Kerry said. "We're at a point in history that requires the United States, as Israel's closest friend and the world's preeminent power, to help end this conflict once and for all." Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas believe a two-state solution will require the recognition of "two states for two peoples," he said. "We're not doing this on a whim and a prayer," he said. Only weeks after starting at the State Department, Kerry restarted peace talks for a defined nine-month period, after four years of silence between the two sides. That negotiating window will expire next month; the secretary hopes to publish an agreed-upon framework for the continuation of negotiations before then. In a meeting with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office on Monday afternoon, Netanyahu stated: "Israel has been doing its part, and I regret to say that the Palestinians haven't," Netanyahu said to Obama in front of the press. "The people of Israel know that it's the case," he said. "What we want is peace—not a piece of paper," he said. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

Israel Navy intercepts Gaza-bound Iranian rocket ship

The Israel Navy intercepted a ship early on Wednesday that Iran was using to smuggle dozens of long-range rockets to Gaza. The IDF's [Operation Discovery](#) took place in the Red Sea, 1,500 kilometers away from Israel and some 160 kilometers from Port Sudan. IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz oversaw the raid. Missile ships and navy commandos from the Flotilla 13 unit, backed by the air force, raided the Klos-C cargo ship, which was carrying Syrian-manufactured M-302 rockets/The ship's crew is in Israeli custody, and the navy is towing the vessel to Eilat, where it is expected to arrive in the coming days. The rockets originated in Syria, according to Military Intelligence assessments. Iran reportedly flew the rockets from Syria to an Iranian airfield, trucked them to the seaport of Bander Abbas, and shipped them to Iraq, where they were hidden in cement sacks. The ship then set sail for Port Sudan, near the Sudanese-Eritrean border, on a journey that was expected to last some 10 days. Had the shipment not been intercepted, the rockets could have been unloaded at Port Sudan and taken overland, through Egypt into Sinai, and through smuggling tunnels into the Gaza Strip. "This is the same known land route that the Iranians have been using to smuggle arms to Gaza," Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel is a nanotech nation

In the six years since nanotechnology was declared a national research priority, government agencies have invested \$107 million in the industry, says the Israel National Nanotechnology Initiative (INNI) in its first summary of the industry ahead of the Nano-Israel 2014 Conference in late March. In this six-year period, [206 nanotech start-ups](#) have been founded and 860 patent applications have been filed, of which 270 have been approved. There are also 830 joint projects between Israeli academic institutions and Israeli and foreign companies in the field. In addition, 101 world-class nanotech scientists have immigrated to Israel, joining university faculties, and there are 220 post-doctoral fellows, 750 doctoral students, and 850 M.Sc. students. In the past six years, more than 7,500 scientific papers have been published, of which 1,500 papers were based on inter-university research.