



Rabbinic Recap

The week of August 4, 2017

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Senate Committee Adopts Legislation to Penalize Palestinian Terrorist Payments

On Aug. 3, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee [adopted](#) the Taylor Force Act (S. 1697), bipartisan legislation which would eliminate funding that directly benefits the Palestinian Authority (PA) if it continues its abhorrent practice of paying salaries to terrorists or their families. This practice only serves to incentivize terrorism and set back the pursuit of peace. The bill—named in honor of U.S. Army veteran Taylor Force, who was brutally murdered in a March 2016 terrorist attack in Tel Aviv—was adopted by the key Senate committee with strong bipartisan support. Current law requires a reduction of U.S. assistance by an amount equivalent to that paid by the PA, the Palestine Liberation Organization, or any affiliated organization to individuals that committed acts of terrorism or their families. However, this important step has not yet put an end to Palestinian incitement, necessitating the increased pressure provided by the Taylor Force Act. The legislation does not affect U.S. funding for security cooperation, nor does it cut humanitarian programs if the U.S. government can certify that the PA is taking credible steps to end violence against Israelis and Americans.

IRAN

Key Iran Sanctions Bill Signed into Law

On Aug. 2, President Donald Trump [signed](#) the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (H.R.3364) into law. The bipartisan legislation—overwhelmingly adopted by the Senate on July 27 and the House of Representatives on July 25—strengthens sanctions targeting Iran's ballistic missile program, destabilizing actions in the Middle East, human rights abuses and illicit conventional weapons trade. "This legislation is the product of very careful, and sometimes difficult, negotiations on a bipartisan basis," said House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) in a floor statement prior to the vote. "It...imposes new sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program, which threatens the United States, our Gulf allies, and Israel." "...Tehran continues to threaten Israel by providing funding and advanced rockets to Hezbollah, its leading terrorist proxy," said House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA). "It continues to hold Americans hostage while developing intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons." In addition to Iran, H.R. 3364 would also require sanctions on Russia and North Korea. "With near unanimous support in both chambers of Congress, this legislation sends a strong signal to Iran, Russia and North Korea that our country will stand firm and united in the face of their destabilizing behavior," said Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-TN).

At U.N., Western Powers Warn Iran Rocket Test a 'Threatening Step'

The United States, Britain, France and Germany warned the United Nations (U.N.) on Wednesday that Iran had taken "a threatening and provocative step" by testing a rocket capable of delivering satellites into orbit and asked the U.N. chief to investigate. In a report submitted to the U.N. Security Council's Iran sanctions committee and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the four countries described the July 27 launch as inconsistent with a 2015 U.N. Security Council resolution. They asked Guterres to report "fully and thoroughly on Iran's ballistic missile and space launch activity" to the 15-member Security Council. Most U.N. sanctions were lifted 18 months ago under a deal Iran made with key world powers to curb its nuclear program, reports [Reuters](#). But Iran is still subject to an arms embargo and other restrictions, which are not technically part of the nuclear agreement. Guterres reports every six months to the Security Council on the implementation of the remaining sanctions and restrictions. "The technologies necessary for the conception, the fabrication and the launch of space launch vehicles are closely related to those of ballistic missiles, in particular to those of an intercontinental ballistic missile," the four powers wrote in their report, seen by Reuters. "This launch therefore represents a threatening and provocative step by Iran," they wrote. "Iran's longstanding program to develop ballistic missiles continues to be inconsistent with (the U.N. resolution) and has a destabilizing effect in the region." U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley submitted the report on behalf of the four countries.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israeli Scientist Develops Early Diagnostic Test for Parkinson's

The exciting news coming out of Israel, that a scientist has developed a groundbreaking test to categorically detect Parkinson's disease, is giving the medical and science worlds hope for the future. Suaad Abd-Elhadi, a PhD student at the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Faculty of Medicine, has developed the lipid ELISA diagnostic tool. She won the Kaye Innovation Award for 2017 for the breakthrough invention of this highly sensitive kit that may lead to earlier detection of Parkinson's disease, along with better tracking of the disease's progression and a patient's response to therapy. According to [ISRAEL21c](#), Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder in humans, after Alzheimer's disease. It is typically characterized by changes in motor control such as tremors and shaking, but can also include non-motor symptoms, from the cognitive to the behavioral. An estimated seven to 10 million people worldwide are living with Parkinson's disease, with medication costing approximately \$2,500 a year, and therapeutic surgery costing up to \$100,000 per patient. Making an accurate diagnosis of Parkinson's, particularly in early stages and mild cases, is difficult, and there are currently no standard diagnostic tests other than clinical information provided by the patient and the findings of a neurological exam. Once Parkinson's is revealed, the disease is usually already progressing. "Earlier diagnosis can help by seeing how a given drug affects the progress of the disease, for example," Abd-Elhadi told Haaretz. "A big problem is that early PD looks just like other neurodegenerative diseases, which hinders appropriate care," she explained. "A great deal of effort is presently being put into delaying the progress of PD, for which purpose one needs to know that one has it."