



Rabbinic Recap

The week of July 28, 2017

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

House Overwhelmingly Adopts Iran Sanctions Legislation

On July 25, the House of Representatives [overwhelmingly adopted](#) the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (H.R. 3364), bipartisan legislation that 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. "The multitude of threats posed to our national security by Iran, Russia, and North Korea cannot be understated," stated Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI). "These bad actors have long sought to undermine the United States and disrupt global stability. Our job in Congress is to hold them accountable. The bill we just passed with overwhelming bipartisan support is one of the most expansive sanctions packages in history. It tightens the screws on our most dangerous adversaries in order to keep Americans safe." The bill now awaits consideration in the Senate.

ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Clashes Erupt at Temple Mount as Muslim Worshipers Return to Site

Thousands of Muslim worshipers entered the Temple Mount on Thursday for the first time in nearly two weeks, as violent clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israeli security forces at the compound. A police officer was lightly injured after a rock was thrown at his head, police said. Some 46 Palestinians were hurt in the clashes both inside the compound and in the surrounding area, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent. Police said worshipers began hurling rocks at security forces upon their reentry to the compound. Some stones fell at the Western Wall plaza below, causing no injuries, a police spokesperson said. The police responded to the stone-throwing with riot dispersal methods and vowed to forcefully combat any violence. After Israel removed the metal detectors and other security measures around the compound installed by police after a July 14 terrorist attack, Palestinians were given the all-clear by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Jerusalem's Muslim religious authorities on Thursday to end their 12-day boycott of the holy site, reports [The Times of Israel](#).

However, a last-minute confrontation erupted at the Huta Gate where two Israeli policemen were killed on July 14 by three Arab Israeli gunmen who had smuggled weapons into the site.

IRAN

U.S. Navy Ship Fired Warning Shots at an Iranian Boat in the Persian Gulf

A U.S. Navy ship fired warning shots at an armed Iranian patrol boat Tuesday in the northern end of the Persian Gulf, according to two U.S. defense officials. The Iranian boat is believed to have been operated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, according to a defense official familiar with details of the incident. The officials said the Iranian boat approached and came within 150 yards of the USS Thunderbolt, a U.S. Navy patrol ship. The USS Thunderbolt was accompanied by the USS Vella Gulf, which is a Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser, and two U.S. Coast Guard vessels at the time, reports [CNN](#). The Iranians did not respond to any warnings from the U.S. ship, including radio calls, firing of flares and five short blasts from the U.S. Navy ship's whistle, which is the internationally recognized communications signal for danger, the officials said. The Navy ship then fired warning shots into the water over concerns about the possibility of a collision, one of the officials said. The Iranian ship then ceased its provocative actions but lingered in the area for some hours, one of the officials said. There were several U.S. Navy ships in the immediate vicinity at the time of the incident conducting routine patrol operations in international waters, according to the defense officials. Iran's Revolutionary Guard is claiming that it "foiled the U.S. warship's provocative move against an Iranian Navy patrol boat in the Persian Gulf," according to a statement published by Iran's official news agency IRNA.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israeli Startup Maps Genome of Cotton, Sweet Potato for Better Crops

NRGene, the Israeli startup that has mapped the genome for bread, pasta and wild emmer wheat, said that it has now mapped the genome for the most common cotton breed and the sweet potato, giving researchers critical insights for developing healthier plants with higher yields. NRGene said it partnered with Genosys Inc. (TGS Singapore), a distributor of genomics technologies in China, to assemble the genome makeup of Upland Cotton, the most common cotton used for clothing, in less than seven weeks. A similar effort used to take years and cost many millions of dollars, the company said. Upland Cotton makes up 90 percent of the global cotton grown around the world and is used to produce most of the world's clothing, the company said. The genomic makeup of *Gossypium barbadense*, also known as extra-long staple cotton, which is used in luxury cotton fabric, was also mapped, the company said in a statement. "Cotton is one of the world's most important non-food agricultural crops," said NRGene CEO Gil Ronen in a statement. "By delivering critical insights into its makeup, we're helping researchers develop healthier plants with higher yields that require fewer resources." According to [The Times of Israel](#), seed developers worldwide spend billions of dollars and years to develop new, more nutritious and resilient varieties of seeds. These in turn enable farmers to grow bigger quantities of more nutritious and more resilient crops. This is crucial for a world that will have to feed and dress an expected 9.7 billion people by 2050. Demand for food globally is expected to rise at least 20 percent over the next 15 years, according to a May 2017 World Bank report.