



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 8, 2016

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **United States Enhances Energy Agreement with Israel**

On April 4, U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz and Israeli Minister of National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Resources Yuval Steinitz signed new provisions that bolster energy cooperation between the United States and Israel. Concluded while Secretary Moniz was visiting Israel, the deal strengthens ties in fossil fuel and renewable energy production, smart grid technologies, protection of energy and water infrastructure against physical, cyber and electromagnetic attack, and areas within the energy-water nexus. “Today, our countries further deepened our continuing cooperation,” said Moniz. “The U.S. and Israel will continue to cultivate research and development, to lower the cost of energy production and make it greener, and to encourage cooperation between the leading energy scientists in our countries.” “I am certain that cooperation in the energy sector will expand in the years to come,” Minister Steinitz said. “I thank Secretary Moniz for the friendship and cooperation. The United States is Israel’s greatest friend, and we appreciate this friendship.” The following day, the United States and Israel announced that they will begin granting scholarships for energy postdoctoral students as part of a bilateral research exchange program.

### **Former Senators Urge Senate Appropriations Committee to Support Foreign Aid**

On April 4, a group of 20 former senators sent a bipartisan letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee leadership highlighting the importance of a robust international affairs budget. The letter, led by former Senate Majority Leaders William Frist and Thomas Daschle, calls on the Senate committee to protect the international affairs budget from increased cuts. “As former colleagues, we write to relay our support for the International Affairs Budget and the important role development and diplomacy programs play in confronting the growing global challenges and advancing our interests throughout the world,” wrote the senators. “However, today America faces unprecedented global challenges, including rapidly increasing humanitarian crises, while funding for International Affairs has been cut by 12% since FY10 when adjusted for inflation, and base funding has declined 30% in that same period.” The letter also stresses that foreign aid is crucial to support America’s closest allies, including Israel. “For just 1% of the federal budget, these programs are cost-effective investments that enable the United States to support allies like Israel and Jordan, respond to humanitarian crises, and promote U.S. interests abroad. To that end, we believe strongly that the International Affairs Budget is a critical component to our overall national security strategy and urge you to protect these programs from further cuts.”

### **Speaker Ryan Leads Bipartisan House Delegation to Israel**

On his first international trip as speaker of the House, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) led a bipartisan congressional delegation to Israel. Reps. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), Devin Nunes (R-CA), Mike

Turner (R-OH), Gregory Meeks (D-NY); Ron Kind (D-WI); Kristi Noem (R-SD) and Will Hurd (R-TX) joined the speaker on the trip, which began on April 4. Following a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Speaker Ryan stated, “in this dangerous, chaotic part of the world, with terrorism all over the world, Israel is one of our most important allies.” The speaker also expressed concern over the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel and the increase of anti-Semitism in Europe. “Europe has been engaging in this ridiculous and counterproductive BDS shenanigan...We in the Congress have been very forceful about that. By the way, when you try to boycott, divest and sanction Israel, you’re hurting Palestinians, as well,” said Ryan. The delegation also met with Israeli Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein and visited an Iron Dome battery. The speaker stressed that the two allies must renew and extend its Memorandum of Understanding, emphasizing robust missile defense programs including David’s Sling and the Arrow. “We see you as our friends, our allies, our partners. You’re an island of freedom in a very difficult, chaotic region, and that is why our partnership is all the more important.”

## IRAN

### **Members of Congress Voice Opposition to Allowing Iran Access to the U.S. Dollar**

Members of Congress from both parties have voiced opposition to reports that the administration is considering loosening sanctions on Iran and granting it the ability to conduct limited transactions in U.S. dollars. Below are statements from members of the House and Senate. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) stated, “These reports are deeply concerning, to say the least. As Iran continues to undermine the spirit of its nuclear agreement with illicit ballistic missile tests, the Obama administration is going out of its way to help Tehran reopen for business. The president should abandon this idea.” House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) said, “I am concerned about reports that the Treasury Department is considering mechanisms that would allow the use of the U.S. dollar for business transactions involving Iran. The power and central role of the U.S. banking system remains a critical tool toward combatting global terror finance and illicit trade, and it should remain that way.”

[Click here to read more statements from Members of Congress.](#)

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **Forget Moneyball; Haifa U study shows how emotions can beat baseball odds**

In the 2011 movie Moneyball, baseball nerd Peter Brand (played by Jonah Hill) almost wins the 2002 American League playoffs for the Oakland A’s by playing the percentages—looking at the records of seemingly has-been players and putting them in the right positions, getting them to produce far more than they ever thought they could. Now, researchers at Haifa University may have found another system to beat the odds for baseball players—and maybe everyone else. According to [The Times of Israel](#), they call their new system “Emoti-ball”—a system that identifies the emotions of baseball players, especially pitchers and hitters, based on their body language and facial expressions. The results of the study showed that, as theorized, the subtle cues on the faces and in the actions of pitchers triggered specific responses in the batters.