



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending June 26, 2015

IRAN

Former Obama Advisors Caution Iran Nuclear Deal 'May Fall Short' of Requirements

On June 24, five former Obama administration advisors joined a larger group of foreign policy experts in a letter to the president that raises concerns regarding the looming nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1. Stating the deal “may fall short of meeting the administration’s own standard of a ‘good’ agreement,” and that there are “required elements that have not yet been achieved,” the letter spells out the minimum criteria needed for a good deal with Iran. The letter, sent to both the White House and the State Department, warned against weakened international inspections, a lack of information regarding possible military dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program and Iran’s ability to continue research and development once the deal expires. “The agreement will not prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapons capability,” it continues. “It will not require the dismantling of Iran’s nuclear enrichment infrastructure. It will however reduce that infrastructure for the next 10 to 15 years.” Among the signers are Obama’s former Special Assistant and Middle East negotiator Dennis Ross, former CIA Director David H. Petraeus, longtime State Department proliferation expert Robert Einhorn, former White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Gary Samore, and former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James E. Cartwright. Other signers include President Bush’s National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and former members of Congress Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-CT).

Iran's Supreme Leader Seems to Pull Back on Nuclear Talks

With exactly a week left before the deadline for a final agreement to limit Iran’s nuclear program, [The New York Times](#) reports that the country’s supreme leader undercut several of the central agreements his negotiators have already reached with the West. The supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, demanded that most sanctions be lifted before Tehran has dismantled part of its nuclear infrastructure and before international inspectors verify that the country is meeting its commitments. He also ruled out any freeze on Iran’s sensitive nuclear enrichment for as long as a decade, and he repeated his refusal to allow inspections of Iranian military sites. One of his statements suggested that sanctions would not only be lifted in close coordination with Iran’s dismantlement of centrifuges and reduction of its stocks of low-enriched uranium. “All economic, financial and banking sanctions, implemented either by the United Nations Security Council, the United States Congress or the administration, must be lifted immediately when the deal is signed,” the ayatollah said. The ayatollah also said that verification of Iran’s actions by the International Atomic Energy Agency (I.A.E.A.) was out of the question. “We have said from the first place that we want cruel sanctions to be lifted,” Ayatollah Khamenei said. “You cannot ask us to fulfill our commitments and wait for the I.A.E.A.’s confirmation for removing the sanctions. We completely disagree with it.” The ayatollah also vowed to maintain an active nuclear program, which he says is for peaceful purposes.

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Congress writes boycott opposition into trade talks

Congress included a provision in a trade bill that requires U.S. negotiators to raise objections to Israel boycotts in their dealings. According to [JTA](#), the language, part of a broad Trade Promotion Authority passed by both chambers of Congress, says that “discouraging” Israel boycotts would become one of the “principal negotiating objectives” of U.S. officials. “The provision included by Congress pushes back against actions by foreign governments to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel,” the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which strongly backed the inclusion of the language, said in a statement Wednesday, the day the Senate approved the trade bill. The bill “urges the U.S. Trade Representative to seek the elimination of politically-motivated economic attacks on Israel by America’s free trade partners,” AIPAC said, praising its lead sponsors, Sens. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and U.S. Reps. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.) and Juan Vargas (D-Calif.). The language explicitly includes “persons doing business in Israel or in Israeli-controlled territories” as illegitimate targets for boycotts. This could compromise trade dealings with Europe, where most countries have banned boycotts of Israel within its 1967 lines, but have regulations restricting trade with Israeli businesses in the West Bank

[Click here for AIPAC’s press release on Congress protecting Israel from “BDS” in Fast Track.](#)

Leaders of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Criticize U.N. Report on Gaza

Reps. Ed Royce (R-CA) and Eliot Engel (D-NY), Chairman and Ranking Member respectively of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, released separate statements criticizing the newly released U.N. Human Rights Council report on last summer’s conflict in Gaza. Rep. Engel criticized the report’s “thinly veiled accusations of war crimes by the Israeli government” as these accusations “have repeatedly been refuted by independent assessments.” Chairman Royce said “There is no moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas. Israel tries to avoid civilian casualties while Hamas revels in them.” Dismissing the report’s recommendations, Engel said “Nowhere else in the Middle East-certainly not in Gaza- do we find such respect for international law and pursuit of Justice.” The top Democrat added that military leaders from all over the world have praised Israel’s continual efforts to protect innocent human lives. Moving forward, Royce advised that in order to further the prospects for peace “Congress must actively work together and with our allies to defeat referrals of the conclusions of this report to other international bodies and tribunals.”

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Swimmer Hinawi Brings Israel Eighth Medal at European Games

Israel’s medal haul at the European Games is up to eight after swimmer Marc Hinawi ended the 1,500-meter final in third place on Wednesday in Baku, Azerbaijan. The [Jerusalem Post](#) reported that the 18-year-old Hinawi registered a time of 15:25.63 minutes, setting a junior national record. “I’m really happy, but I believe I can swim faster. I’m improving with every year...” Ziv Kalontarov will take part in the 100m freestyle final on Thursday, advancing from seventh place overall in a time of 50.61 seconds on Wednesday.