



Rabbinic Recap

The week of August 11, 2017

HAMAS

Israeli Military Says Gaza Homes Hiding Hamas Tunnels

The Israeli military on Thursday said it has identified two residential buildings in the northern Gaza Strip as potential military targets after discovering Hamas militant tunnels underneath them. The army released satellite images of the homes, located near the Israeli border, on Thursday, a day after it struck Hamas targets in Gaza in response to a rocket strike on southern Israel. Maj. Gen. Eyal Zamir, head of Israel's Southern Command, said the situation in Gaza is "stable, but volatile." But he said the two buildings in the photos would be legitimate targets in the event of a future conflict and would draw Israeli forces into densely populated civilian areas. According to [ABC News](#), the military did not say how the tunnels had been identified. One of the buildings identified was a six-story residential building constructed in the past two years, after a 2014 war with Gaza's Hamas rulers. "The location of the tunnel shafts in these buildings is intended to disguise them under civilian cover," the army said in a statement. "In wartime, these exploited locations become legitimate military targets under international law." Israel and Hamas are bitter enemies that have fought three wars since Hamas, an Islamic militant group that seeks Israel's destruction, took control of Gaza in 2007. During a 2014 war, Hamas used tunnels to attack Israeli targets. Israel destroyed over 30 tunnels during the fighting and has identified the tunnels as a strategic threat. Israel began construction of an underground anti-tunnel barrier along the border last year. Zamir said the barrier was expected to be completed within two years.

IRAN

Iranian Drone Comes Close to U.S. Fighter Jet: U.S. Official

An unarmed Iranian drone came within 100 feet of a U.S. Navy warplane as it prepared to land on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf, a U.S. official said on Tuesday. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that despite repeated radio calls to stay clear of the U.S. plane, the Iranian drone "executed unsafe and unprofessional altitude changes" close to the U.S. Navy F/A-18E. The warplane was in a holding pattern and preparing to land aboard the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier, reports [Reuters](#). The official described the interaction as "unsafe and unprofessional." Similar incidents between the United States and Iran are not uncommon, however this appears to be the first time an Iranian drone has come dangerously close to a U.S. fighter plane in the Gulf. This was the 13th unsafe and unprofessional interaction between the United States and Iranian maritime forces in 2017, the official said. The United States has a number of military bases in the region, including in Qatar and Kuwait across the Gulf from Iran and the U.S. Fifth Fleet is based in nearby Bahrain. Earlier this year, a senior commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned the United States that if it designated the group a terrorist organization, its action could be perilous for U.S. forces in the region.

HEZBOLLAH

Ambassador Haley Presses UNIFIL to Thwart Spread of Hezbollah Weapons

On Aug. 7, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.) Nikki Haley [urged](#) the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to increase its efforts to prevent Hezbollah from acquiring illegal weapons. Haley stated that the United States is seeking "significant improvements" to UNIFIL as the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) considers later this month the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate—set to expire on Aug. 31. "These arms—which are almost entirely in the hands of Hezbollah terrorists—threaten the security and stability of the region. UNIFIL must increase its capacity and commitment to investigating and reporting these violations," said Haley. Ambassador Haley's statement came in response to an Aug. 4 letter from U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to the UNSC regarding ways UNIFIL could potentially "enhance its efforts." "We share the Secretary-General's strong desire to enhance UNIFIL's efforts to prevent the spread of illegal arms in southern Lebanon," said Haley. "The United States will continue to raise the threat posed by Hezbollah as we seek significant improvements to UNIFIL when the Security Council renews its mandate this month."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

SpaceIL Craft on Assembly Line as Race to Moon Nears

Israel's SpaceIL, one of only five teams remaining in the multi-million-dollar Google Lunar XPrize race to the moon, is starting to assemble the craft to be launched in 2018, according to SpaceIL CEO Eran Privman. "We are thrilled to share with you that the various parts and components of the spacecraft are in advanced stages of manufacture in Israel and abroad," he announced this week. The competition began 10 years ago with 33 teams vying to be the first to soft-land a privately funded, unmanned robot on the moon, move it 500 meters across the moon's surface and transmit high-definition video and photos back to Earth. The top prize is \$20 million. According to [ISRAEL21c](#), the nonprofit SpaceIL was the last to register, at the end of 2010, but was the first to secure the required launch contract. "Six years of intensive activity, successful trials, development, manufacture and testing of all the complex systems that will be installed in the spacecraft...will allow us to realize our national mission and join the exclusive and prestigious group of superpowers that have landed on the moon to date: The USA, the former Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China," said Privman. The SpaceIL craft will bring a lunar magnetometer from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot to study the magnetic fields on the surface of the moon. "Additionally, we have acquired a new camera – one of the five cameras that will be assembled on the spacecraft," Privman said. "The camera is a technologically complex optic system that was developed specifically for us, and meets the requirements of the Google Lunar X Prize competition. The only others that have made it this far in the competition are teams from India, Japan and the United States, as well as an international team of individuals from about 15 countries."