



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 29, 2016

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

AIPAC Press Release: Senators Urge Expanded Security Assistance to Israel

AIPAC applauds the bipartisan group of 83 senators who sent a [letter](#) to President Barack Obama today backing increased aid to Israel under the current terms of America's assistance program.

The senators emphasized to the president, "Most importantly, we urge you to conclude an agreement with Israel for a robust new MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] that increases aid while retaining the current terms of our existing aid program." The senators also pledged to consider boosting support for U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense programs. The letter was initiated by Sens. Chris Coons (D-DE) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and was signed by a broad cross-section of the Senate—including the two leaders, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Democratic Leader Harry Reid (D-NV).

Currently, the United States and Israel are negotiating a new MOU for security assistance to Israel. The senators' letter states, "In light of Israel's dramatically rising defense challenges, we stand ready to support a substantially enhanced new long-term agreement to help provide Israel the resources it requires to defend itself and preserve its qualitative military edge." The letter further notes that "Israel remains a central pillar of our national strategy to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East."

The letter specifies the numerous regional threats against Israel's security driven by Iran, ISIS, Hamas and Hezbollah. "Given the extraordinary levels of weapons pouring into the Middle East," the letter notes, "Israel could quickly find itself on the wrong end of the regional military balance." Consequently, the senators indicate that "the United States must enhance its investment in the long-term security requirements of our closest Middle East ally."

In 1998, the United States and Israel signed their first 10-year MOU to increase security assistance to Israel while phasing out economic aid. Under that agreement, the United States committed to providing Israel \$21.3 billion in security assistance. In 2007, America committed to provide \$30 billion under the current 10-year MOU, which expires in 2018.

Pentagon adopts Israeli tactic in bombing ISIS

The U.S. has adopted a unique Israeli battlefield tactic in its fight against ISIS: exploding a missile above a building to warn civilians inside that it's about to be bombed. Israeli forces have widely used the so-called knock-on-the-roof operations in Gaza attacks in recent years to try to get civilians out before they are hit. According to [CNN](#), the first public revelation of the U.S. using a "knock operation" came Tuesday at a press briefing by Air Force Maj. Gen. Peter E.

Gersten, deputy commander for operations and intelligence for the anti-ISIS Operation Inherent Resolve. Gersten described a strike against an ISIS financial storage center on April 5 in southern Mosul, Iraq. The U.S. had been closely watching the house of an ISIS finance operative, or "finance emir" in the words of Gersten. "He was the major distributor of funds to Daesh fighters," Gersten said, using another name for ISIS. "We watched him come and go from his house, we watched his supplies, we watched the security that was involved in it. And we also watched occasionally a female and her children in and out of the quarters." Using reconnaissance aircraft and other intelligence assets to keep watch, the U.S. then began to formulate a plan, Gersten said, to get women, children and other civilians out of the building.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Innovative Israeli surgery gives Palestinian toddler new lease on life

A three-year-old Palestinian boy from the Gaza Strip was saved from permanent paralysis after an Israeli doctor carried out a complex and innovative procedure to remove a tumor wrapped around the child's spinal cord, reports [The Times of Israel](#). Suleiman developed an extremely rare tumor in his chest that resulted in the malformation of his spine, and causing him to suffer from respiratory illnesses, the Hebrew-language website reported. Though benign, the tumor was causing pressure on his spine in his neck, severely restricting his movement and posing a serious risk of neural damage and paralysis in the future. Dr. Josh Schroeder, a senior orthopedic surgeon at the Hadassah Medical Center in Ein Kerem, said the six-hour surgery was among the first of its kind in the world. "This was a rare procedure not just nationally, but globally as well," Schroeder told the news outlet on Tuesday. "There is almost no documentation of this kind of repair anywhere in the world." His parents, Schroeder said, were delighted by the results. "We hope that when they go back to Gaza they will talk about the positive sides of Israeli society," Schroeder said. "There are no politics in a hospital, only people. "Just yesterday we treated a girl from Ramallah," he said. "Everyone here is equal."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Green Israel: A Celebration of Earth Day

This Earth Day, Israel joins those around the world celebrating sustainability and environmentally-friendly technologies and policies. As the world confronts climate change, urbanization, population growth, and threatened resources, Israel's private and public sector are partnering to build reliable green technology and infrastructure. Israel has proudly celebrated Earth Day since it became a global movement in 1990. A number of Israeli cities—including Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Ashdod, Herzilya, Ashkelon and Petah Tikva—ask their residents and businesses to participate in "Earth Hour," the international initiative to shut off power for one hour as a way to promote environmental awareness. Additionally, Israel is at the forefront of afforestation. Since its founding in 1901, the Jewish National Fund has planted more than 240 million trees in Israel, making it one of only two countries in the world that showed a net gain in trees during the 20th century.

[Click here to read how Israel celebrates the Earth in 2016.](#)