



Rabbinic Recap

The week of June 16, 2017

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Senate Overwhelmingly Adopts Bill Targeting Iran's Dangerous Behavior

On June 15, the Senate overwhelmingly adopted bipartisan legislation in a 98-2 vote that would impose sanctions targeting Iran's ballistic missile program, its destabilizing actions in the Middle East, its human rights abuses, and its conventional weapons trade. Authored by Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) Chairman Bob Corker (R-TN), Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and SFRC Ranking Member Ben Cardin (D-MD), The Countering Iran's Destabilizing Activities Act of 2017 (S.722) is directed exclusively at Iran's non-nuclear regional aggression, and in no way does it violate the letter or spirit of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The legislation specifically mandates sanctions on persons that engage in any activity that materially contributes to Iran's ballistic missile activity. The mandate includes persons engaged in any efforts to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer or use ballistic missiles. Another important provision authorizes the president to impose sanctions on Iranians responsible for human rights violations against those who seek to promote human rights or expose illegal government activity. "Iran is destabilizing the Middle East and this needs to stop. We need to show Israel, our closest ally that we are serious about cracking down on Iran," said Sen. John Thune (R-SD). "For too long, Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism and their repeated ballistic missile tests in defiance of a U.N. Security Council Resolution have destabilized the Middle East and threatened Israel, our strongest ally in the region," said Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI).

Haley Slams U.N. Human Rights Report for 'Singling out Israel'

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.) Nikki Haley on Tuesday slammed a report by the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights for its "unfair bias" in "singling out Israel." The U.S. envoy condemned a report released just a day earlier that accused both Israel and the Palestinians for failing to probe war crimes, but focused heavily on Israel's "repeated failure" to "comply with the calls for accountability made by the entire human rights system," reports [The Times of Israel](#). Haley, who just last week warned the Human Rights Council in Geneva that the United States might leave the body if they did not make several reforms, including changing its treatment of Israel, argued the report placed disproportionate blame on the Jewish state. "This report is just the latest example of the Human Rights Council singling out Israel rather than focusing on the world's actual human rights abusers," she said. "Not only does it undermine the credibility of the Human Rights Council on human rights issues, but it once again highlights the unfair bias of the U.N. when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." Since joining Trump administration, Haley has been emphatic in her commitment to Israel and seeking initiate changes at the U.N., particularly regarding its handling on Israel-related issues.

HAMAS

UNRWA Uncovers Hamas-Dug Tunnel Under School in Gaza

The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees uncovered a tunnel belonging to Hamas under a boys' elementary school in the Gaza Strip, according to a statement released by the organization on Friday. The tunnel was discovered by workers of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on June 1 under the school, which is part of a compound comprising other schools in the Maghazi refugee camp in the Gaza Strip near the city of Deir al-Balah. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the tunnel, between two and three meters underground, passes under the Maghazi Elementary Boys A&B School and the Maghazi Preparatory Boys School, and was built both westward into the Palestinian enclave and eastward toward the security fence with Israel, according to UNRWA. "The discovery was made during the summer vacation, at a time when the schools are empty, and in the course of work related to the construction of an extension of one of the buildings," UNRWA said, adding that the tunnel "has no entry or exit points on the premises nor is it connected to the schools or other buildings in any way." The agency said it condemns "the existence of such tunnels in the strongest possible terms," adding that it was "unacceptable that students and staff are placed at risk in such a way." "We demand they desist from any activities or conduct that put beneficiaries and staff at risk and undermine the ability of U.N. staff to provide assistance to Palestine refugees in safety and security," the agency said. "The construction and presence of tunnels under U.N. premises are incompatible with the respect of privileges and immunities owed to the United Nations under applicable international law, which provides that U.N. premises shall be inviolable. The sanctity and neutrality of U.N. premises must be preserved at all times," the statement read.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Seedling Startups Reach Full Bloom in Israel's Incubators

Lenore Shoham's year-old ag-tech startup, InPlant Technologies, is adapting drug-delivery technology to improve the efficiency of agrochemicals and fertilizers. InPlant is housed where it was born, in a lab at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa. But Shoham's "baby" is being incubated by Trendlines Agtech, one of 19 franchisees of the Technological Incubators Program (TIP) of the government's Israel Innovation Authority (IIA). "We decided the best way to maximize the value of the technology is to establish an independent company around it to do deals with industry partners," Shoham tells [ISRAEL21c](#). "There were no other ways to do this than to go via incubators. It's very, very difficult to find early-stage or pre-seed funding for projects in general and certainly in agriculture." Of course, she's hoping that InPlant will follow in the footsteps of some spectacular success stories coming out of TIP over the past 26 years. Three examples are CyActive (incubated at JVP Cyber Labs), acquired by PayPal in 2015 for an estimated \$60 million; Protalix Biotherapeutics (incubated at Meytav), whose plant-based Eleyso is FDA-approved for treating Gaucher disease; and wearable robotic exoskeleton developer ReWalk, incubated at the Technion and now sold worldwide. Shoham says Trendlines helped her build a professional team and is actively involved on a daily basis in focusing InPlant's strategy and business development, referring potential partners and investors, advising on marcom and purchasing, and funding the legal work. TIP's model has sparked interest from other countries, where incubators typically are sponsored by a private company, municipality or academic institution.