

**Israel Today – April 23-25, 2016**  
**Rabbi Howard L. Apothaker, Ph.D.**

**Cooperation w/ Egypt, Jordan "Unprecedented"**

The IDF Deputy Chief of Staff Wed.: Israel has seen an "unprecedented level of cooperation" on intelligence w/ Egypt and Jordan in the fight vs ISIS. (*Daily Mail-UK*)

**Saudi-Egypt Ties and Israeli Interests** (*JPost*)

The growing relationship between Saudi Arabia and Egypt is in Israel's interests, said Israel's former Amb. to Cairo. A former deputy at Israel's Nat'l Security Council: The Saudi-Egyptian move strengthens regional forces for stability, a camp including Israel, Egypt, S. Arabia and Jordan: "From our perspective, anything that helps Egyptian stability is good." The Brotherhood sees Egyptian-Saudi cooperation as harming its own fading designs for regional hegemony. What is bad for the Brotherhood is good for Israel. Per some: Saudi Arabia is formally an enemy of the State of Israel. It is ruled by a family regime, based on Wahhabism, a most extreme school of Islam w/ a deeply rooted hatred of Israel. Per others: While this a far cry from normalization of Saudi relations w/ Israel, it's a welcome ray of light. Per DM Ya'alon, steps that bring together the "camp of stability" in the region under joint Egyptian-Saudi leadership serve Israel's interests. S. Henderson: The prospect of Israeli naval vessels sailing beneath a Saudi-Egyptian bridge could prompt heartburn in the kingdom.

**Israel: Strategic Partner** (*Jewish Policy Center*)

Israel is most cost-effective laboratory for US defense, sharing intelligence, battle experience, & battle tactics. The IAF shares w/ USAF & US manufacturers daily operational maintenance & repair lessons derived from Israel's daily experience, e.g., sparing General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin (F-16) 10-20 years of R&D, leading to 700+ modifications in the current generation of the F-16, "valued at a mega-billion dollar bonanza to the manufacturer." Similar lessons have been shared w/ the US Army, Navy, & Marine Corps & the US manufacturers of tanks, armored personnel carriers, missile launchers, missiles, night navigation systems, & hundreds of additional military & homeland security systems manufactured by the US & utilized by Israel. Per a former USAF intelligence chief, the value of intelligence shared by Israel w/ the US - exposing the air capabilities of adversaries, their new military systems, electronics, & jamming devices - "could not be procured w/ 5 CIAs....The ability of the USAF in particular, & the Army in general, to defend whatever position it has in NATO owes more to Israeli intelligence input than it does to any other single source of intelligence." A former Commandant: "Recently, the IAF developed a groundbreaking method of

identifying, repairing, & preempting cracks in old combat planes using ultrasound machines, promptly shared that info w/ the USAF & the manufacturer. Instead of grounding planes for 6 months, the Israeli system requires 2 weeks & only a few mechanics, yielding significant economic & security benefits. Unlike Europe, Israel is able & willing to flex its muscles. Thus, Israel acts as a special strategic partner to America.

**Syria's Black Hole of Instability** (*NYT*)

No peace pact can put Syria back together. Today it is a mosaic of tiny fiefs. The gov't ceded control of stretches of land to Iran, Russia and Hizbullah. Its opponents range from ISIS to a coterie of tiny insurgent groups led by local warlords reliant on foreign donors. If some fraction of the opposition reaches an accord w/ the gov't, the area they could try to rule would amount to a rump state. The nation's industrial heartland and most populous city, Aleppo, has been almost completely destroyed. David Petraeus: It is apparent that ungoverned spaces from W. Africa through the ME and into Central Asia will see extremists establishing sanctuaries where they can enforce an extremist version of Islam and from which they can conduct terrorist attacks; that the attacks of such extremists will not be confined to the areas in which they are located. The path US and coalition partners pursue has to be comprehensive and not just a counter-terrorism approach ... and will have to be sustained for extended periods of time. Premature drawdowns can result in loss of the progress - and reentry into the conflict.

**Social Media to Prevent Attacks** (*Economist-UK*)

Using specially developed algorithms to monitor the social media accounts of young Pals has yielded a list of potential suspects, allowing the IDF in recent weeks to stop attackers before they could act; "warning visits" by Israeli security; their parents are told they're under surveillance. The names are passed on to the PA security apparatus to keep tabs on them.

