



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending March 27, 2015

## IRAN

### **367 House Members Raise Concerns on Iran**

On March 23, a bipartisan group of 367 House lawmakers sent a letter to President Barack Obama highlighting crucial conditions for a nuclear agreement with Iran. Spearheaded by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Democrat Eliot Engel (D-NY), the letter stresses that “a final comprehensive nuclear agreement must constrain Iran’s nuclear infrastructure so that Iran has no pathway to a bomb, and that agreement must be long-lasting.” Emphasizing Congress’ role in enacting a deal with Iran, the letter states, “should an agreement with Iran be reached, permanent sanctions relief from congressionally-mandated sanctions would require new legislation. In reviewing such an agreement, Congress must be convinced that its terms foreclose any pathway to a bomb, and only then will Congress be able to consider permanent sanctions relief.” The bipartisan letter also comments on Iran’s past dealings with international inspectors on its nuclear program. Discussing that Tehran has failed to reveal its past bomb work, the representatives warn that unless there is a full comprehension of Iran’s prior nuclear-related military activity, “it will be impossible for the international community to judge Iran’s future breakout time with certainty.” Due to Iran’s deceptive behavior, the representatives note that “Iran’s record of clandestine activity and intransigence prevents any trust in Iran” and that verifiable restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program must span for decades.

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **AIPAC CEO Howard Kohr Testifies to House Subcommittee**

On March 25, AIPAC CEO Howard Kohr testified in front of the House Appropriations State and Foreign Operations subcommittee regarding security assistance to Israel for fiscal year 2016. He began his remarks by stating that as the Middle East faces its most dramatic upheavals in decades, U.S. security assistance to Israel plays a key role in advancing American strategic interests in the region and ensuring the Jewish state’s ability to defend itself. Iran’s ongoing effort to achieve a nuclear weapons capability and dominate the region, instability in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Libya and elsewhere, the territorial successes of radical Islamic groups and an ongoing, destabilizing and bloody civil war in Syria constitute just some of the potential threats that Israel – and the United States - must prepare to confront in the year to come. In this context, AIPAC strongly urges the Subcommittee to approve the president’s request of \$3.1 billion in security assistance for Israel in fiscal year 2016 in accordance with the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the United States and Israel. The approval of this assistance should include the legislatively-mandated terms under which it has historically been provided, particularly provisions mandating the level of assistance, offshore procurement and early disbursement. In addition, we support a robust and bipartisan foreign aid program that ensures America’s strong leadership position in the world.

[Please click here to read all of Howard Kohr’s remarks.](#)

### **Lawmakers Request \$2 Million for U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation**

106 House members sent a letter to the leaders of the Appropriations Subcommittee on

Energy and Water Development requesting \$2 million for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Program as part of the FY2016 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Led by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), along with Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL), Eliot Engel (D-NY), Bill Johnson (R-OH), Ted Deutch (D-FL), and Peter King (R-NY), this year's letter shows substantial growth in support of this request. First authorized in 2007, the United States has contributed \$11.7 million to the program to-date, matched dollar-for-dollar by Israel. Additionally, the letter states that over \$27 million has been leveraged in private sector cost-sharing thanks to the energy initiative. The U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, passed by Congress and signed into law by the president last year, expanded the program to cover joint R&D into renewables, natural gas and water technologies. "Continued funding for the program will provide for collaborative U.S. and Israeli research and development efforts in areas critical to both the United States and Israel and unite our countries in the pursuit of increased energy security, energy independence and water efficiency," the letter states. A companion letter is now circulating in the Senate, led by Sens. Susan Collins (R-ME) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY).

## **ISRAELI ELECTIONS**

### **Netanyahu apologizes to Arabs for voter turnout remark**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday apologized to the Arab citizens of Israel for comments he made about their voting turnout on election day that were sharply criticized as being potentially racist and offensive to the community. "I know the things I said several days ago offended some of Israel's citizens, hurt the Arab citizens," Netanyahu told representatives of the Arab community during at the Prime Minister's Residence in Jerusalem. "This was never my intent. I apologize for this." The apology was met with enthusiastic applause from the Arab representatives, several of whom embraced him after the statement. According to [The Times of Israel](#), he added that he saw himself "as the prime minister of each and every one of you, all the citizens of Israel, regardless of faith, ethnicity or gender."