

The week ending January 22, 2016

IRAN

U.S. Sanctions 11 Entities for Supporting Iran's Ballistic Missile Program

The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned nearly a dozen Iranian-linked entities Sunday for their alleged role in Tehran's ballistic-missile program, a move coming just hours after Washington and Tehran concluded a high-stakes prisoner swap. "Iran's ballistic-missile program poses a significant threat to regional and global security, and it will continue to be subject to international sanctions," the Treasury Department's top sanctions official, Adam Szubin, said in a statement released Sunday. The sanctions prohibit U.S. or foreign nationals from conducting business with the blacklisted firms. U.S. banks are also ordered to freeze any assets the companies or individuals hold inside the American financial system. According to [The Wall Street Journal](#), the sanctions target U.A.E.-based Mabrooka Trading Co. LLC and its founder, Hossein Pournaghshband, for allegedly aiding Iranian state companies in acquiring carbon fiber for Iran's missile program. Mr. Pournaghshband also used a subsidiary in Hong Kong, Anhui Land Group Co., to acquire materials and financing for a carbon-fiber production line. Among the reasons for the new sanctions are ties the Treasury is alleging between Iran and North Korea on missile development. This includes Iran buying components from Pyongyang's state-owned Korea Mining Development Trading Corp., which is sanctioned by both the U.S. and the European Union. The U.S. also alleges that Tehran sent technicians to North Korea over the past two years to jointly work with its defense industries on the development of an 80-ton rocket booster. Iran denies it is seeking nuclear weapons. Many U.S. defense analysts believe the only function for a ballistic missile would be to carry nuclear warheads.

AIPAC Statement on Iran Ballistic Missile Sanctions

AIPAC appreciates that the U.S. Department of Treasury has taken action to sanction entities and individuals involved in procurement for Iran's illicit ballistic missile program. This is an important first step in response to Iran's two recent missile tests.

It is imperative to maintain constant vigilance about Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and other international restrictions. Iran has a long record of violations of international obligations. That is why illegal or malign behavior by the Iranian regime must not be tolerated and met with a certain, swift and severe response.

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Director of U.S. Missile Defense Agency Calls for Closer Cooperation with Israel

On Jan. 19, Vice Adm. James Syring, director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA), called for increased missile defense cooperation between the United States and Israel. Speaking at a Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) event, Vice Adm. Syring praised Israel's missile defense strategy and predicted a co-production agreement for the David's Sling Weapon System would be reached between the two countries. "We're obviously tied very closely to Israel and what they've done with Iron Dome in terms of funding. And I mean the Congress in this case," said Vice Adm. Syring. "I think you'll see us work closely with them on a similar co-

production agreement [for David's Sling] that we have with Iron Dome. So that's good for them and it's good for the United States... So I think that in particular the Israeli example is a great example," he added. David's Sling is designed to provide Israel and America with effective and affordable protection against long-range artillery rockets, short to medium-range ballistic missiles, aircraft and low-flying cruise missiles. Since 2006, the United States has provided \$1.1 billion in research and development funding for David's Sling. On Dec. 21, 2015, David's Sling passed its final series of tests, putting it on track for deployment in 2016.

Update: U.S.-Israel Foundation invests \$7.5 Million in Joint R&D Projects

Building on the announcement from December, the U.S.-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation agreed to allocate over \$7.5 million to nine new joint research-and-development projects between American and Israeli companies. Approved by BIRD's board of governors in Tel Aviv, this year's joint projects will focus on healthcare, agro technology, environment, nano-satellites, electronics and other initiatives. Each venture can receive up to \$1 million in direct funding from the Foundation. In addition to BIRD grants, companies will be permitted to access private sector cost sharing for a total project value of \$21 million. These nine new initiatives are just the latest investments in BIRD's 38-year history—BIRD typically supports 20 collaborative projects per year. Since its 1977 establishment, BIRD has issued over \$300 million in conditional grants to joint American-Israeli ventures, providing 50 percent of the budget for more than 900 shared projects and facilitating company sales of more than \$10 billion. The ultimate goal of the Foundation is to bring together Israeli and American expertise to mutually benefit industrial research and development.

[Click here for information on BIRD's first nine 2016 research and development projects](#)

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel Sends Aid to Flood Victims in Paraguay and Uruguay

Israel's embassies in Asuncion, Paraguay, and Montevideo, Uruguay, are organizing donations of humanitarian-relief supplies for families displaced by the severe floods that have impacted tens of thousands of citizens in Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. Paraguay is the hardest hit of the South American countries affected by what is being called the worst flooding in 50 years, and its government has declared a state of emergency as approximately 130,000 people—most of them residents of the capital city—are living in temporary shelters. Israel's embassy in Paraguay is donating PYG 60,000,000 (\$10,150) worth of supplies to be purchased in Paraguay and distributed along with the Ministry of National Emergency, according to Israeli Ambassador Peleg Lewi. The Israeli embassy in Montevideo is contributing an equivalent amount to flood victims in Uruguay, where more than 13,000 people were displaced by the disaster. According to [Israel21c](#), the Jewish state and Paraguay have a free trade agreement and cooperate in the areas of water, agriculture, education, and medicine. In Uruguay, Israeli Ambassador Nina Ben-Ami said: "The friendship between Israel and Uruguay is historic and profound. Whenever we step forward to help our friends when they need it, it is in the nature of cooperation and our commitment."