

Israel Today – January 15-17, 2016
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Encouraging Domestic/Diplomatic News

Israel Is Not Isolated; Sought After (*Israel Hayom*)

"Israel is not isolated," per Dep. FM Hotovely. Israel enjoys flourishing commerce and active diplomatic relations w/ 80% of the world's nations. "Today, Israel is holding the US's hand on one side ... and on the other side the hands of India, China and Japan.... There is a lot of warmth coming in Israel's direction from countries that, for years, were aligned w/ the Arab world. These countries have become fans of Israel.... In the Far East Israel is seen as a superpower.... They want to learn from Israel about entrepreneurship." "In Europe there has also been a shift.... The main topic of conversation [w/ the French] is how to fight terrorism and how to use Israel's cyber know-how to fight radical Islamism.... We have now entered a new era in int'l discourse. It is all about global solutions in medicine, agriculture, cyber warfare and technological innovation."

Israel Quietly Courts Sunni States (*WSJ*)

Israel has stepped up efforts to improve ties in the region. "Clearly there's been a convergence of interests between Israel and many Sunni Arab states given the fact that they both face identical challenges in the region," Dore Gold, DG of the foreign ministry. Tzipi Livni, a former Israeli FM: "We have the same understanding of the region. This is the basis for an alliance." *JPost*: DM Ya'alon: The main conflict in the ME is between Shi'ites and Sunnis; Sunni states are forming an Arab coalition - which Pakistan has joined - against Iran. " *JPost*: A senior IDF officer told a Saudi news outlet *Elaph*: Israel had secret relations and common interests w/ a number of Arab states besides Egypt and Jordan.

Israel, Indonesia Secretly Do Business (*Times of Is.*)

There are growing business and tech ties between Israel and the biggest Muslim country in the world – Indonesia, esp. in ag. tech. Israel-Indonesia trade reaches "hundreds of millions of dollars a year," said Israel's Economy Ministry.

Egypt Votes for Israel in UN (*NYT*)

Egypt's rep. at UN voted last Fri. in support of Israel's bid for membership of the UN C'ttee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space Affairs. Egypt had never voted for Israel at the UN. Oman also voted yes w/ 117 others; 21 abstained: Qatar, Tunisia, Syria, Mauritania, Morocco, S. Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Iraq, Algeria. In light of progress in Israel's reconciliation w/ Turkey, Israeli officials say that Egypt has expressed its opposition to Israeli concessions to Turkey w/ regard to Gaza.

Israel's Amb. Welcomed in Islamic Rep. of Gambia

A month after Gambia declared itself an "Islamic Republic," it warmly hosted Israel's Amb. Paul Hirschson. Gambia is the smallest state in continental Africa; 95+% of its citizens are Muslim. (*Times of Israel*)

Germany to Lease Israeli Drones (*Reuters*)

Germany will lease Heron TP drones from Israel Aerospace rather than buy Predator B drones from US. Germany already has 3 earlier versions of the Heron reconnaissance drone deployed in Afghanistan.

Cyprus Correcting "Wrong Perception" (*JPost*)

The head of Cyprus' ruling party said, his country now has a "clearer picture" of Israel - having had the "wrong perception of Israel" for years. "It's a country ... fighting ... for survival and having to face hundreds of millions of Muslims and Arabs, part of whom don't even recognize the right of the existence of a Jewish state.... "For decades Israel was blamed for creating the instability in the region. Can anyone credibly blame Israel for the instability in Syria, the ISIS threat, the Arab Spring-now-Winter, or the chaos in Libya and Iraq?"

Turkey Attacks ISIS (*Reuters*)

Turkish tanks and artillery have bombarded ISIS positions in Syria and Iraq over the past 48 hours, killing almost 200 of its fighters in retaliation for a suicide bombing in Istanbul.

BDS

For Historians, Facts Matter - Jeffrey Herf

On 1/9, the Amer. Hist. Assoc. meeting in Atlanta rejected a resolution denouncing Israeli policies towards Pal. universities in Gaza and the W. Bank. "Other academic orgs may support wretched texts filled w/ distortions about Israel. If they do, many historians will conclude that their standards of evidence are not as rigorous as ours and that their scholarly claims about other matters should be taken w/ a large grain of salt." *The writer is Univ. Prof., U. of MD.*

Lapid Urges EU to Reject BDS (*JPost*)

The leader of Israel's opposition met w/ EU foreign affairs chief F. Mognerini Wed. and asked her to push for a joint statement by the 28 EU FMs against attempts to boycott Israel. Mogherini said she and the entire EU oppose calls to boycott Israel. Hungary, Greece and the Czech Rep. have expressed their opposition to the EU labeling decision. EU Parliament Prez Schulz said he opposed labelling products from the W. Bank, Golan Hghts and E. Jerusalem: "It mainly hurts

Pals who make a decent wage there." Is. official: "Europeans boycott wines from the Golan Hghts....Who should we give the Golan to, Syria or ISIS?"