**European Banks Wary** (*NYT*)

European banks are refusing to finance new deals w/ Iran, wary of US sanctions over Iran's missile program and its sponsorship of terrorism. America's visa regulations complicate entry into the US if one has traveled to Iran. Iran has failed to update laws governing money laundering and prohibitions against the financing of terrorism. // Iran reacted furiously to a SCOTUS ruling that Iran's central bank must pay ~\$2 billion to Amer. victims of the 1983 bombing of a Beirut Marine Corps barracks. Hypothetically victims' families may receive impounded Iranian central bank assets. *Bloomberg*: On

4/8, the State Dep't sent letters to the governors of all 50 states asking them to reconsider laws that call for divesting state funds from businesses interacting w/ Iran's economy, or laws that would deny contracts to companies that do business w/ Iran. Sanctions were imposed because of Iran's its human-rights record, dev't of ballistic missiles and support for terrorism.

#### **France's Peace Meeting Without Israel** (*JPost*)

France will convene a meeting of 30 countries and int'l orgs to discuss the parameters for an int'l peace conference. Neither Israel nor the Pals will be invited.

#### **US Ed. Dep't on Campus Anti-Semitism** (*JTA*)

Citing reports of anti-Israel activity on college campuses, the US House Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism asked US Education Sec'y King to outline how his dep't is tracking anti-Jewish bias. *Nat'l Post-Canada*: The BDS campaign inspires organized anti-BDS protests. Students at UC Santa Barbara woke to find themselves surrounded by posters attacking BDS and its "genocidal campaign to destroy the world's only Jewish state." One poster includes the names of those who've "allied themselves w/ Pal. terrorists to perpetrate BDS and Jew Hatred on this campus." Profs filed a lawsuit Wed. charging the Amer. Studies Ass'n w/ violating laws governing tax-exempt non-profs over its academic boycott of Israel, a move they claim is outside the scope of its charter. The Brandeis Center for Human Rights assembled a legal team to represent the professors.

**Maturing Is.-Russ. Relations** - A. Borshchevskaya  
Putin has pursued improved ties w/ Israel since he came into office in 3/2000. Russian and Israeli officials maintain multiple open channels of communication, incl. an agreement on visa-free tourist travel. Putin's regional policy is driven by zero-sum anti-Westernism; Israel is a pro-Western democracy. Moscow's aggression in the FSU and increasing influence in the ME complicates Russian-Israeli relations. Jonathan Lis: Netanyahu told Putin in Moscow Thurs.: Israel has clear red lines for self-defense: to prevent both the transfer of advanced weaponry from Iran and Syria to Hizbullah in Lebanon and the establishment of an additional terror front on the Golan Heights. "Regarding the Golan Heights, we will not go back to the days when they fired at our communities and at our children from atop the Heights. With or without an agreement, the Golan Heights will remain under Israeli sovereignty." *Bloomberg*: Bibi received assurances of military coordination from Russia that would help Israel stop the transfer of weapons through Syria to Hizbullah in Lebanon. Advisers met w/ Russian counterparts to help "preserve freedom of movement for the IDF and IAF in the places most important to our security."

#### **Hizbullah - Criminal Org.** - Matthew Levitt

Hizbullah is involved in organized criminal enterprises, running networks of its own while plugging into those of other criminal entities. Nasrallah denied charges that Hizbullah is involved in drug trafficking, money laundering, and other crimes, challenging his accusers to "Bring me the evidence!" That has now been done, in case after case, w/ ample evidence from American and European law enforcement agencies.

#### **Iran Conducts Space Launch** (*Wash. Free Beacon*)

Iran Tues. conducted the first launch of the Simorgh space launch vehicle, an element of Tehran's effort to build long-range missiles. US intelligence believe N. Korea supplied Iran w/ design data, stage separation technology, and booster equipment. The Simorgh is assessed as having enough lift to carry a nuclear warhead. Adm. Bill Gortney told a House hearing, "Iran's continuing pursuit of long-range missile capabilities and ballistic missile and space launch programs, in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, remains a serious concern."

#### **Islamic State Income Falls 30%** (*Telegraph-UK*)

ISIS has lost control of territory and people. Its leaders have introduced new fines and taxes to halt the slide in funding and have begun accepting money from criminals in lieu of corporal punishment. Taxes have been introduced for truck drivers, installing satellite dishes, and exit fees for anyone trying to leave a city.

#### **Iran's Behavior as a Pariah State** (*WSJ*)

The governor of Iran's central bank warned that failure to integrate Iranian banks into the global economy could jeopardize the int'l agreement over Tehran's nuclear program. The US is effectively blocking such integration because its gov't continues to support terrorism. *NYT*: Post-deal, Iran has yet to realize expected economic benefits. Most American sanctions remain because of Iran's involvement in terrorism, human rights abuses and its ballistic missile tests. It is still barred from using the American financial system. Many foreign banks who are free to engage w/ Iran hesitate to do so, fearing they will run afoul of American sanctions. Experts: Iranian banks are badly run, politicized and lack transparency.

