



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending February 12, 2016

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Congress Adopts Anti-BDS Provision in Customs Bill

On Feb. 11, Congress approved a provision in the Trade Facilitation and Enforcement Act, also known as the Customs bill, to combat harmful anti-Israel trade and commercial practices. The provision puts the U.S. firmly on record opposing BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) and supporting enhanced commercial ties between the United States and Israel. It further establishes new requirements for administration reporting on an array of global BDS activities, including the participation of foreign companies in political boycotts of Israel. Additionally, the measure provides important legal protections for American companies operating in Israel. This pro-Israel provision builds upon an anti-BDS amendment in the "Fast Track" Trade Promotion Authority bill that targets harmful trade and commercial practices against Israel. Authored by Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Rob Portman (R-OH) in the Senate and Reps. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Juan Vargas (D-CA) in the House, the amendment was passed into law last June and addresses efforts by foreign governments to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel.

AIPAC Statement: Congress Asserts Strong Anti-BDS Leadership with New Trade Provision

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This measure builds on the important work of Congress this past June, passing into law firm anti-BDS negotiating objectives for American trade negotiators in their pursuit of U.S.-EU free trade.

AIPAC appreciates the leadership of Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL) and Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA), who originally introduced the anti-BDS provision, along with the leadership of the House Ways & Means and Senate Finance Committees, specifically Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI), Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR).

U.S. College Campuses Forge Close Ties with Israel

When the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement was first launched on American

campuses more than a decade ago, Israel's opponents hoped to drive a wedge between U.S. and Israeli academic institutions. Their goal was—and remains—to delegitimize the Jewish state. Despite vitriolic attacks and attempts to obscure this agenda, which precludes even the possibility of peace through direct negotiations (let alone coexistence between Arabs and Jews), a remarkable result has emerged: Not one American campus has come close to divesting from Israel. A simple inventory of the tangible, contractual and mutually beneficial ties between the two nations would suggest that, in fact, the exact opposite of BDS has taken place. Simply put, there is more cooperation between American and Israeli colleges and universities than ever before in history. And such ties continue to blossom.

[Click here for a few illustrations of this phenomenon.](#)

President Submits Fiscal Year 2017 Budget with Key Pro-Israel Provisions

On Feb. 9, President Barack Obama submitted his plans for the fiscal year 2017 budget to Congress, including \$3.1 billion in security assistance to Israel. If authorized, the funding would fulfill the ninth year of a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Israel. The budget proposal also requests authorization for \$145.8 million in U.S.-Israel Cooperative Missile Defense programs, including funding for missile interceptors Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow 2 and 3.

[Click here to see the president's full 2017 budget request.](#)

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Update: Palestinian and Arab Terrorism against Israel

Palestinian and Arab terrorist attacks against Israel have left at least 28 dead and over 200 wounded. Below is a timeline of major attacks since February 8.

Feb. 9: In the West Bank, an Israeli man who was out jogging was stabbed and moderately injured by a Palestinian assailant. The attacker reportedly fled the scene.

Feb. 8: An 11-year-old Israeli boy was stabbed in the Israeli town of Ramle. The attacker fled the scene.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

IsraAID Sends Team to Help Taiwan's Earthquake Victims

With the death toll still rising in the wake of a 6.4-magnitude earthquake, Israeli humanitarian aid organization IsraAID has sent a team of three experts to Taiwan to assess needs in the country, and offer psychosocial support to quake victims still looking for family members. The earthquake struck Taiwan on Saturday, killing an estimated 41 people and injuring over 500. Worst hit was the city of Tainan, where a high-rise apartment block built using shoddy materials including tin cans, collapsed with hundreds of people inside it. According to [Israel21c](#), one hundred people are still thought to be trapped in the rubble. After carrying out a rapid needs assessment in Tainan, IsraAID has "joined Taiwanese professionals and assisted them in their relief efforts to support the families affected by the quake," says IsraAID Director Shachar Zahavi.