



Rabbinic Recap

The week of May 5, 2017

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Critical Pro-Israel Funding Contained in Omnibus Bill

On May 4, the Senate joined the House of Representatives in passing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which includes key provisions to help Israel address critical security challenges. The bill provides \$3.1 billion plus an additional \$75 million in overall security assistance to Israel. It also contains \$600.7 million for vital joint U.S.-Israel missile defense programs, representing a \$113 million increase over FY 2016. The sum includes \$268.7 million in research and development funding for U.S.-Israel cooperative missile and rocket defense programs; \$62 million for procurement of the Iron Dome rocket defense system; \$150 million for procurement of the David's Sling missile defense system; and \$120 million for procurement of the Arrow-3 missile defense system. The legislation provides for a majority of these procurement funds to be spent in the United States. In addition, Congress included \$42.5 million for continued U.S.-Israel joint development of technologies to address the complex challenge of locating, mapping and destroying terrorist tunnel networks. The bill also includes a provision that reduces aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) on a dollar-for-dollar basis for any support the PA, the Palestine Liberation Organization and any successor or affiliated organization provides to Palestinian terrorists or their families. Congress further included \$2 million for U.S.-Israel energy cooperation and \$11.8 million for a water desalination grant program that now incentives cooperation with Israel.

Entire Senate Issues Bipartisan Call to End Anti-Israel Bias at the U.N.

On April 27, the U.S. Senate unanimously urged U.N. Secretary General António Guterres to end the United Nations' anti-Israel bias. In a bipartisan letter led by Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Chris Coons (D-DE), the entire Senate pressed the Secretary General "to engage member states in a comprehensive effort to directly confront and root out this bias." The letter notes, "While much good is being done and has been done by the body, many of its member states and agencies are using the U.N.'s privileged platform to advance an anti-Israel agenda." The letter continues, "Although, as Republicans and Democrats, we disagree on many issues, we are united in our desire to see the United Nations improve its treatment of Israel and to eliminate anti-Semitism in all its forms." The senators call upon the Secretary General "to pursue a comprehensive effort" to improve the U.N.'s treatment of Israel in several areas, such as addressing the anti-Israel activities of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and ending the unfair and imbalanced focus on Israel by the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC), to include removal of "Agenda Item VII" that targets Israel as a permanent agenda item. Noting that the United States is the "U.N.'s principal founding member and its largest contributor," the letter concludes by making clear to the Secretary General that the current situation targeting Israel "must change."

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

The New Hamas Charter – No Moderation Here

Hamas Politburo chairman Khaled Mashaal on Monday presented a new policy document at a press conference in Doha, Qatar. While some observers have interpreted the document as Hamas moderating its positions on Israel, the details of the document show that Hamas is not undertaking major changes. Observers say that Hamas's acceptance of a Palestinian state along pre-1967 borders as "a national consensus" indicates that Hamas is positioning itself to make territorial compromises with Israel, according to [The Jerusalem Post](#). However, Hamas makes clear throughout the document that it is not prepared to make such a compromise. "Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea," the document states. It also says that Hamas refuses to recognize Israel, as the Palestine Liberation Organization did in 1993. "There shall be no recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist entity," the document reads. Taken together, Hamas's rejection of territorial compromise and recognizing Israel leaves no room to believe it is moving in the direction of making concessions to Israel. Another important question is: Why Hamas spent the past four years producing a new policy document? According to Mashaal, the document was created to explain Hamas's policy and positions to Palestinians, the Arab world and the broader international community. "We are presenting this document to Hamas members... the Palestinian people, of which we are an important part, our partners in the homeland, the Islamic and Arab masses and the regional and international community," Mashaal said. "We are saying to them: This is Hamas."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel to host water conference in Austin, Texas

Israel will showcase its water technologies in a first-of-its-kind event in Austin, Texas, on May 5, to senior officials from the Texas water industry. The conference, organized by the Israeli Economic Delegation of the Ministry of Economy and Industry, based in Houston, will be held directly after the [Offshore Technology Conference](#), the largest energy exhibition in the world. The water event will be dedicated to the "promotion of innovative and groundbreaking Israeli water technologies" that were developed in Israel to improve and optimize water consumption on municipal and state levels, the organizers said in a statement. The conference's featured speaker will be Sid Miller, the current Texas agriculture commissioner. In addition, eight Israeli water and infrastructure companies will present their products and technologies in various fields of water management. According to [The Times of Israel](#), attending will be 200 representatives from the Texas water industry, local Texas authorities, and water corporations. The event is sponsored in part by the Texas-Israel Chamber of Commerce and will feature opening remarks by the new Israeli economic attaché, Shay Luvshis. The conference is held in partnership with the Israeli Innovation Authority, the Israeli Water Authority, senior government officials and members of the Texas Congress. The conference aims not only to create a stronger connection between the Israeli and Texas water industries, but to encourage key government officials and local authorities to participate in the [WATEC Exhibition](#), which is taking place in Israel Sept. 12-14. WATEC is one of the largest exhibitions in the world for companies, decision makers, professionals and thought leaders in the water sector, the statement said. "This is a significant event for the water industry, and the first of its kind in the state of Texas," said Luvshis.