



Rabbinic Recap

The week of June 30, 2017

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Key Congressional Committees Advance U.S.-Israel Missile Defense Funds

On June 29, the House Appropriations Committee and the House and Senate Armed Services Committees [advanced](#) U.S.-Israel missile defense assistance and cooperation in the 2018 defense appropriations and authorizations bills. These funds will help Israel defend its citizens against rocket and missile threats, and contribute to America's missile defense programs. These committees provided a total of \$705 million for research and development and procurement funding for the Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense systems. This funding represents a \$558 million increase above the president's budget request for these programs, and \$105 million over last year's adopted funding level. The Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to consider its version of the defense bill later this year. The inclusion of these vital funds was specifically made possible through the leadership of House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) and Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY), House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairwoman Kay Granger (R-TX) and Ranking Member Peter Visclosky (D-IN), House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-TX) and Ranking Member Adam Smith (D-WA), House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Chairman Mike Rogers (R-AL) and Ranking Member Jim Cooper (D-TN), Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) and Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI), and Senate Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Strategic Forces Chairwoman Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Ranking Member Joe Donnelly (D-IN).

Mattis, Lieberman Discuss "Regional Strategy" Amid Escalation in the Golan Heights

On June 27, U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman met at the annual Munich Security Conference to [discuss](#) "regional strategy" and the ongoing cooperation between the Israeli and U.S. militaries. The meeting comes on the heels of three separate incidents in the Golan Heights in which errant shells fired from Syria landed in Israeli territory, forcing the Jewish state to respond against Syrian targets. "We won't hold back if necessary and when needed we will respond with all our might," [said](#) Lieberman. "Anyone that wants to turn Syria into an Iranian base against Israel should think again." The issue of Iran's expanding regional aggression was a major focus of Mattis' April trip to Israel—his first since becoming defense secretary. "Iran continues to threaten Israel and its neighbors with ballistic missiles through its maritime and cyber activities and through proxies and surrogates, including Lebanese Hezbollah, a terrorist organization helping to keep [Syrian dictator Bashar Assad] in power in Syria," he [said](#) in an April 21 joint press conference with Lieberman. To counter this mounting threat, Mattis [reaffirmed](#) America's commitment to Israel's qualitative military edge: "The United States maintains absolute and unwavering commitment to Israel's security and to

its qualitative military edge over Iran or other threats...Our alliance with Israel is the cornerstone of a larger regional security architecture, which includes cooperation with Egypt, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf partners.”

IRAN

Iran Targeted Star of David in Ballistic Missile Test, Israel Says

Iran used a Star of David as a target for missile test last year, Israel said Wednesday, distributing satellite images of the site to the United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) on Wednesday. “This use of the Star of David as target practice is hateful and unacceptable,” Israel’s Ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.) Danny Danon wrote in a complaint to the Council. Grainy photos provided to U.N. members showed what Danon said was the Jewish and Israeli symbol as the target in a test of a ballistic missile carried out last year with the impact crater visible next to it, reports [The Times of Israel](#). “The missile launch is not only a direct violation of UNSCR 2231, but is also a clear evidence of Iran’s continued intention to harm the State of Israel,” Danon said, adding that “the targeting of a sacred symbol of Judaism is abhorrent.” “It is the Iranians who prop up the Assad regime as hundreds of thousands are killed, finance the terrorists of Hezbollah as they threaten the citizens of Israel, and support extremists and tyrants throughout the Middle East and around the world,” he added. Earlier this month Iran fired missiles at Syria, targeting Islamic State positions in the first missile attack by Iran outside its own territory in 30 years, since the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said after the attack, “I have one message for Iran: Don’t threaten Israel.”

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

\$1 Billion Israeli Renewable Energy Commitment to Africa

Israeli renewable energy company Energiya Global will invest \$1 billion over the next four years to expand green power projects across 15 West African countries. This initiative is a key aspect of a June 2 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Israel and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), according to [ISRAEL21c](#). “In honor of...Liberia’s friendship with the State of Israel, Energiya Global and our international partners will finance and build a commercial-scale solar field at Roberts International Airport, which will supply 25 percent of the country’s generation capacity,” said Energiya Global Chief Executive Officer Yosef Abramowitz. Israeli Minister of Knesset and Chairman of the Israel-Africa Caucus Avraham Neguise stated: “With 600 million Africans without electricity, the State of Israel can literally help African heads of state bring power to the African people. We look forward to working with ECOWAS to deploy \$1 billion over the next four years, starting with this first investment of \$20 million in Liberia by Energiya Global.” Energiya Global and its associated companies established the first commercial-scale solar field in sub-Saharan Africa in Rwanda, and it now has fields at varying stages of development in ten African nations. The memorandum’s announcement coincided with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech at the ECOWAS Summit in Liberia on June 4, marking the first time a non-African leader was invited to speak at the forum. Netanyahu outlined Israeli technological innovations in agriculture, water and green energy that can support economic development in West Africa. The resulting MOU will promote investments, technology and cooperation.