



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending December 25, 2015

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Congress Passes Omnibus Bill with Key Pro-Israel Provisions

On December 18, Congress passed a \$1.1 trillion omnibus appropriations bill for the 2016 fiscal year, which contains essential U.S. assistance to Israel. An omnibus is a catch all bill that wraps multiple initiatives into one piece of legislation. In this case, the bill provides funding for all U.S. government agencies and programs, including foreign aid. Expressing strong bipartisan support for Israel, Congress allocated \$3.1 billion in security assistance to the Jewish-state, \$487.6 million for U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense programs, \$40 million for a new U.S.-Israel anti-tunneling initiative and \$2 million for U.S.-Israel cooperative energy programs. The passage of \$3.1 billion in security assistance to Israel fulfills the eighth year of a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding between the two nations. The bill also renewed the Department of Defense's authority to replenish stockpiles in Israel by an additional \$200 million annually for two years, and extended Israel's ability to use existing U.S. loan guarantees for an additional four years. By providing Israel with strong U.S. security assistance, America ensures that the Jewish state maintains a robust qualitative military edge (QME) over its adversaries. The legislation also includes restrictions on aid to the Palestinians, enforcement of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and other funding initiatives throughout the Middle East. The omnibus bill passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 316-113 and in the Senate 65-33.

David's Sling missile shield to be deployed in 2016

Israel plans to deploy its new medium-range missile interceptor David's Sling by mid-2016 after the U.S.-backed system passed final trials, defense officials said on Monday. According to [Reuters](#), David's Sling is designed to shoot down rockets held by Israeli antagonists such as Lebanon's Hezbollah guerrillas with ranges of 100 to 200 km (63-125 miles), as well as cruise missiles and drones. David's Sling, along with the Iron Dome short-range rocket interceptor and the Arrow ballistic missile interceptor, both already operational, will form a multi-level shield that the Israelis are developing with Washington's help as a bulwark against Iran and its allies on the Israeli border. The three systems incorporate a network of radar-guided interceptors designed to shoot down everything from the low-flying, Katyusha-style rockets of Hezbollah and Palestinian guerrillas to the ballistic Shehab and Scud missiles of Iran and Syria. David's Sling is being manufactured jointly by Israel's state-owned Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd and U.S. firm Raytheon Co. On December 10, Israel and the United States said they held a successful interception test for the upgraded Arrow 3, which hit a target in space.

IRAN

Members of Congress: Stronger U.S. Response Needed After Iranian Ballistic Missile Tests

U.S. officials have confirmed that Iran tested a medium-range ballistic missile on November 21—the second such test since the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and a violation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions 1929 and 2231. Members of Congress from both parties have called on the United States for a stronger response to Iran’s repeated transgressions. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) urged the administration to act on the latest illicit ballistic missile test, [stating](#) that the United States “cannot allow Iran’s threatening activities to continue without consequence.” Reps. Ted Deutch (D-FL) and Joseph Kennedy (D-MA) sent a [joint letter](#) to President Obama urging him “...to call on the [U.N.] Security Council to condemn this violation and to sanction any entity involved in this illegal launch.” Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-TN) [condemned](#) the lack of a U.S. response, stating “the administration has the authority to penalize foreign individuals who engage in proliferation-related activities like ballistic missile launches. They have used that authority in the past, and should do so again.” On December 8, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) [spoke](#) on the Senate floor about the dangers of delivering a weak response to the recent ballistic missile tests. "What has happened as a result of Iran violating the U.N. Security Council resolutions as it relates to missile testing? Absolutely nothing," he said. "Something is wrong because the silence is so deafening."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

First Israeli University Launched in China

[Israel21c](#) reports that The Technion-Israel Institute of Technology broke ground for the Guangdong Technion Israel Institute of Technology (GTIIT) in Shantou, on December 16. Due to open in 2016, it is expected eventually to accommodate 4,000 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate students in engineering, science and life science. Leading the ceremony were former Israeli President Shimon Peres, Hong Kong business leader and philanthropist Li Ka-shing, Technion President Peretz Lavie, GTIIT Chancellor Li Jiange; Technion Distinguished Professor and Nobel Laureate Aaron Ciechanover, GTIIT vice chancellor; and Ofir Akunis, Israel’s minister of science, technology and space. According to a statement from the two institutes, “GTIIT will create not just a new academic facility, but a new era of cooperative research between Israel and China. For the Chinese, the GTIIT brings the Technion’s expertise on creating a topnotch technical institute, as well as a stimulating dose of Israeli-style entrepreneurialism on a strategic level.” Lavie said, “The combination of the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of Israel and the unbelievable scale and resources of China will result in a great partnership. Together we will create a major research institute that will help not only China and Israel, but also mankind in general.” Peres noted that China is one of Israel’s major partners in technology and high-tech, with more than 1,000 Israeli companies active in China.