

The week ending October 10, 2014

ISRAEL & THE PALESTINIANS

Navy intercepts weapons-building material bound for Gaza as Hamas bids to rearm

The Israel Navy has intercepted multiple attempts to smuggle weapons manufacturing material into Gaza since the end of the war in August, a senior navy commander told [The Jerusalem Post](#) on Thursday. Hamas fires rockets into the sea every few days, as part of its weapons upgrade program. "They are doing experiments and checking their rockets. This is a part of their domestic weapons production. We did not doubt, at the end of the war, that their focus would be on building more weapons. We monitor every such launch, noting the quality of the rocket and its range," said Cmdr. Eli Soholitski, who has commanded the navy's Squadron 916 for two years. "We continue to see attempts to smuggle weapons or material to build them. The sea is a very convenient platform for smuggling. The terrorists still have one big smuggling tunnel, and it's called the Mediterranean," said Soholitski. "The activities of Squadron 916 did not begin with Operation Protective Edge. Most of the time, we are not in the headlines, but we are carrying out Sisyphean tasks around the clock, preventing arms transfers and blocking elements that can threaten our security. It's a heavy workload." "Weapons on board boats heading for Gaza have been intercepted thanks to the controllers. They spotted fishing vessels carrying arms on radar, or vessels carrying raw material for rockets," the commander said. "We have a lot of work in the coming years. I'm happy that I've been given the opportunity to do this," he said.

IRAN

Iran President: Differences Remain on Nuclear Deal

The Iranian president has acknowledged that Tehran and world powers agree on the principles of a final deal on Iran's nuclear program but that differences remain on the "details" that still need to be negotiated, reports [The Associated Press](#). The remarks by President Hassan Rouhani came as the two sides face a Nov. 24 deadline in ongoing nuclear negotiations to reach a comprehensive deal that would prevent Iran from making an atomic weapon while at the same time easing economic sanctions on Tehran for curbs on its nuclear program. Failure to conclude the deal could mean that the whole negotiating process, years in the making, falls apart. Rouhani told Iranian lawmakers during a meeting on Tuesday night that Iran and the six-nation group — the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany — have come a long way in sorting out major issues but that they still differ over issues such as "quantity," the Iranian state TV reported. "We have reached understanding on part of the issues ... and part of it (the deal) remains to be negotiated," Rouhani was quoted as saying. "The only differences (that remain) are about details and quantity," Rouhani said without elaborating. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, European Union negotiator Catherine

Ashton and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will gather in Vienna next week, diplomats say. Another negotiating round is expected shortly after to include Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia. There are concerns that too many concessions to Tehran would leave Iran on the threshold of developing nuclear weapons.

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Defense giant Lockheed to draw on Hebrew U innovations

U.S. defense firm Lockheed Martin tightened its relationship with Israel Monday with the signing of a long-term deal with the Yissum Research Development Company, the technology transfer company of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. [The Times of Israel](#) reports that under the deal, the two will sponsor and facilitate joint research at Hebrew U and at Lockheed-Martin research labs, one of which is located in Beersheba. The collaboration will focus on basic and applicable scientific research in areas such as quantum information sciences and material sciences, as well as in other areas of joint interest, both parties said. Last May, Lockheed Martin, EMC Israel, and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba signed a deal to work together to ferret out promising Israeli cyber-security start-ups, and then help them develop their technology into commercial products. Under the deal, the companies will invest together and fund start-ups, which will work at EMC's R&D facilities in the Advanced Technologies Park in Beersheba. In an interview with The Times of Israel, Chandra McMahon, senior VP for commercial markets, Lockheed Martin IS&GS said that the company "has nearly \$9 billion in sales annually, and we support our clients in the private sector, government, and defense arena. All of them use our systems and need cyber-security solutions, which we help them to find and maintain. And of course, as a leading defense contractor, we ourselves are prime targets for hackers. We need good cyber technologies to protect our customers, and Israel is a great place for that."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

LeBron James expressed interest in visiting Israel prior to the Cleveland Cavaliers' game against Maccabi Tel Aviv

Speaking before the Cleveland Cavaliers' preseason debut Sunday night against Maccabi Tel Aviv, [Cleveland.com](#) reported, LeBron James said "I want to look forward to going to" Israel someday. Israeli reporters, surrounding James by his locker in the corner of the team dressing room, tried their best to get a sound bite from James they could send halfway across the globe. James also told Israeli reporters that he had not been to the country but "I want to look forward to going there if I get an opportunity to." Israeli media asked James several questions about Cavaliers coach David Blatt, who until last season was Maccabi's coach for six years. After answer a few of the questions, James said: "You guys know the new coach more than I do. I've only been with him for a couple weeks." After Blatt's pregame press conference with reporters, he spoke to Israeli media in Hebrew.