



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending May 6, 2016

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Second Gazan tunnel reaching into Israel found, army says

The Israeli military announced Thursday it had found a second tunnel in as many months emerging from southern Gaza into Israeli territory, as violence on the southern border spiked with a series of cross-border exchanges. The tunnel, which is slated to be destroyed in the coming days, is 28 meters deep and was located just a few kilometers from where another tunnel was located and destroyed last month, the army said. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the exact location of both tunnels has been kept under wraps by the IDF censor. Israeli troops who were fired upon in several separate incidents since Tuesday were working to uncover the tunnel and other cross-border passageways, the army confirmed in a statement. "The IDF considers above and below-ground terror activity a violation of the State of Israel's sovereignty and a threat to its citizens and deems Hamas solely responsible," a spokesperson said. "It is our job to locate and destroy them." He added the tunnel was found using a combination of technology, intelligence and engineering.

U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

House Armed Services Committee Authorizes U.S.-Israel Missile Defense Funds

On April 28, the House Armed Services Committee passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 (H.R. 4909), in a 60-2 bipartisan vote. The defense bill, which contains key pro-Israel provisions, now heads to the House of Representatives floor. The authorization is part of a two-step process. The actual funding will be allocated through an appropriations bill. The NDAA includes \$600.8 million for U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense programs. The funds will help Israel defend its citizens against rocket and missile threats, while also helping advance the capabilities of America's armed forces. The committee approved a proposal sponsored by Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-NJ) that authorizes \$25 million in directed energy research and development activities between the United States and Israel. An amendment submitted by Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO) that authorizes \$10 million in funding for U.S.-Israel tunnel cooperation efforts was approved by the committee. The committee also unanimously accepted a bipartisan proposal by Reps. Lamborn and Gwen Graham (D-FL) that directs the secretary of defense to provide a briefing on the status of anti-tunnel cooperation between the United States and Israel. Two Iran-related amendments were approved. The first requires a briefing on the Department of Defense's investigation of the Iranian seizure of American sailors. The second amends the annual report on the military power of Iran to include Tehran's cyber capabilities and information on Iranian military and security organizations responsible for detaining members of the United States Armed Forces or interfering with military operations.

State Department Authorization Bill Clears Senate

The Senate passed by unanimous consent Thursday evening a fiscal year 2016 State Department Authorization bill. The legislation reauthorizes a number of State Department activities and addresses a range of issues of concern to the pro-Israel community. The legislation strongly condemns incitement from the Palestinian Authority and urges President Abbas to discontinue all official incitement. The legislation requires the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to counter Iranian-sponsored terrorism in Middle East and reassure United States allies and partners in Middle East in the wake of the Iranian nuclear agreement. Finally, the bill requires a report from the Secretary of State on anti-Semitic activity at the United Nations. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday also took up and passed the Department of State Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017. This legislation forbids U.S. funding to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) until it takes steps to remove permanent agenda items targeting Israel. It is unclear if either bill has a path forward in the House. Congress has not passed a State Department authorization bill since 2002.

IRAN

Chevrolet, the 'Heartbeat of America,' not coming to Iran

Chevrolet, the U.S. car brand once advertised as the "Heartbeat of America," won't be rolling new models through the streets of Iran anytime soon despite the recent lifting of sanctions under a nuclear deal with world powers. According to [Fox](#), last week, as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave a speech in Iran focusing on domestic industrial production, he criticized the American automobile industry; drawing chants of "Death to America!" for - surprisingly - his criticism of fuel consumption. Farah Amhaz, a spokeswoman for GM based in Dubai, said the Detroit-based manufacturer "is fully committed to complying with U.S. sanctions, including those that continue to prohibit most transactions with Iran." "We have no plans to enter the Iranian market at this time and are taking appropriate steps to prevent local entities from importing GM vehicles into Iran," she said.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israeli chutzpah lies at the heart of America's favorite coconut drink

Two guys walk into a New York City bar in 2003 and meet a couple of Brazilian women. "What do you miss most from home?" the men ask. "Agua de coco," the women answer. Coconut water. In 2004, the two men found Vita Coco, which takes off like wildfire as consumers everywhere seek alternatives to sugary soft drinks. Today, Vita Coco is the global market leader in coconut water, the clear nutritious liquid inside young green coconuts. The company has 10 manufacturing facilities in eight tropical countries, which altogether utilize two million coconuts daily. "I never dreamed it would be this successful. My original plan was to sustain my life in Brazil," Ira Liran, the Israeli-born member of the founding duo, tells [Israel21c](#) during one of his frequent trips to visit family in Israel. "But we knew we had something special on our hands." "We're having fun and it's so important to us to make the business sustainable," says Liran. "We really want to give back to the communities where our coconuts are grown, so we do things like build schools. We constantly we want to do more."