



Rabbinic Recap

The week of July 14, 2017

ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS

Israel, Palestinians Reach Landmark Water Deal for West Bank, Gaza

Israel and the Palestinian Authority on Thursday announced an agreement that will provide millions of cubic meters of drinking water to the Palestinians from a desalination process. While the Palestinians made plain that the deal, brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump's envoy Jason Greenblatt, has no impact on final-status issues in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Greenblatt hailed it as a "harbinger of things to come." At a joint press conference in Jerusalem, however, Greenblatt refused to take any questions regarding his bid to relaunch peace negotiations, reports [The Times of Israel](#). The agreement announced Thursday is part of a larger trilateral agreement for the construction of a 220-kilometer (137-mile) pipeline transferring water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea—the lowest body of water on earth—to benefit Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians, and replenish the dwindling Dead Sea. As the water runs down the gradient it will be used to generate electricity that will also power a desalination plant to produce drinking water. "The United States welcomes the agreement reached by the Palestinian Authority and the government of Israel, which will allow for the sale of 32 million cubic meters of water from Israel to the Palestinian Authority. In addition, we hope that the deal will contribute to the healing of the Dead Sea and that will help not only Palestinians and Israelis but Jordanians as well," said Greenblatt. "This agreement is an example of the parties working together to make a mutual beneficial deal," he said. "I am proud of the role the United States and international partners have played in helping the partners reach this deal and I hope it is a harbinger of things to come," Greenblatt said.

HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah Threatens to 'Surprise Israel' With New Military Edge in Any Upcoming War

Hezbollah has vowed to "surprise Israel" during any upcoming conflict, upping the war of words between the Lebanese Shi'ite terror group and Israel. The most recent threat came directly from the head of Hezbollah's Executive Council Sayyed Hashem Safieddine in an interview yesterday with the Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Manar television channel. Safieddine said that the group has been changing and developing new military capabilities as both Israel and Lebanon mark 11 years since the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War. According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), Safieddine, who oversees Hezbollah's social and economic activities and was added to the United States counter-terrorism blacklist in March, said that Israeli reports on Hezbollah weaponry are "inaccurate as the enemy intelligence agencies can never reach veracious data in this context." Israel fought against Hezbollah in war that lasted 34 days in 2006. Since then, hostilities between the two countries have been limited to occasional cross-border fire and

reported airstrikes by Israel against Hezbollah leaders and military equipment in Syria, where the group is fighting in support of President Bashar Assad. Last week, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Gadi Eisenkot said that the IDF has used the time since the Second Lebanon War to dramatically improve its abilities and now has better intelligence and operational capabilities than ever before.

IRAN

Iran Seeking Nuclear Weapons Technology, German Intel Says

Damning German intelligence reports emerged in June and July revealing the Iranian regime's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons and missile technology in defiance of international sanctions and United Nations resolutions. A federal intelligence report also said that the Islamic Republic targets Jewish and Israeli institutions with espionage. According to the German state of Hamburg's intelligence agency: "there is no evidence of a complete about-face in Iran's atomic policies in 2016" [after the Islamic Republic signed the JCPOA accord with world powers in 2015, designed to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief]. According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), Iran sought missile carrier technology necessary for its rocket program." Germany's federal domestic intelligence agency—the rough equivalent of Shin Bet—said in its report on Tuesday: "The State of Israel, its representatives and supporters as well as members of the Jewish religious community are among the declared enemies of Iran. Even the agreement made between Iran and the Western world to settle the nuclear conflict has not changed this attitude. Therefore, Iranian intelligence-related organizations continue to spy on (pro-)Jewish and Israeli targets in Germany." A telling example of Iran's evasion sanctions strategy involved the assistance of a Chinese front company. The intelligence agency wrote that a Chinese import-export company contacted a company in the southern German state that sells "complex metal producing machines."

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel Earmarks Funds for Special-Needs Technology

Apps that help children on the autistic spectrum and wheelchair users are among the projects that have received NIS 3 million (\$845,000) in funding from the Israel Innovation Authority (IIA) for the development of technological solutions for populations with special needs. Among the approved projects are two applications aimed at children on the autistic spectrum. The first is intended to enable autistic children to communicate more effectively, and the second is intended to help develop their social skills, reports [The Times of Israel](#). The IIA also approved the development of a system that enables the visually impaired to receive information that will help them orient themselves in public spaces and even help them carry out various day-to-day activities. Another approved project is for the development of an electro-mechanical device intended for offices open to the public. The device will enable people in wheelchairs to open doors using their cellphones. An additional project aims to help the disabled with physical limitations, such as ALS patients, communicate through the movement of their pupils alone. "These funds have been allocated to develop technologies designed to help people with disabilities meet daily challenges, to increase awareness and to support businesses integrating people with special needs into the economy and society." Economy Minister Eli Cohen said in a statement. "As a society, we must promote equal opportunity and I commend the use of one of our greatest resources, Israeli innovation, to meet these particular challenges. These projects can effect real change in the lives of real people."