



Rabbinic Recap

The week of December 15, 2017

PALESTINIANS

Abbas 'Distorting' Trump's Jerusalem Remarks and Preventing Peace, White House Says

The White House hit back against PA President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday over a speech he delivered in Istanbul dismissing any role for Washington in the Middle East peace process, following U.S. President Donald Trump's recognition last week of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, [The Jerusalem Post reported](#). Slamming Abbas's rhetoric as a distortion of the facts and detrimental to the pursuit of peace, a senior White House official said that the Trump administration would continue heads down in its effort to restart direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians. But Abbas said earlier on Wednesday that the U.S. had relinquished its historic position as a fair negotiator, and "from now on" could no longer mediate serious peace talks. He characterized the U.S. policy shift move as a "crime" and a gift to the "Zionist movement," and claimed that the Trump administration had gone back on an agreement not to move its embassy to Jerusalem in exchange for a Palestinian commitment not to join additional international bodies as a state. [...] A senior White House official responded forcefully to the speech. "The president remains as committed to peace as ever," the official said. "This rhetoric, which has prevented peace for years, is not surprising, as we anticipated reactions like this. We will remain hard at work, putting together our plan, which will benefit the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. It is also important to ignore the distortions and instead focus on what the president actually said last week – the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final-status negotiations between the parties, the United States continues to take no position on any final-status issues, and the United States would support a two-state solution if agreed to by both sides," the official continued. "We will continue to work on our plan for peace that we hope will offer the best outcome for both peoples, and look forward to unveiling it when it is ready and the time is right." Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed the rhetoric voiced in Turkey against the U.S. decision on Jerusalem, saying simply, "All these statements do not impress us." Netanyahu said it would be better for the Palestinians to "recognize reality and work toward peace and not extremism."

IRAN

DoD Shows Iranian Weapons as Proof of Tehran's Duplicitous Ambitions

Successive U.S. administrations have warned of Iran's malign influence in the Middle East, but lying in a hangar at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling here is concrete proof that the Iranian regime is exporting arms to sow instability and promote violence throughout the region, [according to a U.S. Department of Defense report](#). In the hangar are three intact Iranian weapon systems and debris from a fourth, recovered from the battlefields of the Middle East that can be directly traced to Tehran. "In October, President [Donald J.] Trump announced a new strategy to

address the totality of Iranian threats and malign activities: nuclear; ballistic missile development and proliferation; counter-maritime operations; cyber; and support to terrorism and unconventional warfare,” said Laura Seal, a Defense Department spokesperson. “Part of the president’s strategy is to clearly show how Iran continues to defy the international community by violating United Nations resolutions.” The equipment in the hangar is proof of Iran’s malicious strategy, Seal said. “We present this evidence so that we, our allies and international partners -- including organizations like the [United Nations] -- can be clear eyed about Iran’s activities as we work together,” Seal said. Specifically, the hangar contains “objects that provide evidence of Iranian weapons proliferation in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 2216 and 2231,” Seal said. The U.N. has repeatedly sanctioned Iran for its illicit proliferation.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Israelis train Philippine EMS teachers for mass disasters

A Magen David Adom (MDA) delegation recently went to the Philippines to train instructors for emergency medicine teams on dealing with mass casualty incidents, [Israel21c noted](#). MDA, Israel’s national ambulance, blood-services and disaster-relief organization, has been collaborating for more than two years with the Philippine Red Cross in order to strengthen lifesaving capabilities and emergency response in the Asian island country. The Philippines is prone to typhoons, volcanos, earthquakes as well as armed conflicts, which require a high level of skilled medical and rescue forces. “Over the past few years, the Philippines Red Cross has been able to improve, with the help of MDA’s professional trainings, their emergency response system that aims to provide response to disasters,” said Menachem Blumental, senior MDA paramedic and one of the instructors in the delegation. “During the last mission, we worked on improving preparedness and management of mass casualty incidents.” The training was led by the Philippine Red Cross in collaboration with MDA, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the Israeli Embassy in the Philippines and the American Red Cross.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel’s Technion ranked #1 worldwide in digital education

The newest Times Higher Education survey ranks the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa as the world’s top academic institution in terms of preparing students for leading positions in the digital revolution, as [reported by Israel21c](#). Survey respondents from global companies ranked University College of London second and Korea Institute of Science and Technology third. The only American school in the top 10 was Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in sixth place. “This is a badge of honor for Technion,” said Technion President Prof. Peretz Lavie. “In recent years, Technion has placed considerable emphasis on training its students to meet the changing needs of the digital revolution. As a result, Technion’s interdisciplinary research is expanding and advancing by leaps and bounds, in a process integrating life sciences and engineering.”