



Rabbinic Recap

The week of March 23, 2018

U.S. CONGRESS

Measure to Limit Palestinian Aid Over 'Martyr Payments' Due to Pass U.S. Congress

Legislation to sharply reduce the annual \$300 million in U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority unless it takes steps to stop making what lawmakers described as payments that reward violent crime is set to be passed by the U.S. Congress this week as part of a major spending bill unveiled on Wednesday, as [reported by Reuters](#). The measure, known as the Taylor Force Act, was named after a 29-year-old American military veteran fatally stabbed by a Palestinian while visiting Israel in 2016. The act is intended to stop the Palestinians from paying stipends, referred to as "martyr payments," to the families of militants killed or imprisoned by Israeli authorities. The payments can reach \$3,500 a month. Force's attacker was killed by Israeli police, and his killer's family receives such a monthly payment. U.S. House of Representatives and Senate leaders reached an agreement on Wednesday on the massive omnibus spending bill, which they aim to pass by Friday night.

SYRIA

Ending Secrecy, Israel Says It Bombed Syrian Reactor in 2007

The [New York Times reported](#) that Israel's government on Wednesday publicly confirmed for the first time that it had carried out an audacious 2007 strike against a reactor in Syria that could have produced nuclear weapons fuel, lifting a decade of secrecy surrounding the episode. The country's leaders used the occasion to warn that, if necessary, Israel would not hesitate to launch similar strikes again. "The government of Israel, the IDF and the Mossad prevented Syria from developing a nuclear capability," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, referring to the Israel Defense Forces and the country's spy agency. "Israel's policy has been and remains consistent — to prevent our enemies from arming themselves with nuclear weapons."

IRAN

IDF exercise readies military for Iranian threat

The annual nationwide exercise of the IDF's General Staff this year marked the escalation of the threat from the northeast: while the army still considers Hezbollah its main enemy in the next possible major confrontation, and is therefore preparing accordingly, as time goes by, Iran's foothold in Syria is slowly forcing the IDF to bolster its awareness and military readiness against the Iranian threat, [Ynetnews reported](#). A future multi-theater war, the IDF predicts, may have Iran as a major actor, and if so will undoubtedly drag its proxy in Gaza, Hamas, to back it in its efforts with a simultaneous pincer attack from the north and the south.

Khamenei: U.S. Created Islamic State to Distract Region from 'Zionist regime'

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tehran has neutralized U.S. plans in the Middle East, in a speech Wednesday marking the Persian New Year, [reported The Times of Israel](#). "Those who interfere in all the affairs of the world protest and ask: 'Why does Iran intervene in the affairs of Iraq and Syria?' What is it to you? The Islamic Republic of Iran has succeeded in neutralizing U.S. plans in the region," he said. Khamenei accused the United States of planning to "create oppressive and rebel groups like Daesh [the Islamic State group] to distract people in the region from the Zionist regime [Israel] and keep them occupied with internal conflicts." The Iranian leader's speech was delivered in the holy city of Masshad and broadcast on state television.

PALESTINIANS

Abbas Warmly Greets Terrorist Released from Israeli Prison

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was among the hundreds of east Jerusalem residents who came to warmly greet a terrorist who was released from Israeli prison last week, as [reported by Ynetnews](#). Rajaei Haddad, a resident of Jerusalem's Old City, was part of the terror cell that murdered Gabriel Hirschberg in an attack on HaGai Street in November 1997. [...] According to the MEMRI Institute, Haddad received a dignified and sympathetic personal welcome from the Palestinian leader. Abbas warmly embraced Haddad and told him that "the prisoners' issue holds a special place in the priorities of the Palestinian leadership, that works to free all the prisoners from the occupation's prisons." Haddad spent 20 years in an Israeli prison for his complicity in a terror attack. Haddad's job was to signal the other member of the terror cell, Ayman al-Sharbati, when Jews were coming so the latter could open fire at them with a Kalashnikov rifle.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

New Drug-Release Method Avoids Harming Healthy Tissue

Researchers at the Technion Faculty of Biotechnology and Food Engineering have developed a new, highly targeted technology for drug delivery that uses light to affect only the diseased tissue the drug is targeting, according to [Israel21c](#). The noninvasive method helps avoid random dispersion of drugs throughout the body, which often lowers their effectiveness and can damage healthy tissue. Chemotherapy drugs, for example, work to block cell division but cause hair loss and bowel issues in cancer patients. As a result, there has been a global effort to develop a better targeted system of drug delivery that can bypass healthy tissue and reach only specific parts of the body affected by cancer. The new method, published in ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces, was developed by doctoral candidate Alona Shagan and Assistant Prof. Boaz Mizrahi. It uses a unique polymer coating that contains nanoscale gold particles, in addition to the drug itself. The drug only releases when a light shines on the gold particles, causing the polymeric coating to melt.