Palestinians

Pal. Violence Is Waning (*JPost*)

DM Ya'alon: "We are managing to foil plans by the orgs, the terrorist groups ... to carry out attacks. If it were up to them, there would be suicide bombings and gun attacks here every day.... Statistically, we see that this is waning." *Ha'aretz*: In recent weeks, the main justification given by the attackers is a wish to avenge the deaths of others, often relatives/acquaintances. *Times of Is*: Residents of the Jenin refugee camp are enjoying one of the calmest periods they have experienced over the past decade. One: "What did we gain from the 2nd Intifada? Did we get representation on the Rev. Council or on the Central Committee [of Fatah]? What will we get out of sending a kid to stab somebody?" "Let us live in peace and quiet ... live together w/ the Israelis" What about a Pal. state? Sabr: "The Pal. state is nonsense. Talks have been going on here for 20 years w/o results...." A Fatah official: "There's no need to go into a new intifada as long as we don't understand ... what our goal is. In other words, we want a better life for our children instead of them just getting killed."

Change Is.-Arab World from Within (*Times of Is.*)

Dr. Dalia Fadila, an Arab-Israeli educator, founded a network of schools that emphasize English. Arab Israelis can and must strengthen themselves through integration w/ the Jewish majority, she says. Summing up her vision: "Fully educated kids, w/ something to lose, will be more positive towards themselves and the state ... have the skills to work better for their rights and to compete for jobs. That's a much softer revolution than an intifada, and in the long run, more sustainable."

"Lone Wolf" Psychology - Dr. Irwin J. (Yitzchak)

A characteristic of the "knife intifada" is the almost inevitable the attacker's death. Incitement comes in 2 stages; (1) Fuel for basic motivation; (2) an ignition process for the behavior itself. Both factors are necessary for violent action to take place. Constant Pal. institutional and social support of those who engage in violent behavior against Israelis blunts the "lone wolf" classification. An atmosphere supporting these attacks and the systematic reinforcement, materially and socially, of those who engage in these attacks provides a constant reminder of societal approval at any given time.

Recommending Fomenting Protest in Israel (*JPost*)

Former US ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering wrote an email to then-Sec'y Clinton on 12/18/11, advocating the US back non-violent Pal. protests intended to

pressure Israel. There is no indication any part of this proposal was acted upon or put into practice.

Explosive Belts, RPG Launchers Parade (*MEMRI*)

Fatah in Bethlehem held a parade featuring masked men brandishing firearms and axes; children armed with mock RPG rockets and suicide belts, in an event attended by senior PA and Fatah officials.

Terror in Israel (*Ynet*)

(1) The terrorist who killed 3 in Tel Aviv a week ago was shot dead by security in the Israeli Arab town of Arara last Fri. after he opened fire at them. (2) IDF soldiers shot and killed 2 Pals who tried to attack them w/ knives in the West Bank Saturday. (3) IDF troops shot and injured a Pal. man who attempted to stab them in the West Bank Mon. (4) The Is. Sec. Agency arrested a Hamas terror cell in Hebron in Nov. that planned to carry out a terror attack between Hebron and Ashkelon, and had purchased weapons, including an M-16 rifle. (5) A Pal. terrorist who attempted to stab a soldier in the W. Bank was shot/killed by Israeli security. (6) A Pal. approached soldiers and stabbed an officer. The attacker was shot and killed.

PA Anti-Semitism - 2015 (*Pal. Media Watch*)

In a report to a European Parliament Conf., Pal. Media Watch found that the PA continued to emit overtly anti-Semitic messages throughout 2015, portraying Jews as inherently evil, comparing them to apes and pigs, and depicting them as a threat to all humanity.

PA/Hamas Torturing Pals - Khaled Abu Toameh

The PA in the W. Bank and Hamas in Gaza use int'l funds to build prisons/detention centers where torture is the norm. Hamas in Gaza also practice a startling disregard for human rights and public freedoms. The Pal. Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) reports a dramatic rise in the number of complaints about torture in Pal. prisons run by Hamas and the PA.

Iran

Core of Arak Reactor Removed (*Fars News*)

Iran has taken out the heart of its heavy water reactor in Arak in compliance with the nuclear deal, an informed source told *FNA* on Monday.

House Approves Greater Oversight (*AP*)

The US House approved an Act that gives Congress greater oversight of the nuclear agreement with Iran. The president will veto the legislation. The WH says a bill that seeks to bar the US from lifting certain sanctions against Iran would violate commitments necessary to implement the international agreement to limit the Iranian nuclear program. It is said Obama would veto the bill if Congress approves the measure.

