

The week ending January 10, 2014

IRAN

Iran sanctions bill gains support in the Senate

The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act—a bill that would increase new sanctions on Iran if Tehran either violates the interim agreement or fails to reach a final comprehensive deal—has [gained support](#) since the legislation was introduced on December 19. As of Thursday, The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act is supported by at least 54 senators in the 100-member chamber. "Expect that number to keep growing over [the] next couple of days as folks who were out of town...get back in," an aide said. The bill was introduced by Robert Menendez (D-NJ), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Mark Kirk (R-IL). While the bill has gained support, it remains uncertain if backers can put together the two-thirds majority in the Senate needed to override a veto by President Barack Obama. Since 2012, U.S. and European sanctions have cut Iran's oil sales by more than 1 million barrels per day, costing the country billions of dollars a month and driving up inflation. This information is an update to the information contained in this week's [Sermon Tidbits](#). To subscribe to Sermon Tidbits, click [here](#).

THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Arrow 3 Interceptor Missile Successfully Tested

The U.S. and Israeli militaries successfully tested the Arrow 3 interceptor missile on Jan. 3, [The Times of Israel](#) reported. This was the second practice exercise for Arrow 3, which provides another layer of defense against potential incoming nuclear missiles. "The successful test is a major milestone in the development of the Arrow-3 Weapon System and provides confidence in future Israeli capabilities to defeat the developing ballistic missile threat," the U.S. Missile Defense Agency said in a statement. Israel Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon addressed the IDF's successful test flight of the Arrow 3 interceptor missile, which was conducted in a joint operation by the Israel Missile Defense Organization and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, and said that the missile would prove a major asset to Israeli society. "The development of such systems will allow the state of Israel to maintain a normal life in the face of major threats, and will help the IDF to win any battle, if required, quickly and efficiently." Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also commented on the launch, saying Israel's development of sophisticated weapons systems for its defense would continue.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Israeli Official Points to 'Incitement' by Palestinians

Israeli officials have highlighted dozens of examples of negative statements about Israel and Jews in official Palestinian Authority media and textbooks. According to [The New York Times](#), these examples in a new presentation include Adolf Hitler quoted on the

websites of Palestinian Authority schools; a young girl appearing on Palestinian television, describing Jews as “barbaric monkeys, wretched pigs” and the “murderers of Muhammad,” the Islamic prophet and maps on the Facebook page of the Palestinian presidential guards that do not show Israel. Additionally, PA President Mahmoud Abbas embraced released Palestinian prisoners who killed Israelis as “heroes.” The presentation delivered by Yuval Steinitz, Israel’s minister of strategic affairs, is part of an intensifying campaign in which he, Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others have emphasized what they call “incitement” as a prime obstacle to peace.

SYRIA

First Chemical Weapons Shipment Leaves Syria

The first batch of lethal chemicals from Syria's arms program was loaded onto a Danish ship, officials said Tuesday, with most of the chemicals set to be transferred to an American vessel to be neutralized. According to [The Wall Street Journal](#), the development was considered a notable step forward after the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, or OPCW, raised alarm last month by saying it would miss its Dec. 31 deadline for their removal. "Today's news is extremely good," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, which helps educate the public on disarmament issues. "It shows that the Syrians are capable of moving the material on the road or roads north of Lebanon to the port, apparently without incident." The ship, escorted and protected by vessels from several nations, was headed for international waters, where it will wait to return for more batches of chemicals at Syria's main port of Latakia when they are ready, officials said. The international mission's leaders said they were confident that despite the obstacles they would meet a June 30 deadline for destroying all the chemicals from Syria's program, including several hundred tons of less-toxic materials.

Jihadists battle back in north Syria: activists

[The Daily Star](#) reported that a car bombing in the Aleppo province killed at least nine people on Wednesday, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Jihadists battling rebels in northern Syria opened in the deadly conflict gripping the country. The fighting comes a day after the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria was expelled from Aleppo city by rebels fighting to topple President Bashar al-Assad. Similar overnight attacks took place in Hreitan and Jarabulus in Aleppo province, and in Mayadeen in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

13 Ways We Were Inspired and Amazed By Israel In 2013

From the first Ethiopian-Israeli to be crowned Miss Israel to Israel’s aid teams to the Philippines, Israel inspired and amazed the world in 2013. Some shining moments included, President Shimon Peres’ 90th birthday celebration, Quentin Tarantino’s endorsement for Indie Israeli film, Big Bad Wolves, the world’s biggest Harlem Shake in Tel Aviv and an Israeli restaurant that gave customers a 50 percent discount if they kept their cell phones off the table. Israel also made it into the Guinness World Record for hair donation to cancer patients. As for the Startup Nation, 2013 will be remembered for Google’s \$1.03 billion acquisition of Waze and the Cornell-Technion partnership for a new NYC campus. Israeli researched also discovered a drug called FoamOtic that saved an endangered Sumatran Tiger. These examples, highlighted on [Buzzfeed](#), are just some of the many inspirational stories that happened in 2013 in Israel.