#### **The US and Saudi Arabia** - Ray Takeyh

When the US and Saudi Arabia look at the region, they see different landscapes. As the US grows more energy independent, Saudi oil becomes less relevant. Changing the occupant of the WH next year will not markedly alter America's policies. Republican front-runners denounce expansive visions for transforming the politi-

cal culture of the ME and implanting democratic regimes in the heart of the Arab world. US politicians on both sides are tired of expending precious resources to stabilize a region coming undone. (*Politico*)

### **The Self-Destruction of UNESCO** - Alan Baker

The Executive Board of UNESCO, an int'l body dedicated to education, science and culture - condemned Israeli presence and activities in J-lem, Hebron and the Tomb of Rachel, deleting from history any historic, cultural and religious link between the Jewish People, the Jewish religion and J-lem, including the Temple Mount (T/M) and the Western Wall, the Cave of the Patriarchs (Hebron) and Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem. UNESCO will stop using the term "Temple Mount" and will refer to the holiest site in Judaism as the "Al-Aqsa Mosque." So UNESCO denies the indigenous Jewish historic linkage of the T/M to Judaism, Jewish history and religion; ignores the fact that this was the cradle of Jewish existence and history for centuries. Spain, France, Sweden, Russia and Slovenia - "friends" of Israel - supported this decision; 6 opposed: Estonia, Netherlands, the UK, Germany, Lithuania, and the US. The abuse of an int'l body to deny the history, culture and integrity of the Jewish People and religion should concern the int'l community as a whole. *WashPost*: For hundreds of years, Muslim scholars wrote in their own religious and historical texts that Solomon's Temple was located on the Temple Mount: J-lem-based Muslim historians like Al-Muqaddasi or Aref al-Aref, Al-Mastoufi, the poet Rumi, and the Muslim preacher Abu Bakhar al-Wasati. In the time of Grand Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Waqf published a visitor's guide to the Temple Mount that read, "The site's identification w/ the Solomonic Temple is beyond all doubt." The Temple's existence is supported by archeological discoveries, e.g., a fragment of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple-era Greek inscription found near the Lion's Gate, or the corner where trumpets were blown to herald the start of the Sabbath and holidays, unearthed at excavations at the compound's southern wall. The Bible, the Mishnah, the Talmud, and a wealth of Jewish and other historical sources show that the Temple stood on the Temple Mount. *Ynet*: Irina Bokova, current head of UNESCO and in the running to be the next UN S-G, distanced herself from UNESCO's decision to completely disregard the Temple Mount's religious and historic significance for Jews. She said it was a political decision and that she herself was opposed to it.

### **Yemen Rebels Arrest Rabbi** - (*JPost*)

Houthi militias reigning in Sanaa have arrested Rabbi Yahia Youssef Yaish, who was accused of aiding in "smuggling an ancient Torah scroll to Israel."

### **Pals Won't Accept a Jewish Israel** – K. Abu Toameh

In recent weeks, Abbas has reiterated his opposition to recognizing Israel as a Jewish state. This refusal is a main obstacle to peace. Complaints about settlement construction are a smokescreen to the many that regard Israel as one big settlement that needs to be removed. Even those who say they've accepted the 2-state solution are not prepared to recognize any Jewish link to or history in the land. *JPost*: Netanyahu: "How many times do I have to invite Abbas for talks? ... Abbas talks about a willingness, but then runs away."

### **Six Months: What Was Gained?** (*WashPost*)

After 6 months of attacks by Pals vs. Israeli soldiers and civilians, what did the Pals gain? Funerals – 180+ Pals have been killed during these months. During the same period, Pals killed 29 Israelis, along w/ 4 foreign nationals, incl. 3 visiting Americans. A senior Israeli commander: "Most of the attacks do not succeed; most of the time the Pal. is arrested, wounded or killed, and no Israeli is hurt."

### **IDF Blows Up Hamas Attack Tunnel** (*JPost*)

Israel believes Hamas is digging additional attack tunnels. *Ynet*: Israel is developing a system to detect the tunnels, to be completed within 2 years. Army gear is specifically designed for tunnel combat: mini walkie talkies that function underground, oxygen masks, night-vision equipment, and lighter body armor. Infantry soldiers will receive training in tunnel combat so that any infantry battalion will be able to quickly and effectively neutralize the tunnel threat.

### **All Pal. Factions Justify Bus Bombing** (*MEMRI*)

A bomb exploded on a bus in J-lem Mon., wounding 21 people. PA officials have issued no disapproval. Fatah: It was a natural response to Israel's actions. Hamas, Pal. Islamic Jihad, and other factions welcomed the attack. Members of the terrorist's family handed out sweets and sang songs of praise because he became a martyr in carrying out a successful attack against Israeli citizens. Gloating posters and cartoons were posted on social media. *WashPost*: The suicide bomber did not grow up in a refugee camp; his uncles are prosperous merchants. He could not have made the bomb himself. Who gave it to him and how it was detonated is now the object of an investigation. Several Hamas members from the Bethlehem area were arrested for involvement in the planning/execution of the bus bombing. *Ynet*: Residents of "Arab" E. J-lem threw firebombs Sat. at police and border police. One of throwers injured by a firebomb thrown by another Arab.