Impending Lifting Sanctions Worries Israel (*Ynet*)

Most of the economic sanctions imposed on Iran will be removed Fri. On Iran's seizure of American patrol boats in the Persian Gulf: Washington's response to the incident a sign that the US will ignore violations of the Iranian nuclear agreement if they are not too over-the-top.

Bases in in Persian Gulf (*Wash. Inst. for NE Policy*)

In Dec., Ankara announced: It will establish a new military base in Qatar to project power in the Persian Gulf. The French have established a multipurpose air, sea, and ground base in the UAE; British For. Sec'y Hammond took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for a similar project in Bahrain last Nov. China controls commercial operations at the Pakistani port of Gwadar, not far from the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

Implications of Saudi-Iran Conflict – J. Teitelbaum

By executing prominent Shiite leader Nimr al-Nimr, the Saudi King and his son said it would not tolerate intervention in its internal affairs, that it would not allow "Arab Spring"-like dissent.

Is the US Leaning toward Shiite Iran? – J. Diehl

The WH's priority to avoid any words/action that would disrupt the implementation of the Iranian nuclear deal accords w/ a retreat from imposing sanctions for missile launches and a promise to waive new congressional restrictions on visas for foreigners who visited Iran. The message: Wash. lacks the will to punish Iran for clear violations. Dennis Ross: A vacuum was created by our hesitancy to do more than offer words, a vacuum to be filled by Iran, Hizbullah and Shia militia proxies; Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar; Russia; and ISIL. Not every conflict in the ME is a replay of Iraq; our choices for responding to them shouldn't be reduced to doing nothing or putting massive numbers of troops on the ground.

Iran's Other Scary Weapons Program (*NYT*)

Iran is advancing the range/mobility of its ballistic missiles and vowing to accelerate production. The Administration told Congress that missile-related sanctions were coming, then held back. New sanctions on Iran's ballistic missiles must still be pursued.

Front Line

If UN Positions on Border Fall (*JPost*)

The capture of UN positions on Mt. Hermon by Sunni factions or by elements from the Shi'ite axis would constitute a threat to IDF posts. UNDOF retains a number of lookout posts; 46 posts have been abandoned and captured by rebels in recent years.

Living Under the Sword of ISIS in Syria (*NYT*)

Raqqa, the de facto capital of ISIS, is my hometown.

ISIS's ideology has zero appeal. It gives people one choice: Escape your poverty by fighting for us. Not counting bonuses, a fighter starts out earning about \$200/month - more than a family needs to live. He gets additional money for wives, children, slaves and provisions, raising his potential to a monthly \$500+.

Russian Airstrikes Helping US Allies (*Daily Beast*)

US-backed forces of the Syrian Democratic Front made some of their biggest gains in Syria in recent months when they retook villages near Aleppo w/ the help of Russian airstrikes.

Combating Unconventional Weapons (*Is. Hayom*)

The IDF is establishing a company to identify and treat unconventional materials in a combat zone. The unit will use new technology that the IDF. The specialized training course includes chemistry and biology studies.

Russia Giving Hizbullah Advanced Weapon? (*Ynet*)

Officials in the West doubt a *Daily Beast* report Monday that Russia is directly arming Hizbullah. One official: "This report is baseless ... an awkward attempt by Hizbullah to plant disinformation via a respected Western news site in order to muddy the waters between Israel and Russia."

Israel's Homegrown ISIS Threat (*USA Today*)

The director of the Int'l Inst. for Counter-Terrorism: "The phenomenon of Israeli Arabs joining ISIS is relevant to the homegrown terrorist phenomenon." While a majority of Israeli Arabs condemn ISIS, there is a high level of sympathy for it, said a Haifa U. sociology prof. who focuses on Israeli-Arab public opinion.

Some Not-So-Great News

Israel Rebukes Swedish Amb. (*Ynet*)

Israel told Sweden's Amb. to Israel that its FM's call to investigate the execution of Pals represented a twisted presentation of reality. Israel now will no longer allow Sweden to promote any projects in the Pal. territories. Still a delegation of former senior experts in Sweden's defense establishment arrived in Israel this week to learn about dealing with terrorism.

Intolerable for France's Jews to Hide – J. Robinson

Prez Hollande: It is "intolerable" that French Jews feel they have to hide their religion after anti-Semitic attacks prompted a call to abandon wearing the kippah.

Egypt's President Turns to Religion Control (*NYT*)

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is turning to religion to bolster his authority, shutting unregistered mosques, banning unauthorized preachers.

