

The week ending June 24, 2016

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **America and Israel Reach New Cybersecurity Agreement**

On June 21, the United States and Israel signed a joint declaration to increase cybersecurity cooperation between the nations. With this agreement, Israel becomes one of the first countries to join the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Automated Indicator Sharing (AIS) initiative, a program designed to automate information sharing for cyber threats between governments and the private sector. Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas underscored the importance of this program, [stating](#), "Automated data sharing could make the difference in avoiding a cyberattack." Maj. Gen. (res.) Isaac Ben-Israel, the initial founder of Israel's National Cyber Bureau and current head of Tel Aviv University's cyber department, echoed this sentiment in his [remarks](#) at the Sixth Annual International Cybersecurity Conference on June 20. "We are always collecting data from cyberattacks, and the data about the attacks is on our computers, but sometimes we see it too late," said Ben-Israel. Through the AIS initiative, the National Cyber Bureau will work with DHS to counter cyberattacks more effectively, a priority for both countries. "The declaration expresses the vital nature of an international integration of forces in order to more effectively deal with joint threats in the cyber sphere," wrote the Prime Minister's Office in a [statement](#), "especially given the commitment of the U.S. and Israeli governments to expand and deepen bilateral cooperation in cyber defense, which has grown in recent years."

### **United States and Israel Celebrate Roll Out of First Israeli F-35 Jet**

On June 22, U.S. and Israeli leaders met in Fort Worth, Texas to celebrate the [rollout](#) of the first Israeli F-35 aircraft. The Israel Air Force (IAF) is set to receive 33 F-35A jets and is also considering the option of ordering 17 more. The newly appointed Israeli Minister of Defense Avigdor Lieberman said that the F-35 jets will "beef up Israeli deterrence against its enemies" during his [address](#) at the rollout ceremony. "The State of Israel is proud to be the first in our region to receive and operate the plane," Lieberman added. "[The F-35 jet is] the most advanced in the world, and is the best selection by defense chiefs for safeguarding Israel's aerial superiority." During Lieberman's first trip to the United States as Israel's defense minister in late June, he met with his American counterpart Secretary of Defense Ash Carter in Washington to "reaffirm the strength of the U.S.-Israel defense relationship and the United States' unwavering commitment to Israel's security." While emphasizing regional security challenges in the Middle East and increased defense cooperation between the two allies, Carter and Lieberman also discussed the impact of the F-35 jets on Israel's security. "Israel will be the first foreign partner to receive the F-35, which will play a key role in maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge in the Middle East," [wrote](#) the Department of Defense. According to IAF Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Tal Kelman, Israel will create and install its own [cyber defense solutions](#) on the aircraft, as well as manufacture F-35A wings for all aircraft worldwide. Additionally, Israel's Elbit Systems has been working with Iowa-based Rockwell Collins on producing helmet mounted display systems that allow F-35 pilots to move missiles by simply turning their heads. After testing the F-35 simulator, Kelman [felt](#) he "had the future in his

hands” and that the aircraft’s technology “will lead the world to the fifth generation.” To coincide with the F-35 rollout ceremony, Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX) published an [op-ed](#) on “how important the U.S.-Israel partnership is to North Texas...and to our national defense.” “The joint efforts we are engaged in with Israel on the F-35 helmets demonstrate how our two countries must work in coordination in order to protect our nations from global threats,” wrote Veasey. “These F-35 planes incorporate the best of American manufacturing and Israeli technology and represent a partnership which will keep both of our countries safe for years to come.”

## **Senate Appropriations Committee Adopts New Provisions on Iran Sanctions**

On June 16, the Senate Appropriations Committee included key provisions on Iran sanctions as part of a report accompanying a new funding bill for fiscal year 2017. Spearheaded by Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), the new language in the Fiscal Year 2017 Financial Services and General Government Act report instructs the Department of Treasury to “conduct a full review of all sanction designation removals related to Iran in the past two years.” Under the proposed provisions, if the Treasury Department determines an entity has engaged in any sanctionable activity, it must either sanction the entity or provide written justification for why sanctions have not been imposed. The Senate committee further expressed its concern about the dramatic decrease of Iranian non-nuclear sanctions over the past two years. Since the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was announced, the United States has not sanctioned any Iranian entities for supporting terrorism or for carrying out human rights abuses. Only a handful of entities supporting Iran’s missile program have been sanctioned. “The Committee directs the Treasury Department to provide a report to the Committee, within 180 days from enactment, on the number of non-nuclear related sanctions designations related to Iran issued for the each of the past 3 fiscal years. The report shall provide an overall number of designations, and the number for each sanctions program,” wrote the Committee. Finally, the Committee expressed concern with the time Treasury takes to make sanctions determinations and directed it to “begin tracking the time between the start of each investigation into possible sanctions violations and the issuance of sanctions or closure of the investigation.” The Treasury Department will now be required to report on the average investigation time, the number of investigations carried out, the number of investigations concluded, and the number of open investigations. The bill now awaits consideration on the full Senate floor.

## **2016 U.S.-Israel Strategic Dialogue Covers Wide Range of Regional Threats**

On June 16, the United States and Israel held their annual Strategic Dialogue where they discussed tactics to increase cooperation and counter shared regional threats—including Hezbollah, Hamas, Iran and ISIS. The annual meeting is the highest level regularly scheduled diplomatic talks between the two countries. This year’s dialogue was led by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Acting Israeli National Security Advisor Brig. Gen. (Res) Jacob Nagel, and Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General Dore Gold. In a joint statement, “Both countries agreed that the dialogue underscores the strength of the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Israel, which is based upon shared values and common interests, and a commitment to ensuring Israel’s security. Both countries agreed to continue coordination on the full range of shared threats.”