



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending July 8, 2016

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

AIPAC Press Release: AIPAC Mourns the Passing of Elie Wiesel

AIPAC joins the world in mourning the passing of Elie Wiesel. He was a moral witness to evil and an eloquent spokesman for humanity who instructed us all about the profound meaning of the pledge "never again." He was a powerful defender of Israel and a proponent of the humanitarian and democratic values that bind together the Jewish state and America. His wise voice will be deeply missed, and all that he taught us must never be forgotten. May his memory forever be a blessing.

Key Senate Committee Votes Unanimously to Increase Military Aid to Israel

The Senate Appropriations Committee voted unanimously on June 29 to approve the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2017 ([S.3117](#)). The bill includes a \$300 million increase in military assistance to Israel over both last year's figure of \$3.1 billion and the administration's budget request for this year. State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) spearheaded the effort to include increased aid to Israel. "The bill includes a \$300 million plus-up for Israel above the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) level to support an important ally at a critical time," said Graham. "We have no better friend than Israel, and they are in the middle of the toughest neighborhood in the world." Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) also [played](#) vital roles in garnering bipartisan support for the bill. "This bill is America's public diplomacy and key tool in our national security efforts. So much important work is done through this bill. It provides assistance to our treasured allies Israel and Jordan, keeps our embassies safe, helps neighbors in this hemisphere, fights despicable human trafficking and protects vulnerable populations," [stated](#) Mikulski. "This legislation will help the U.S. respond to new and evolving global challenges," [added](#) Cochran. "The security, economic, health, and humanitarian assistance in this bill is important to protecting American interests abroad." The House Appropriations Committee is expected to markup its version of the bill next week.

Israel, U.S. test missile defense systems against thousands of simulated rockets

The United States and Israel successfully conducted a large-scale, 5-day, intercontinental exercise last month, pitting the countries' missile defense systems against a simulated attack of thousands of rockets fired from Lebanon and Iran, the Defense Ministry announced Wednesday. According to [The Times of Israel](#), six missile defense systems were tested in the simulation, which was conducted in both the United States and Israel. The Arrow 2, Arrow 3, David's Sling, Aegis, Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), all of which

protect against medium- and long-range rockets, were used in the exercise, the ministry said. “During the test, scenarios consisting of multiple missile and rocket attacks were simulated against Israel with both United States and Israel successfully employing, engaging and destroying the simulated incoming threats,” the Defense Ministry said in a statement. The US has either jointly developed or financed all three of the Israeli programs — the Iron Dome, Arrow (long-range) systems, and David’s Sling (medium-range) system. They are meant to ensure Israel can counter threats from Gaza, south Lebanon, Syria, and an Iran that is relentlessly developing its ballistic missile technology.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Three IDF Soldiers Hurt in Suspected West Bank Car Ramming Attack

On July 6th, three IDF soldiers were lightly injured in a possible car-ramming attack near the Neve Daniel settlement outside of Bethlehem, the army said. According to [The Times of Israel](#), Security officials were treating the incident as a suspected terror attack by the Palestinian driver, who was seriously hurt, although an army spokesperson did not specify what led them to this conclusion. “Initial inquiry indicates that the ramming was intentional,” the army said in a statement. According to police, it appeared that the Palestinian man “intentionally collided with the military vehicle.” The incident was, however, still being investigated to determine if it was an accident. Since October, 35 Israelis and four others have been killed and hundreds more injured in the wave of Palestinian attacks, though the violence had dramatically waned of late. Some 200 Palestinians have also been killed, some two-thirds of them while carrying out attacks and the rest in clashes with troops, Israeli officials say.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel’s Netanyahu Seeks to Make New Friends in Historic First Visit to Africa

“Israel is coming back to Africa, and Africa is coming back to Israel,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta in a joint news conference in Kenya’s capital Tuesday. The occasion marked the first official visit by an Israeli premier to sub-Saharan Africa in 30 years. Netanyahu, who arrived in neighboring Uganda on Monday, will also visit Rwanda and Ethiopia in coming days. [The Washington Post](#) reports that in Uganda, Netanyahu held a summit with leaders of seven African nations meant to strengthen ties. Israel will aim to provide them with its expertise in security and technology, and in exchange receive support from new friends who it hopes will refrain from criticizing Israeli policies and provide diplomatic backing in international forums. The African continent constitutes vast potential for Israel in very many areas,” Netanyahu said before his departure for Africa. “Many countries are seeking to open their gates to Israel, and we will realize this desire for their benefit and for the benefit of the state of Israel.”