



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending June 3, 2016

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

French Conference Hinders Prospects for Peace

Tomorrow, France will host a conference to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—without any Israelis or Palestinians. The French conference is being held at the ministerial level, and includes representatives from the Middle East Quartet (United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations), as well as the Arab League, the U.N. Security Council and about 20 other countries. Secretary of State John Kerry will represent the United States.

The French approach appears designed to replace U.S. efforts to bring Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table and to pressure Israel for unilateral concessions. According to reports from the past few days, the talks are believed to be aimed at formulating parameters for a solution to the core issues of a final peace deal, including borders, security, refugees, Jerusalem, settlements and water. The conference will also reportedly seek to impose a rigid set of deadlines for negotiations to take place.

While the international community's hope is to seek a peaceful resolution, the French initiative could actually hinder the pursuit of peace. A far better path forward would be for the international community to persuade the Palestinians to return to direct negotiations without preconditions—which Israel has repeatedly welcomed.

On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated Israel's opposition to internationalizing the conflict: "The path to peace is via direct negotiations and without preconditions between the parties. That's how it was in the past when we achieved peace with Egypt and also with Jordan, and that's how it needs to be with the Palestinians." Netanyahu has also expressed interest in engaging the Arab world in the peace process based on the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. The Palestinian Authority and the PLO support the conference. One member of the PLO Executive Committee, Wassel Abu Youssef has said, "Meeting the Palestinian rights is our precondition to any initiative, mainly the withdrawal from the entire occupied Palestinian territories along the 1967 borders." He also added, "We will refuse to recognize the Jewishness of the state of Israel."

[Click here to read the AIPAC Memo on the French Conference.](#)

Israel intercepts communication equipment en route to Gaza terror groups

Dozens of packages containing drone parts and other communications equipment en route to terror cells operating inside the Gaza Strip were intercepted by Israeli security forces in recent weeks, the Defense Ministry said Monday. The packages, which were shipped through the Israeli postal service, contained disassembled drones, rifle scopes, radio receivers, cellphone

signal boosters and video transmitters, a statement from the ministry said. Some of the equipment—including the 5.8 GHz video transmitters confiscated at the border crossing earlier on Monday morning—are banned for private use both in Israel and Palestinian Authority-controlled areas of the West Bank. According to [The Times of Israel](#), security forces have launched an investigation into locating the source of the equipment and those responsible for their attempted smuggling into Gaza. Earlier this year, guards at the Kerem Shalom border crossing into the southern Gaza Strip uncovered a shipment of drones equipped with high-quality cameras hidden in an Israeli truck carrying toys. Earlier that year, during Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza, the terrorist group launched two drones into Israeli airspace before they were promptly blasted out of the sky by IAF-launched Patriot missiles.

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

U.S. mulls \$1b Rafael defense missile procurement

Iron Dome's Tamir interception missile is part of Raytheon's bid for a U.S. army defense system tender. The U.S. Army is considering equipping itself with the Tamir interception missile used by the Iron Dome rocket defense system. The Tamir missile was developed in Israel by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. A few months ago, the U.S. Army published a tender for defense systems for its land forces from a range of the latest threats including rockets, drones, and naval missiles. Sources believe that the tender procedures will be completed in the next two years with Lockheed Martin and Raytheon expected to submit bids. Sources inform [Globes](#), that incorporation of the Tamir missile will be part of Raytheon's bid. If Raytheon wins the tender, then this will be the first time ever that Iron Dome's Tamir interception missile would have been sold outside of Israel. Rafael recently announced that it had participated in the first-ever interception trial for the Tamir missile in the U.S. In the trial, the Tamir missile successfully shot down a drone and more such trials are planned in the U.S. Since Iron Dome was first deployed in Israel in 2011, the defense system has shot down more than 1,500 rockets fired at Israel, mainly from the Gaza strip with Rafael claims, a 90% success rate. Raytheon is also collaborating intensively with Rafael in the development of the David's Sling medium range missile interception system.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Jerusalem's water utility and Utilis sign deals in Romania

During a business seminar led by the Israeli commercial attaché's office in Bucharest, Romania's largest water utility, Raja Constanta, signed cooperation agreements with Jerusalem's Hagihon water utility and with Israeli water-management company Utilis on May 30, 2016. According to the agreement with Hagihon, professional bilateral delegations will travel to both countries and Hagihon will help Raja Constanta prepare for various challenges – above all, the reduction of water loss, reports [Israel21c](#). Utilis will help Raja Constanta identify underground leaks by using its specialized satellite technology. "About half of Romania's population is not connected to central drinking water and sewage treatment networks," said Matan Safran, the Israeli Ministry of Economy and Industry's trade representative in Romania. Safran said the agreements "will create a permanent bridge for sharing information, knowledge and technology between both countries. I am certain that we can help more Israeli companies enter the Romanian market, which is in need of new technologies."