

The week ending January 2, 2015

## ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

### **Palestinian-backed resolution fails at U.N. Security Council**

The U.N. Security Council on Tuesday rejected a resolution that would have called for Israelis and Palestinians to strike a peace deal within a year and for Israel to withdraw to its 1967 borders within three years—a blow to Palestinians seeking to increase pressure on the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, reports [The Washington Post](#). The resolution fell one vote short of the nine necessary for passage, sparing the Obama administration, which opposed the measure, the need to wield its veto power on the council. After the vote, Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the administration's opposition to the resolution stemmed from its belief that peace will come through a negotiated agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, not through a "staged confrontation." Israeli officials said passage of the resolution would have exacerbated the situation in the region. Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman told reporters before the vote that Israel considered the resolution a unilateral step by the Palestinians. "I believe this is a futile step and, apart from reducing the chances of reaching a comprehensive peace agreement, this will achieve nothing," he said. State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke called the measure "the wrong resolution at the wrong time," making an eventual two-state solution and peace more elusive.

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **Graham to Netanyahu: 'America Has Your Back'**

On his recent trip to the Holy Land, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) expressed the United States' unwavering support for Israel during a joint conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "I wanted to come here in the most desperate way before the new Congress reconvenes, to let you and the people of Israel know that the United States Congress, above all entities in America, has your back in a very bipartisan way," said Graham. "You can count on the United States Congress, Republican and Democrat, to be there for you when you need us the most." Highlighting the importance of preventing Iran from attaining a nuclear weapons capability, Graham stated that Congress will seek Netanyahu's advice regarding sanctions on Tehran. "I'm here to tell you, Mr. Prime Minister, that the Congress will follow your lead," said Graham. "In January of next year, there will be a vote on the Kirk-Menendez bill, bipartisan sanction legislation that says, if Iran walks away from the table, sanctions will be re-imposed; if Iran cheats regarding any deal that we enter to the Iranians, sanctions will be re-imposed. It is important to let the Iranians know that from an American point of view, sanctions are alive and well." Graham also emphasized Congress' recent bipartisan resolutions that reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas' terrorism. "I'd like to let the people of Israel know, during the recent conflict with Hamas, there were resolutions sponsored by Republicans and Democrats that passed unanimously, saying

there is no moral equivalent between the tactics of Hamas and the IDF...The Congress clearly sees the difference between the tactics of Hamas and the democracy called Israel, and the international community seems to be a bit confused,” said Graham. Netanyahu thanked Graham for his continued support for Israel stating, “You’re a frequent and welcome visitor, and I want to thank you for all the work that you have been doing for the U.S.-Israel strategic partnership and for the support for Iron Dome which has saved many lives. You’ve been a stalwart champion of our relationship and just indefatigable and consistent supporter of the State of Israel, and I thank you for that.”

## **Senators Ask Treasury to Investigate Upcoming London Conference**

A group of Democratic senators sent a letter to Secretary of Treasury Jack Lew expressing concern over an upcoming London conference where officials from the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) plan to present oil and energy projects to foreign investors. Signed by Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Robert Casey (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Charles Schumer (D-NY), the Dec. 22 letter urges “the Treasury Department to act quickly to investigate this matter and take enforcement actions if needed before the conference.” The Treasury Department designated NIOC as an affiliate of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in 2012. The letter notes that “the IRGC and its affiliates have been sanctioned multiple times for their role in Iran’s nuclear program, support for terrorism, egregious human rights abuses, and support for the Assad regime in Syria.” London-based energy company CWC Group Ltd. organized the conference. The senators stated, “We believe it is possible that the CWC Group’s sponsorship of this conference could constitute material support, possibly placing it in violation of the sanctions policy and we urge you to investigate any possible breach.” “As we continue our diplomatic efforts, it is vitally important that existing U.S. sanctions continue to be strictly enforced. We look forward to your response to this request,” they added.

## **ISRAEL IN THE NEWS**

### **14-year-old Israeli wins revered junior tennis tournament**

According to [Ynet News](#), Israeli tennis player Yshai Oliel made history on Tuesday night after winning the Junior Orange Bowl tennis tournament in Florida for tennis players under the age of 14—a revered tournament considered the unofficial world championships. Oliel beat his Taiwanese opponent Chen-Jui Ho 7-5, 7-5 in the finals—the 9th player in tennis history to win the tournament twice—Oliel won 1st place in the under age 12 division two years ago. Oliel, who is considered one of the most promising tennis players in Israel today, is a resident of Ramla, a mixed Arab-Jewish city in central Israel. The young Israeli tennis player was added to an impressive list of past players who had won both the under 12 and under 14 division championships consecutively. Only eight other tennis players have won both championships consecutively during their youth, predicting a promising future for the young Israeli teen tennis player.