Israel's Most Advanced Submarine (*Foxtrot Alpha*)

Israel's new submarine, the *INS Rehav*, is crewed by 35 sailors, but can hold an additional 10 people for special ops. It can operate without resupply for up to 30 days, stay submerged for weeks at a time, and its fuel cell technology is extremely quiet.

353 Italian Immigrants in 2015 (*ANSAMED-Italy*)

More Italians emigrated to Israel in 2015 than any other year since 1948-49. There are roughly 30K Italian Jews."

Debt Burden Falls in Israel (*Globes*)

Israel's ratio of public debt to GDP fell by 1.8% in 2015, a key indicator of economic soundness. Israel has lowered its debt ratio more than any other Western country since 2008. Israel's GDP in 2015 grew by 2.3%, outperforming Europe and the US. Israel's GNI per capita increased by ~111.6% from 1980 (to \$30,676). In the OECD. Israel has the highest labor force participation rate (63.4%) and a lower total unemployment rate.

Plunging Oil Prices Raise Is. GDP (*Globes*)

Plunging oil prices have had a positive effect on the the global and Israeli economies. Lower prices reduce inflation, have a positive impact on economic activity, and improve the balance of payments. The fall in prices, combined w/ the transition to natural gas, translates to 2% of GDP.

All-Bedouin Tech Company in Israel (*NYT*)

I. Sana set up Sadel Tech, an all-Bedouin Israeli company near Beersheba employing a dozen people that offers expertise in Internet and mobile technologies. Sana graduated from the Technion, and received a master's degree at Ben-Gurion U. He worked at Cisco in central Israel. The Israel Ministry of Economy introduced a program in 2015 w/ the goal of placing 1,000 Arab graduates in the high-tech work force. 225 have been placed at leading software companies since the program was started early last year.

Tech Successes

Johnson and Johnson, Israeli Tech (*Globes*)

Israeli startup V-Wave completed a \$28 million capitalization round led by Johnson & Johnson for an implanted device for patients w/ chronic symptomatic heart failure. Successfully implanted in 30 patients, it is intended to relieve symptoms, improve quality of life, and to reduce the need for acute hospitalization. An Israeli cartilage and bone regeneration device developer CartiHeal has closed a \$15 million financing round led by J&J. Successfully implanted in ~200 patients, the device enables biological resurfacing of cartilage and its underlying subchondral bone through a tissue regeneration process.

Israeli Electronics Are Favorites (*Times of Is.*)

At the Consumer Elect. Show in Las Vegas, both the Last Gadget Standing Live Audience winner *and* the Last Gadget Standing Online winner were Israeli. The VUZE camera from HumanEyes Tech is the world's first sub-\$1,000, 360 degree 3D camera for virtual reality applications. The Ripple Maker from Steam CC reproduces any image or message from a smartphone onto the foam of lattes and other foamy beverages.

J-lem Animation Serves Hollywood (*JPost*)

At Snowball Studios in J-lem, ~30-40 animators create textures, colors and backdrops, and ensure the characters make all the right movements. Most are currently working on an episode of the Disney animated children's series "Star Darlings."

Israeli Startup's Suitcase Tracking (*Times of Is.*)

Israel's NUA Robotics unveiled a prototype for luggage that uses Bluetooth tech. to sync w/ a smartphone app to locate its owner. The case features an anti-theft alarm and a USB port. The company hopes to have the product available to customers within a year.

Note:

It is always gratifying to take a chance on analysis and then to have that analysis backed up by the facts in very short order.

I gave a sermon on 1/9/16 that emphasized the scriptural value of Patience. I applied the value to the long-struggle for Israel to gain acceptance as an ally of the relatively moderate forces in the Middle East. I also noted that it would be a fools mission to make as a condition of the emerging cooperation the statement that the State of Israel is "Jewish State."

Such recognition had not been demanded of the Egyptians nor of the Jordanians when they signed peace accords with Israel. Even if one group stated such, a greater number of Palestinians would reject it. So what's the point?

As the first part of this newsletter attests, Israel is becoming ever more accepted in many Muslim Arab capitals as a partner with similar political aims.

And so it was pleasing to note, on 1/10, the day after my sermon, this report: "Israel is not isolated," per Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Hotovely. Israel enjoys flourishing commerce and active diplomatic relations w/ 80% of the world's nations. "Today, Israel is holding the US's hand on one side ... and on the other side the hands of India, China and Japan.... There is a lot of warmth coming in Israel's direction from countries that, for years, were aligned w/ the Arab world. These countries have become fans of Israel...." This week, Egypt for the first time in its history supported Israel in a vote at the UN.

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Iran Transfers Uranium to Russia
India Getting Closer to Israel (*The Statesman-India*)
Cooperation w/ Leaders of Greece, Cyprus (*Ynet*)