

The week ending February 6, 2015

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

House Committee Highlights Concerns over Recent Hezbollah Attacks on Israel

On Feb. 2, members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee wrote a letter to United Nations (U.N.) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressing dismay over Hezbollah's violence in Israel. The bipartisan letter, spearheaded by Reps. Grace Meng (D-NY) and Mark Meadows (R-NC), calls upon U.N. action regarding the Iranian backed terror organization's recent attacks that resulted in the death of at least two members of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). "As Members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, we are writing to express our deep concern over Hezbollah's attack in Israel last week. Hezbollah terrorists fired anti-tank missiles into Israel...The violence in the area caused by Hezbollah is horrific, and it results from the failure of the United Nations (U.N.) to enforce Security Resolutions 1559 and 1701." According to the letter, Hezbollah continues to consistently disregard key United Nations (U.N.) Security Resolutions to illegally progress its military agenda. Hezbollah's activity directly violated Resolutions 1559 and 1701, which called for the disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militia and prohibited the sales of arms to Lebanon from outside bodies. "This slide to violence must be stopped, and the international community must fully enforce these critically important U.N. Security Resolutions," the letter declared. "It is incumbent upon the U.N. and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to ensure that Hezbollah, a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel and its allies, does not continue to rearm and initiate violence against Israel." The letter also highlights recent reports that Iran has supplied new advanced "Fateh" missiles to the terrorist organizations. Sources deem that Hezbollah could have 100,000 missiles and rockets in its possession by next year. According to Fars, Iran's semi-official news agency, the "Fateh" missiles have a range of 250-350 Kilometers and capable of carrying a 500kg warhead. "Both the quantity and quality of missiles possessed by Hezbollah could threaten to overwhelm Israel's missile defense system, precipitating a swift reaction to neutralize the missile threat, and causing significant casualties on both sides," the members of Congress wrote. "The cost of continued inaction on this issue will be catastrophic."

IRAN

Iranian fuel oil exports trade skirts sanctions

Iran is sidestepping Western sanctions and managing to sell hundreds of thousands of tons of fuel oil every month through companies based in the U.S.-allied United Arab Emirates, trading sources told [Reuters](#). The U.S. and EU sanctions that came into force in 2012 prohibit the import, purchase and transport of Iranian petroleum products to pressure Tehran to halt its disputed nuclear program. Washington has also pressed its allies around the world to clamp down on the shipping of Iranian oil products. But Tehran

has been using innovative methods to circumvent the restrictions, several Middle East-based trading sources said. They include tankers switching off their tracking systems, ship-to-ship transfers, discharging and loading at remote ports, blending Iranian products with fuels from another source to alter the shipment's physical specification and selling them with Iraqi-origin documents, the sources said. Iran is keen for any extra income as sanctions have halved its crude exports - its main source of revenue - to just over 1 million barrels per day, dealing a major blow to its economy. The sanctions target the financing and shipping insurance needed to buy and transport Iranian cargoes, making it more difficult for would-be customers to trade with Iran. But one trading source said Iranian fuel oil was still flowing to the UAE: "Iranian fuel oil has been in the market in the UAE and everybody knows about it." U.S. Treasury spokeswoman Hagar Chemali said: "We do not comment on specific cases, but investigate and pursue sanctions evasion vigorously, including through work with foreign authorities."

GREATER MIDDLE EAST

After Jordanian pilot's death, king signals he will escalate fight against Islamic State

According to [The Washington Post](#), Jordan's King Abdullah II vowed Wednesday that his military forces would hit Islamic State militants with "relentless" strikes upon "their own homes," an escalation that could place Jordan in the middle of the Syrian civil war. The king huddled with his security cabinet and top generals Wednesday just hours after Jordan hanged two convicted terrorists in retaliation against the Islamic State, which posted a video Tuesday of its fighters burning alive a captured Jordanian pilot in a cage. The immolation prompted harsh condemnation from leaders across the Middle East and in the United States, with the White House speaking of Jordan's "strength and commitment" to the international coalition against the Islamic State "in the face of this barbaric act."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israelis to dedicate largest solar field in East Africa

A company with Israeli ties will dedicate East Africa's first large-scale solar field in Rwanda on Thursday, which will bring power to 15,000 homes, reports [The Times of Israel](#). Gigawatt Global will officially dedicate the 28,360-panel solar field, built in the shape of the continent of Africa, on land owned by the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village, a kibbutz-style orphanage for victims of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. "The genesis of the idea to build in Rwanda came from Anne Heyman, [founder of the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village], an amazing individual who tragically passed away a year ago," said Yosef Abramowitz, president of Gigawatt Global, said in a phone conference before departing for Rwanda earlier this week. "She was looking for creative, value-based revenue generation models to help support the youth village." "She saw what the sister company in Israel had done, and asked to replicate it at the Shalom youth village," Abramowitz said. Abramowitz is a pioneer in the Israeli solar energy industry, and, with the Arava Power Company, he built the largest solar field in Israel at Kibbutz Ketura. "Energy drives economic development and it drives education and healthcare," said Abramowitz. "That's why the US government put so much emphasis on energy. Six out of the ten fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. We believe that lifting people out of poverty with green energy is going to be one of big success stories of next few years."