**Red Cross Lauds Is. Disaster Medicine** (*Times of Is.*)

"Providing medical assistance under emergency conditions where there are few resources and no order or protocol is far different than the ordered medical facilities where most doctors learn to treat people," Dr. H. Veen, chief surgeon of the Int'l C'ttee of the Red Cross, told a conference in Israel last week. "Israelis are very good at this kind of medicine; they have successfully used their skills both on the battlefield locally and in emergencies such as earthquakes and floods, where they have set up effective and successful field care operations. Not all countries can do that."

**Israeli Aid Workers in Japan, Ecuador** (*JPost*)

The Israeli humanitarian agency IsraAID has a delegation in earthquake-devastated S. Japan. Its relief workers are distributing goods and opening child care centers in affected communities. An IsraAID team was headed to Ecuador to offer medical treatment, psycho-social outreach and child resources after an earthquake.

**Hamas' Weak Political Standing** (*Ynet*)

Hamas doesn't currently have a patron in the Arab world. The Muslim Brotherhood is being chased out of Egypt; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have outlawed them. At the Org. of Islamic Cooperation summit, Iran was "deplored (for its) interference in the internal affairs of the states of the region...and its continued support for terrorism." Hamas' military rehabilitation is so far only partial. Meanwhile: A Hamas military court in Gaza sentenced 5 Pals to death Mon. for collaborating w/ Israel.

**Taking Kuwait Air to Court** (*SWI-Switzerland*)

A Geneva resident of Israeli nationality filed a complaint against Kuwait Air at a Geneva court, claiming it refused to sell him a ticket because of his nationality. The complaint alleges a violation of Swiss law that condemns discrimination based on race, religion or ethnic origin. The airline suspended its route between NY and London after the US Trans. Dep't ordered it to stop denying Israelis the right to board.

**Singapore Thanks Israel for Defense Aid** (*JPost*)

The PM of Singapore arrived in Israel this week for his first ever visit. He lauded noted the defense aid and advice Singapore has received from Israel over the years "The IDF helped us to develop the Singapore Armed Forces. We asked a number of countries [for assistance], but only Israel responded to us, and it did so very promptly....We will always be grateful that Israel helped us and stood by us at our time of great need."

**12-Year-Old Finds Ancient Egyptian Amulet** (*AP*)

A 12-year-old Israeli has discovered an ancient Egyptian amulet dating back 3,200+ years to the days of the Pharaohs - a pendant-shaped amulet bearing the name of the Egyptian ruler Thutmose III.

**US Tests Israel's Iron Dome** (*JPost*)

The US Army this week carried out a successful trial of the Israeli-made Tamir air-defense missile against a target drone in the US. Rafael Advanced Defense Systems unveiled the Drone Dome, designed to detect and neutralize hostile drones. It detects drones and disrupts their electronic systems. // US Lawmakers called for added funding for US-Israeli partnership: the Iron Dome air defense system, David's Sling, a medium- and long-range air defense system, and the Arrow family of anti-ballistic missiles.

**Turkish Crew Saved by Israeli Upgrades** - (*Ynet*)

A Turkish M60T tank w/ Israeli upgrades survived an attack by an advanced anti-tank guided missile shot by ISIS. The upgrades on the US-made tank were made by Israel and sold to Turkey 10 years ago.

**Israeli SintecMedia Goes for \$400M** (*Globes*)

US private equity fund Francisco Partners has acquired the Israeli company SintecMedia for \$400 million. SintecMedia developed Internet-based management applications and software systems for broadcasters.

**Magic Leap Buys Isr. Cyber Security** (*Bloomberg*)

Magic Leap, a US startup working on a device that simulates reality, has acquired Israeli cybersecurity company NorthBit. Last month, NorthBit discovered a software vulnerability that could affect millions of customers using the Android operating system.

**Tel Aviv Apps for Tourists Experience**

Howazit, provides a seamless connection between guests and hotels throughout the different phases of the visit; Dotz, offers the ideal events guide for visitors based on their geo-location and personal interests; Aspectiva, offers customer review insights.

**Israeli Surgical Sealant Gets EU Approvals**

LifeSeal, a no-leak sealant solution for patients who have undergone gastrointestinal surgery, is now approved for use in the EU. The Israel-based LifeBond allows doctors to prevent leaks after bariatric and GI operations. The sealant is stronger and longer-lasting than others and uses only natural ingredients so it is much better tolerated in patients. (*Times of Israel*)