

The week ending January 23, 2015

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Palestinian Stabs Up to a Dozen Israelis in Rush-Hour Attack in Tel Aviv

According to [The New York Times](#), a Palestinian man stabbed and wounded up to a dozen Israelis as he rampaged through a bus in central Tel Aviv during the Wednesday morning rush hour and then fled through nearby streets, the police said. He was shot and wounded by security forces as he tried to escape. It was unclear whether all the stabbings took place on the bus. At least 15 Israelis were hospitalized, including several who were reported to be in serious condition. The assailant, a Palestinian man in his early 20s from the West Bank city of Tulkarm, was being treated in a hospital and questioned, the police said. The assailant, identified by the police as Hamza Muhammad Hassan Matrouk, 23, boarded a bus in Tel Aviv around 7:30 a.m. and traveled several stops as more passengers boarded. He first attacked the driver, who resisted, said Yehuda Dahan, the district police chief. The man then stabbed a number of passengers before they managed to open the doors of the bus and escape. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday said that Hamas, Mr. Abbas's "partners in a unity government, hastened to commend this attack." Referring to Mr. Abbas by his popular name, Mr. Netanyahu added, "Abu Mazen is responsible for both the incitement and the dangerous move at the I.C.C. in The Hague."

IRAN

Editorial: Iran doesn't hesitate to use a human pawn as nuclear negotiations go on

As negotiations with Iran on its nuclear program resumed last week, President Obama reiterated his opposition to new sanctions legislation. The legislation, which has strong bipartisan support, could "undermine the negotiations" and isolate the United States from its allies, Mr. Obama said Friday. "Just hold your fire," he urged Congress, vowing to veto the bill if it reached him. [The Washington Post Editorial Board](#) notes that, the logic of that argument has always been a little hard to follow, since the measure the Senate is likely to take up, sponsored by Democrat Robert Menendez (N.J.) and Republican Mark Kirk (I.L.), would mandate new sanctions only if Iran failed to accept an agreement by the June 30 deadline established in the ongoing talks. Common sense suggests the certain prospect of more punishment for an already-damaged economy would make the regime of Ali Khamenei more rather than less likely to offer the concessions necessary for a deal. We gave Mr. Obama's argument the benefit of the doubt when Congress first considered the legislation more than a year ago. But the president's logic has been undercut by the manifest willingness of the Iranians to adopt their own pressure tactics—including steps that are considerably more noxious than the threat of future sanctions. On the day before talks resumed between Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif last Wednesday, Tehran announced that construction has begun on two new nuclear reactors. The State Department was quick to explain that Iran is not barred by United Nations resolutions or an interim nuclear agreement from building new reactors. Yet by announcing the construction, the regime is making clear its intention to continue expanding, rather than dismantling, its nuclear infrastructure. It's also demonstrating that it's not constrained from taking provocative steps during the course of the negotiations—even as the Obama administration argues that countervailing pressure would somehow be a deal breaker. If tactics such as that do not ruin the chance of an agreement, then neither should action by Congress.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

12 Israeli Technologies Changing the Lives of the Disabled in 2015

We're used to talking about the Israeli tech ecosystem as the Startup Nation, focusing on the young country's ability to quickly launch and scale innovative ideas and build companies from the ground up. According to [Forbes](#), Tech giants like Facebook, Google, and Apple understand the role the Startup Nation plays globally and they routinely acquire startups here. What's sometimes lost in the cool-whiz-bang-awesomeness of some of the startups coming out of Israel is the fact that some of these companies are dramatically changing lives. Israel has an entire tech sector dedicated to enabling the disabled. The impact Israeli tech has on people is almost biblical in nature: whether it's helping quadriplegics to walk (and look their loved ones directly in the eyes or use their hands or move more efficiently) or the deaf to hear and the vision-impaired to see, Israel is a leading medical innovator. The Sesame Phone, developed by a quadriplegic IDF veteran and a young game developer, the Sesame Phone is the first completely touch-free smartphone. People who lack use of their hands can now make calls, send emails and engage in social media using voice activation and groundbreaking head tracking technology. The company won the Verizon Powerful Answers Award in 2014 for its game-changing mobile solution that can give 150,000 children in the U.S. without the use of their hands the opportunity to access educational opportunities previously inaccessible to them. The smartphone is available for pre-order and will ship in March of 2015. Oded Ben Dov, CEO and Co-Founder of Sesame Enable, the company behind the phone, said, "Despite the incredible advancements in technology today, so few are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The Sesame Phone is helping to create equality through technology, by opening the doors of the smartphone revolution to those who have until now been shut out: quadriplegics, people with spinal cord injuries, ALS, Cerebral Palsy, severe Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, severe arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other disabilities that limit the use of the hands and arms. This population stands to benefit the most from the independence of the smartphone, and now they can finally have access to that independence." Israel has developed a strong reputation for its ability to innovate. That's been true in the pure commercial sense as the country has produced leading technologies powering your car, your mobile phone, and your computer. But, that same innovative spirit is also being applied to real-world problems, attempting to repair disabilities in sight, movement, and hearing. Who knows, in a few years, the Startup Nation may morph into the Healing Nation.