



Rabbinic Recap

The week of June 29, 2018

IRAN

New Protests in Tehran Pose Fresh Challenge to Iran's Rulers

Hundreds protested in the Iranian capital on Monday while merchants in the city's oldest bazaar shut their shops to protest economic woes and a collapsing currency as the U.S. restores sanctions, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported. The protests were a fresh challenge to President Hassan Rouhani's government just months after widespread street demonstrations roiled the Islamic Republic. The government has struggled to tackle persistent double-digit inflation and unemployment. The Iranian rial has tumbled against the U.S. dollar in recent months over economic concerns that were aggravated by the Trump administration's exit from the 2015 nuclear deal in May and its move to restore economic penalties. A weak and sharply fluctuating currency has increased the cost of imports and disrupted trade.

U.S.-ISRAEL ALLIANCE

U.S. Army Inks \$193 Million Deal to Buy Israeli Tank Defense System

The U.S. Army on Tuesday awarded a contract worth nearly \$200 million for Israel's TROPHY defense system to shield its Abrams tanks, according to the Rafael Advanced Defense Systems contractor, as reported by the [Times of Israel](#). The systems, which block incoming anti-tank missiles, will be supplied to the US Army by the American defense contractor Leonardo DRS, Inc., which partnered with Rafael to manufacture them.

PALESTINIANS

Israel Planning to Ease Gaza Power Crisis by Building New Solar Field — Report

Israel has approved a plan to build a solar field in Israel to pump power into the Gaza Strip and ease the electricity crisis in the Palestinian enclave, an Israeli newspaper reported Tuesday, as reported by the [Times of Israel](#). According to the report in the Yedioth Ahronoth daily, which quoted unnamed diplomatic sources in Jerusalem, the panels would be set up near the Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel as a unilateral measure, without the involvement of the Hamas terror group, which rules the Strip.

Palestinian Authority rejects Israeli, U.S. ideas to help Gaza

The Palestinian Authority on Tuesday expressed fear that the talk about easing restrictions on the Gaza Strip was part of an Israeli-Palestinian "conspiracy" to transform the Palestinian cause into a "humanitarian issue," the [Jerusalem Post](#) reported. The PA, which has been imposing its own financial sanctions on the Gaza Strip, also expressed fear that the easing of restrictions

would embolden Hamas and tighten its grip over the coastal enclave. Palestinian Authority officials in Ramallah claimed that the U.S. administration and the Israeli government were now talking about improving the living conditions of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as a way of “undermining the Palestinian national project, including the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.” The PA leadership has been facing growing pressure from Palestinians to lift the sanctions that President Mahmoud Abbas imposed on the Gaza Strip about one year ago.

White House Warns Palestinians of Aid Cut Without End to ‘Martyr’ Payments

The Trump administration is warning Ramallah to end its policy of compensating the families of Palestinians convicted of murder and terrorism in Israel, as it reviews whether to cut foreign aid to the organization. U.S. officials told the [Jerusalem Post](#) that “nothing has changed” since the president signed into law the Taylor Force Act, a bill that requires the administration to freeze aid to the Palestinian Authority unless it halts the decades-old program. Months earlier, Trump had called for a broad review of all U.S. foreign aid, including of aid to the Palestinians. But one National Security Council spokesman said on Monday that the new law would tie their hands and require action from Palestinian leadership if they wanted aid to continue unaffected. “At President Trump’s direction, assistance to the Palestinians remains under review,” the White House official said. “While the Taylor Force Act restricts aid to the Palestinian Authority, with very limited exceptions, the Palestinian Authority has the ability to ease those restrictions by ending the abhorrent policy of inciting violence against Americans and Israelis through payments to terrorists and their families.”

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Prince William Kicks Off First Royal State Visit to Israel

Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, landed in Israel early on Monday evening, kicking off the first-ever official visit by a member of the British royal family since the end of the British Mandate and founding of the State of Israel in 1948, [Israel21c](#) reported. William arrived on a Royal Air Force plane from Jordan, where he spent the first leg of his five-day visit to the Middle East. He was greeted at Ben-Gurion Airport by Tourism Minister Yariv Levin before departing for Jerusalem’s King David Hotel, where he stayed the night. The visit has been characterized by British officials as completely apolitical, though William is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Reuven Rivlin and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Audi Partners with Israel's Autonomous Vehicle Simulation Startup Cognata

German carmaker Audi AG has partnered with autonomous vehicle simulation platform provider Cognata Ltd to speed up the development of autonomous vehicles, the Israel-based startup said on Tuesday, according to [Reuters](#). Cognata said its simulation platform virtually recreates real-world cities, provides a range of testing scenarios, including traffic models that simulate realistic conditions, prior to physical roadway tests of autonomous vehicles. Audi, through its self-driving car unit Autonomous Intelligent Driving GmbH (AID), is the first major carmaker to sign a multi-year partnership on Cognata's platform, which will help it reduce the time to get its autonomous cars to market.