



# Rabbinic Recap

The week of December 16, 2016

## U.S. - ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **First F-35 Stealth Fighter Jets Arrive in Israel**

On Dec. 12, the first two of Israel's F-35 stealth fighter jets touched down at Nevatim Air Base. Israel is the first country after the United States to receive the fifth-generation aircraft and has agreed to purchase a total of 50 from U.S. defense company Lockheed Martin. The F-35s departed from a Lockheed Martin facility in Texas last week, briefly stopped near Portugal, and spent the weekend in Italy. After a brief weather-related delay, the planes touched down Monday evening in Israel and were greeted by a ceremony attended by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman, U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and U.S. Ambassador Dan Shapiro. "The aircraft will change the rules of the game," said Rivlin. "Our enemies already know that Israel is not worthwhile to harm." The stealth aircraft is one of the most advanced in the world and has a high price tag—costing approximately \$100 million per unit (not including maintenance and additional support equipment). Israel's purchase of the F-35 is made possible in part due to security assistance provided by the United States each year, which in turn is largely spent in the United States. Netanyahu thanked President Barack Obama, Congress and the American people for helping to make Israel "stronger today." "I want to be clear: Anyone who thinks of attacking us, will be attacked. History has taught us that only strength brings deterrence, only strength brings peace and respect," he said. Secretary of Defense Carter stated that the United States "will continue to provide Israel with the most advanced capabilities, including more F-35s to sharpen Israel's military qualitative edge. With the turmoil in the region, we are more dedicated than ever before to Israel's security and America's pledge to defend Israel's security remains unwavering." "As of today Israel is our only friend in the region flying the F-35," he added. "The F-35s will help the U.S. and Israel air forces operate more jointly and more effectively. And together, we will dominate the skies."

### **Deepening U.S.-Israel Cybersecurity Cooperation**

On Dec. 10 lawmakers passed the United States-Israel Advanced Research Partnership Act, which will deepen U.S.-Israel cybersecurity cooperation. Specifically, the law permanently authorizes an already-existing three-year joint research-and- development program at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and expands it to include cybersecurity technologies. Currently, the focus of the program is wearable technologies for first responders. Another U.S.-Israel cybersecurity bill—the United States-Israel Cybersecurity Cooperation Enhancement Act of 2016 (H.R. 5843)—passed the House by voice vote on Nov. 29, but was unable to clear the Senate before Congress adjourned. This legislation would establish a cybersecurity grant program for joint research-and-development opportunities between Israeli and American entities. The bill is likely to be reintroduced in the next Congress. These two pieces of legislation signal a growing Congressional consensus that Israeli technology and expertise will play a crucial role in U.S. cybersecurity efforts. The 114th Congress has proven to be a strong

supporter of the U.S.-Israel relationship, advancing a number of pro-Israel pieces of legislation: Lawmakers funded annual security assistance to Israel, pushed back against Iran, took a stand against BDS and Palestinian efforts to impose a one-sided solution on Israel, and expanded cooperation in emerging key areas like water and cybersecurity cooperation. Together, the United States and Israel are stronger and more secure.

## IRAN

### **Iran Sanctions Extension Act Becomes Law**

On Dec. 15, the bipartisan Iran Sanctions Extension Act (H. R. 6297) was enacted into law. The bill passed with overwhelming majorities in Congress—419-1 in the House on Nov. 15 and a unanimous 99-0 in the Senate on Dec 1. Authored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY), the legislation extends the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) for an additional 10 years. Originally passed in 1996 and set to expire at the end of December, ISA targets investments in Iran's energy sector, the leading segment of the Iranian economy. The law played a role in pushing Iran to negotiate its illicit nuclear program, ultimately leading to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran nuclear deal. "Iran's support for terrorism, and its push to develop a missile capable of striking the United States, is a direct threat to our national security," said Royce. "This law ensures the U.S. retains its ability to hold the regime accountable." "The Iran Sanctions Act is a crucial part of ensuring Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal. The sanctions authorized in this law show Iran's leaders exactly what they will face if they don't live up to their end of the bargain," said Engel. "This law does not violate our obligations under the deal. In fact, extending it continues the sanctions law already in place, and there should have been no expectation that Congress would permanently lift sanctions barely a year into the deal. So I'm pleased that this ten-year extension has gone forward."

## ISRAEL AND JORDAN

### **Israel to double water supply to Jordan**

The new 5.5 km Kinneret-Beit Shean pipeline will supply water to Jordan in exchange for desalinated water from Aqaba. In one month, following Supreme Court approval and a 2010 agreement between Israel and Jordan, Mekorot National Water Company will be able to start laying a new pipeline through the Jordan Valley, intended to double water supply to the Kingdom of Jordan. In exchange, as stated in the peace accord between the states, Israel will receive water from the Jordanian desalination plant to be established in Aqaba. According to [Globes](#), the new 5.5 km Kinneret-Beit Shean pipeline will pass mainly through Jordan Valley agricultural areas and will provide the Hashemite kingdom with up to 100 million cubic meters of water per year, compared with 50 million cubic meters at present. The laying of the new pipeline is of critical importance for Jordan. Due to the ongoing civil war in Syria, millions of refugees have flocked to Jordan, resulting in a real water crisis which has made the need to increase water supply more vital than ever.