

The week ending January 8, 2016

IRAN

Members of Congress to Administration: Sanction Iran

Leading lawmakers from both parties, including supporters of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, criticized the administration for delaying new sanctions on Tehran over its missile program. On Dec. 30, 2015, the U.S. Department of Treasury notified Congress that it intended later in the day to impose sanctions on nearly a dozen companies and individuals for providing support to Iran's ballistic-missile program. The administration, however, walked back its notification and the sanctions were not issued. "We just have additional work that we need to do as the U.S. government before we would announce additional designations," Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes said about the delay. Members of Congress are pressing the administration to impose the new penalties; warning that the delay will embolden Tehran's destabilizing regional activities. House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) said he was "disappointed that the Administration has delayed punitive action in response to Iran's recent ballistic missile tests." "Under that agreement, Iran's non-nuclear violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions will merit punitive action, and I will continue to press for decisive action by the United States and our international partners. Otherwise, we will have a serious problem with our credibility in enforcing the JCPOA," said Rep. Hoyer. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) stated that the administration "continues to turn a blind eye to Iranian saber rattling...for fear Iran will walk away from the nuclear deal." Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) said that "the Treasury Department's sanctions in response to Iran's clear violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1929's ban on ballistic missile activity sends a message to Iran that they can't use the new regime to cheat in other areas. It is essential that the United States be willing to act unilaterally on any violations and that we remain vigilant to spot and act on any violation of international agreements."

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

HEZBOLLAH

Treasury Sanctions Hezbollah Financier and His Company

[The U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) targeted a key Hezbollah support network by designating Hezbollah financier and member Ali Youssef Charara and Spectrum Investment Group Holding SAL, a telecommunications company of which Charara is the Chairman and General Manager. Charara has received millions of dollars from Hezbollah to invest in commercial projects that financially support the group. As a result of this action, all assets of those designated today that are based in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are frozen, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them. These are Treasury's first designations of Hezbollah supporters since the passage of H.R. 2297, the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015, which the President signed into law on December 18, 2015. This strong, bipartisan-supported law strengthened our authorities to target Hezbollah and threatens consequences for those who would knowingly facilitate Hezbollah's activities anywhere in the world.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Update: Palestinian and Arab Terrorism against Israel

Palestinian and Arab terrorist attacks against Israel have left at least 27 dead and over 200 wounded. Below is a timeline of major attacks since January 1, 2016.

Jan. 7: Three Palestinian attackers attempted unsuccessfully to stab Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers at the Gush Etzion junction in the West Bank. Two of the assailants were killed and the other was injured.

Jan. 5: An IDF soldier was injured in a stabbing attack at the Gush Etzion junction in the West Bank. The Palestinian assailant was shot and killed by Israeli security forces at the scene.

Jan. 4: A knife-wielding Palestinian tried to stab police in Jerusalem, but was shot and subdued.

Jan. 3: In separate attacks in Hebron, two IDF soldiers were shot and wounded. In Jerusalem, a Palestinian attempted to stab an Israeli citizen.

Jan. 1: An Arab citizen of Israel opened fire on a busy Tel Aviv street with a submachine gun. The attacker killed two Israelis and wounded seven others. Police believe that the terrorist also killed a taxi driver following the initial shooting.

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Israel signs health innovation deal with U.S.

Health Minister MK Ya'acov Litzman met with U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Mathews Burwell in Washington D.C. on Tuesday and signed a cooperation agreement in the field of health innovation, reports [The Jerusalem Post](#). Burwell, who took office in June 2014, met both with the United Torah Judaism MK and Israel's ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer. Teams from the two countries will work together to advance health and the quality of medical treatment in Israel and the U.S. In the meeting, it was decided that both countries would invest in cancer and other research and to promote cooperation in the field of aging and health quality indicators. Burwell told Litzman that she was "very impressed with Israel innovation in medicine," adding that she "regarded Israel as a devoted partner in advancing health in the world."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

The Israeli Army Unit That Recruits Teens With Autism

For eight hours a day, E., 21, sits in front of multiple computer screens, scanning high-resolution satellite images for suspicious objects or movements. As a decoder of Israel's complex and often heavily civilian battlegrounds, he's been critical in preventing the loss of life of soldiers on the ground in several different situations, his officers say. For many people, combing through each millimeter of the same location from various angles would be tedious work—but E., who is on the autism spectrum, describes the job as relaxing, "like a hobby." According to [The Atlantic](#), E. (he requested his full name be withheld to comply with army protocol) is a corporal in the Israel Defense Force's "Visual Intelligence Division," otherwise known as Unit 9900, which counts dozens of Israelis on the autism spectrum among its members. The relationship is a mutually beneficial one. For these young people, the unit is an opportunity to participate in a part of Israeli life that might otherwise be closed to them.