



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 24, 2015

## U. S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **Fast Track Bill Targets Anti-Israel "BDS" Activities**

AIPAC praises the Senate Finance Committee for unanimously including an amendment targeting harmful anti-Israel trade and commercial practices in the "Fast Track" Trade Promotion Authority bill yesterday. AIPAC applauds the amendment's authors, Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Rob Portman (R-OH), and expresses appreciation to Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Ranking Democrat Ron Wyden (D-OR), who backed this key initiative.

The amendment addresses efforts by foreign governments to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel. Utilizing well-established congressional tools, the provision directs that one of the principal American objectives in upcoming trade negotiations will be to discourage trading partners from taking actions that would limit U.S.-Israel commerce. The amendment also urges the U.S. Trade Representative to seek to eliminate politically-motivated economic attacks on Israel by America's free trade partners.

In considering another measure, the customs enforcement bill, the Finance Committee included additional important provisions to further combat BDS activities. The Committee established new requirements for administration reporting and disclosure by foreign companies of their participation in political boycotts of Israel.

Companion legislation to the anti-BDS amendment, H.R. 825, has been introduced in the House by Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA).

## IRAN

### **Iran's Powerful Guard Rejects Inspection of Military Sites**

International nuclear inspectors will be barred from all Iranian military sites under any deal with world powers, a senior commander in the Revolutionary Guard said Sunday, setting up a possible standoff as negotiators try to reach a final deal. According to [The Associated Press](#), Gen. Hossein Salami, the Guard's deputy leader, told Iranian state television that allowing foreign inspection of military sites is tantamount to "selling out," raising the stakes as talks between Iran and the six-nation group are to resume April 22 in Vienna. "They will not even be permitted to inspect the most normal military site in their dreams." Meanwhile Sunday, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei described such Western claims about its nuclear program a "myth." "Americans, Europeans and some apple polishers fabricated the myth of nuclear weapons to say that the Islamic Republic was a threat. No. The threat is America itself," he told military commanders Sunday. Khamenei's remarks are seen as an effort by Iran to toughen its position ahead of the next round of talks.

### **Indications of Troubling Concessions to Iran**

Last week, the Obama administration indicated a willingness to consider dramatic immediate sanctions relief if Iran signs a final nuclear agreement. This marks another in

a series of troubling concessions. The current administration positions will provide Iran with extensive and rapid sanctions relief, while enabling it to retain virtually its entire nuclear infrastructure. This departs significantly from previously outlined requirements for a good agreement. The administration apparently intends to rely on international monitoring and the willingness of future leaders to take rapid concerted action. In effect, this posture would grant Iran the status of a nuclear threshold state. Congress must scrutinize any final agreement to make sure that it will foreclose all paths to a nuclear weapon. For example, On October 22, 2012 President Barack Obama stated, "The deal we'll accept is they end their nuclear program. It's very straightforward." Yet, the announced political framework announced early this month by the P5+1 indicated that Iran will be allowed to continue its nuclear program, including uranium enrichment, research on advanced centrifuges and heavy water activity.

[Please click here to read more Indications of Troubling Concessions to Iran.](#)

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **Israel's Population: 8.345 million**

According to [Israel21c](#), Israel's population stands at 8,345,000, according to the annual Independence Day report by the Central Bureau of Statistics. When Israel was founded in 1948, the population was just 806,000. The report shows a two percent population growth over last year's data, citing 176,000 Israeli babies born and 32,000 new immigrants to Israel. Israel's Jewish population numbers 6,251,000 (74.9%). The report says there are 1,730,000 Arabs (20.7%) and 364,000 (4.4%) others (Christians, non-Arabs and other religions). In 1948, just 35% of Israelis were sabras while today, 75% of Israelis are born in the country. The report also highlights the urbanization over the years. In 1948, Tel Aviv-Yafo was the country's only city with a population exceeding 100,000. Today, Israel has 14 cities answering those criteria. Of those, six cities boast a population of more than 200,000—Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Haifa, Ashdod, Rishon Lezion, and Petah Tikva. The Ministry of Economy also published data on the occasion of Israel's 67<sup>th</sup> Independence Day, reporting that Israeli exports from industry (excluding diamonds) have soared from \$5 million in 1948 to \$47 billion. The number of production plants has also jumped since the State's establishment from around 2,300 factories in 1948 to 124,000 today. "On Israel's 67th Independence Day we need to continue encouraging the purchase of Israeli goods, while encouraging local industry and its employees, and increasing the State's economic and social resilience," said Director of the Histadrut's Trade Union Division and Chairman of the Blue and White Division, Einav Kabala. "The Histadrut views the preservation and encouragement of Israeli industry in general as being of great importance, with even more significance in the periphery, and we will continue working to strengthen local industry and its workers and reduce unemployment, while creating new openings in the workforce."