



Rabbinic Recap

The week of November 18, 2016

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

House of Representatives Overwhelmingly Passes Iran Sanctions Extension Act

On Nov. 15, the House of Representatives [overwhelmingly passed](#) the Iran Sanctions Extension Act with a 419-1 vote. Authored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY), the bill would reauthorize the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) and maintain the United States' current sanctions architecture on Iran. Initially passed in 1996, ISA targets investments in Iran's energy sector, the leading segment of the Iranian economy. The legislation is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2016, and must be renewed by Congress to remain in effect. In the upcoming weeks, the Senate is expected to take up this legislation.

Members of Congress from both parties have praised the passage of the Iran Sanctions Extension Act in the House.

"The Iranian regime continues to finance terrorism, test-fire ballistic missiles, abuse its people, and, as recently as last week, violate the nuclear agreement. Today's bipartisan vote will help maintain our ability to immediately reinstate sanctions against Iran over the next decade. I appreciate Chairman Royce and his entire committee for their work on this important bill, and hope the president will agree to sign it," [said](#) Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI).

"Iran's theocratic leaders continue to threaten Israel and Americans in the region. They continue, as well, to pursue ballistic missile technology that destabilizes the region, and its regime has held Americans captive for years as bargaining chips in negotiations over its compliance with basic international law and norms," [echoed](#) House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD).

Please click [here](#) to read additional congressional statements.

Lawmakers Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Combat BDS

On Nov. 14, Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA) introduced the [Protecting Israel Against Economic Discrimination Act](#), a bipartisan piece of legislation that would combat the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel. Specifically, the bill would amend existing U.S. anti-boycott laws to include efforts by international organizations to economically isolate the Jewish state, and it would require the Export-Import Bank to negatively consider BDS activity when evaluating potential applicants. In May, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted a resolution calling for the creation of a "blacklist" of Israeli companies that operate in or have business relationships beyond Israel's 1949 Armistice Lines, also known as the "Green Line."

“The Protecting Israel Against Economic Discrimination Act puts Congress on the record opposing the UNHRC resolution and other attempts to economically harm and delegitimize Israel,” [said](#) Reps. Roskam and Vargas. “U.S. taxpayer-backed financing should not be available to those who choose to conduct economic warfare against Israel.”

Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Rob Portman (R-OH) introduced companion legislation in the Senate in September 2016.

U.S. National Guard Chief Observes Israel’s Emergency Readiness

Earlier this month, the new U.S. National Guard Bureau chief [traveled to Israel](#) to [observe](#) Israeli advances in emergency response during a large-scale defense exercise run by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Home Front Command. In a three-day visit, Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel led a delegation of senior U.S. military and civilian advisors. The exercise—dubbed “Silver Jewel”—was conducted in Hadera, a city of approximately 80,000 inhabitants. IDF Home Front Command personnel trained emergency responders on how to alert and assist civilians near Israel’s northern border through drills at three locations: a working hospital, a real train struck by a vehicle, and a civic center with civilian volunteers that experienced a simulated chemical weapon attack. “The notion of civil defense was once a part of every American’s daily life,” [said](#) Gen. Lengyel. “It’s important to consider the need to be able to take care of ourselves and our neighbors.” Gen. Lengyel was invited to observe Silver Jewel by his Israeli counterpart Maj. Gen. Yoel Strik, commander of Home Front Command. “This relationship has blossomed,” stated Gen. Lengyel. “The Home Front Command has similar missions, similar goals to the National Guard: to react, respond; to protect lives; to protect property; to help society recover.”

ISRAEL AND THE WORLD

Israeli company developing world’s first blood test to aid diagnosis of Parkinson’s

Doctors diagnose as many as 60,000 new cases of Parkinson’s disease (PD) every year in the United States. Yet diagnosing PD with certainty can take years—long after early signs and symptoms have appeared. The Israeli startup [BioShai](#) has a game-changing product on the horizon: PDx, the world’s first simple blood test for the early diagnosis of PD. The test results can be combined with clinical data, providing a more accurate diagnosis to help physicians decide on the best course of treatment at a much earlier stage. More than 10 million people worldwide are living with this chronic and progressive movement disorder caused by the malfunction and death of neurons that produce dopamine, a chemical that coordinates the brain’s control of movement and coordination. “Having a diagnosis at an earlier stage can lead to a more precise treatment and a higher quality of life for the patient,” says BioShai CEO Jennifer Yarden, who has a PhD in medical science and formerly was responsible for clinical and commercial development of diagnostic assays and kits at Glycominds. Yarden is also CEO and cofounder of Curewize Health. The PDx blood test, which measures changes in particular molecules known to be associated with Parkinson’s, will be available through an Israeli lab on a limited beta basis in early 2017. BioShai will soon apply for regulatory approval in Europe. Yarden tells [ISRAEL21c](#) that BioShai is currently in the final stages of validating and standardizing the PDx assay in a multi-center clinical trial in Israel and Italy.