



Rabbinic Recap

The week of February 16, 2018

IRAN

Lessons from the Iranian Incursion

[AIPAC's News Hub](#) noted that Israeli leaders have long warned that Iran's growing entrenchment in Syria can lead to a military confrontation. On Feb. 10, Iran provocatively carried out perhaps its most brazen incursion ever into Israeli territory: Iranian forces based in Syria launched a military drone into Israeli airspace. An Israel Air Force (IAF) Apache helicopter intercepted and destroyed the unmanned aerial vehicle. In direct response to Iran's provocation, a formation of IAF F-16 fighter jets destroyed the Iranian command-and-control center used to operate the drone. As the fighter jets returned to Israel, Syrian anti-aircraft forces damaged one, leading the pilots to eject over northern Israel. This incident was the first time since 1982 that an Israeli fighter jet was destroyed by enemy action. Israel retaliated for the loss of its fighter with its most significant engagement in Syria in decades. The Israel Air Force destroyed 12 Syrian and Iranian military targets in Syria, including a significant part of Syria's air defense system. As of this writing, thankfully there have been no further exchanges of fire. Iran's aggressive action follows a dramatic increase in Iranian advanced military hardware and personnel reaching Syria. Iran is attempting to leverage its support for Syria's brutal regime, amidst the chaos of the Syrian civil war, to establish a second front against Israel. This endeavor augments Iran's decades-long effort to establish itself along the Israel-Lebanon border via support for its terrorist proxy Hezbollah. Iran's strategic goal is to exercise control along a crescent from Tehran to Beirut—a direct land bridge from Iran to Lebanon via Iraq and Syria. Israel's firm response to Iran's probe demonstrates Israel's determination to prevent Iran from entrenching itself on its border. America's support for Israel will prove critical if Israel—and its Sunni Arab neighbors—are to prevent Iran from dominating the Levant.

U.S. Secretary of Defense: Israel Has 'Absolute Right to Defend Itself' From Iran

U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis said Sunday about the recent escalation between Israel and Iran that Israel has "an absolute right to defend itself" in face of threats from the Iranians on its northern border, [Haaretz reported](#). Speaking to reporters before flying to a work visit in Europe, Mattis said that "everywhere we find trouble in the Middle East, you find the same thing behind it," explaining that he sees Iran as the most problematic player in the region. "It is interesting that everywhere we find trouble in the Middle East, you find the same thing behind it. Whether it be in Yemen or Beirut, or in Syria, in Iraq, you always find Iran engaged," Mattis said. "If you're in Bahrain, and the police there have captured explosives and that sort of thing, clearly from Iran; if you're picking up debris in Saudi Arabia of Iranian missiles; or you've got explosive boats, remote-controlled boats, out in the Red Sea, you can see where Iran is either producing the wherewithal for the fight or actually leading the fight, in some case."

On revolution anniversary, Rouhani decries U.S., Israeli ‘plots’ to divide Iran

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called for a “year of unity” in the face of “Israeli plots” to create division, as Iran celebrated 39 years since the Islamic Revolution Sunday in the wake of protests that rocked the country last month, according to a [Times of Israel report](#). “The plots by the United States and Israel to create division among the Iranians, Iraqis and the Lebanese were defeated,” Rouhani said in a speech before a huge crowd in Tehran, as hundreds of thousands converged on the city’s central Azadi Square. “The Americans wanted to interfere in our internal affairs, but our people turned its back to them,” Rouhani said, as demonstrators chanted traditional slogans of “Death to the United States” and “Death to Israel.”

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

The U.S.-Israel Relationship Must Transcend Partisan Politics

In this increasingly partisan era, building a bipartisan pro-Israel consensus has become more challenging, as reported in [AIPAC’s News Hub](#). But given the threats and the opportunities that the United States and Israel share, strong support must come from both sides of the aisle. At this year’s AIPAC Policy Conference, we will join together to demonstrate that the pro-Israel community is a big tent composed of politically, racially, religiously and geographically diverse individuals—and each of us is essential to building the lasting consensus that supports Israel. For decades, AIPAC has worked to strengthen, protect and promote the U.S.-Israel relationship by encouraging bipartisan support in Congress. This approach ensures success in passing legislation that keeps Israel and America safe, no matter what party is in control. In addition, this approach enables success in the Senate, where bills that are filibustered require the support of three-fifths of its members to pass—a number no party has controlled for the last forty years. Today, more than ever, maintaining and strengthening bipartisan support for Israel is a central responsibility of the American pro-Israel community. As partners in pro-Israel activism, our members recognize and appreciate that our common success is predicated on the political engagement of fellow members with a range of political affiliations—in many cases, affiliations that differ from our own. Together, we ensure that our country’s support for Israel transcends partisan politics.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Israel Hosts 1st International Cybersecurity Conference for Cities

Innovation, cybersecurity and technology officers from 80 municipalities worldwide are heading to Tel Aviv to attend the First International Cyber Security Conference for the Municipal Sector, with the aim of learning how to keep their connected cities safe from the hundreds of daily cyber-attacks that can immobilize critical infrastructures, according to [Israel21c](#). The conference will be held as part of the Federation of Local Authorities Conference and the MUNI-EXPO urban innovation conference, Feb. 13-14. Participants will meet with leading cyber security experts from Israel and the world, for a global brainstorming session on the challenges and threats of smart cities. Among the activities will be simulated war-games, sessions on cyber defense strategies, and introduction of current and future technologies. Experts in the cybersecurity industry will present various innovative tools of defense and cyber-threat assessment. Among the speakers are Israeli Minister of Economy Eli Cohen; Jonathan Reichental, chief innovation officer of Israel Electric Corporation; Roy Zisapel, cofounder and CEO of Radware, and former Mossad Director General Tamir Pardo.