



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending March 6, 2015

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

AIPAC Statement on Netanyahu Address

AIPAC commends the overwhelmingly bipartisan attendance and positive response to Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to the joint meeting of Congress. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the unbroken U.S. commitment to Israel from President Truman to President Obama. The Prime Minister's message to Congress and the American people is critical at a moment when there is a danger that an agreement will be reached that fails to dismantle Iran's program such that it does not have a path to a nuclear weapon. AIPAC believes that on a matter as crucial to U.S. national security as preventing a nuclear-capable Iran, Congress must assert its historic foreign policy role, review any agreement, and object if a bad agreement is reached. That is why AIPAC strongly supports adoption of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Act of 2015 (S. 615) introduced by Senators Bob Corker (R-TN) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ).

Defense Secretary Commends U.S. Israel Defense Cooperation and Cautions on Iran

Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey praised U.S. –Israel defense efforts and warned against Iran's ballistic missile capabilities during a series of House and Senate hearings on the fiscal year 2016 budget. "This is a longstanding concern, the ever-growing, expanding in numbers and range Iranian ballistic missile program," said Carter, during the House Appropriations subcommittee on defense budget hearing. "It is the reason for our very close cooperation with Israel in missile defense, as we cooperate with Israel in everything in defense. This is a very important ally to us, our most important ally in the region." Echoing Carter's statement, Dempsey added "The ballistic missile capability of Iran is one of about five things that cause me great concern from a national security perspective." Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY) posed questions regarding cooperative missile defense programs including Arrow 3, Arrow 2, Iron Dome and others. "I've been doing this a long time, and we have a relationship that close with the Israeli defense forces, and that needs to continue. And missile defense has to -- and will continue, and missile defense an important part of it," said Carter. "You mentioned Iron Dome, you mentioned Arrow, I could mention Patriot and lots of other things that we do together, and we share capability there. It's a longstanding joint effort and it'll continue." While testifying on the president's proposed budget, both Carter and Dempsey discussed the overall dangers of Iran. "I certainly think that the danger of a runaway Iranian program stimulating runaway nuclear programs elsewhere in the Middle East is a very serious one," said Carter to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

IRAN

Leading Senator Questions Cut in Funding for Sanctions

On March 2, Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE) questioned Treasury Secretary Jack Lew on a proposal to cut funding for enforcement of U.S. sanctions. "I do have concerns about the Department's proposal to cut funding for the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, given pressing issues and the sanctions enforcement against Iran and Russia," said Coons. "I want to be continually reassured you have more than adequate resources for the fight." The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held the hearing to discuss President Barack Obama's fiscal year 2016 budget request for the Treasury Department. "I was struck, given the ongoing issues with Russia and the Ukraine, with Syria, and in particular, with Iran, that the budget proposes a reduction," Coons con. "And given, the real potential that we may return to enforcing sanctions against Iran, do we have the resources that this office needs?" While defending the administration's proposed budget cuts, Lew reassured the Senate subcommittee that Iran sanctions will not be diminished. "As far as the Iran sanctions go, we have not lessened our level of activity on Iran sanctions. So we're fully funded on Iran sanctions," Lew stated.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

ISRAEL21c, AIPAC applaud Israeli innovation

The first three days of March brought 16,000 people to Washington, DC, for the AIPAC Policy Conference, the largest gathering of America's pro-Israel community. Participants in this annual event always say that one of the highlights is the showcase of groundbreaking Israeli innovations – the kinds of innovations [ISRAEL21c](#) brings to readers every day. One of the most emotional moments was when past Innovation Showcase presenter Elie Isaacson, co-founder of Agilite portable rescue equipment used across the world, shared a touching story at the 2015 conference. The former paratrooper explained how Agilite's Injured Personnel Carrier (IPC), initially developed for soldiers to carry injured comrades on their backs while leaving their hands free, is used by the Jennings family of New York for their son Kieran, who has cerebral palsy. The audience saw how the lightweight IPC enables them to indulge Kieran's passion for hiking. The 12-year-old was even able to participate with his family in his hometown's annual adventure race, carried on his dad's back in an IPC. The 2015 Innovation Showcase focused on the people behind the chosen five innovations. These remarkable individuals were pleased to be reacquainted with ISRAEL21c, as President Amy Friedkin and Social Media Director Nathan Miller were on the scene to congratulate them. First up was Ami Daniel of Windward, whose story ISRAEL21c featured on December 3, 2014. Daniel established a Jewish-Arab community center when he was only 16, and later became an Israeli naval officer. Daniel and his navy buddy and cofounder, Matan Peled, decided to "do something transformational connecting technology and the high seas." Windward is a unique business that gathers and analyzes intelligence from ocean vessels to counter widespread transmission of false data. He told Miller that he was inspired to be among so many Americans "looking for the points of light in Israel's story." ISRAEL21c's coverage of Windward, he added, can help get the message about Israeli innovation even to those who may not consider themselves traditional supporters of Israel.