

**Israel Today – April 1-3, 2016**  
**Rabbi Howard L. Apothaker, Ph.D.**

**Israel's Gaza Border Region Enjoys Quiet** (*JPost*)

Israel's border region opposite Gaza is experiencing its quietest period in years. Record numbers of new residents are moving to villages and kibbutzim once considered war zones. Farmers work their lands right up to the Gaza border; a recent festival in the area drew over 100,000. The IDF remain on high, discreet alert. Hamas is holding its fire and rebuilding its capabilities.

**Israel Tourism Grows from China, India** (*Reuters*)

Israel is looking east to China and India to drive tourism. In 2015, tourism grew 43% from China to 50K. It'll be helped by the start of nonstop flights next month from Beijing adding 35K extra seats to Israel a year. Tourism to Israel from India rose 13% last year to nearly 40K.

**Israel-Uganda Relations at New High**

Israel is a major contributors to Uganda's nat'l security and intelligence. Israeli companies are heavily involved in ag., water management, and health; hosts ~ 200 Ugandan undergrad ag. students yearly. Israel's Solel Boneh has built some of Uganda's modern highways, is working on the 3K-housing-unit project just outside Kampala, and built Entebbe Int'l Airport. (*Independent-Uganda*)

**New Defense Deals w/ India** (*JPost*)

Israel Aerospace Thurs.: It made new sales in India worth hundreds of millions of dollars in the past quarter: drones, air defense and radar systems and other products. Aty India's Defexpo 2016 exhibition in Goa 28 Israeli defense firms exhibited at the Israeli pavilion.

**Raytheon: \$9.5 Million in Reciprocal Procurement**

US arms manufacturer Raytheon will make \$9.5 million in reciprocal procurement in Israel over the next 5 years, in an agreement signed Wed., much of it for the dev't and production of the David's Sling anti-missile defense system. Rafael makes the interceptor missile; Raytheon produces the launchers, chassis, and other accessories. Raytheon's procurement will focus on electronics and semiconductor enterprises, many of which are already subcontractors for Rafael. (*Globes*)

**Israeli Playbuzz Raises \$15 Million** (*Reuters*)

Playbuzz, a platform for distributing online content, has raised \$15 million in funding. Playbuzz is used by thousands of publishers to create content in new formats to boost audience engagement. Playbuzz also provides publishers w/ slideshows, flip cards, galleries and lists. Olmert said the average time spent looking at a traditional news article is >15 seconds compared w/ 3-4 minutes for Playbuzz-powered content.

**Moody: Israel's A1 Stable Rating** (*Globes*)

Int'l credit rating agency Moody's Thurs. confirmed Israel's A1 rating w/ a stable outlook. Economists: If not for Israel's geopolitical risks, its credit rating would be higher. Moody's describes Israel's economy as very strong, w/ growth supported primarily by high-tech exports. This sector rests on a highly educated population and high R&D expenditure. Israel's debt is low by int'l standards; Israel dealt effectively w/ the crisis that engulfed the world's economies.

**US Vigorously Opposes BDS** (*Ynet*)

US Amb. to Israel Dan Shapiro on 3/28: "The USA vigorously opposes efforts to isolate or boycott Israel.... We consider it an extension of our longstanding commitment to fight any effort to delegitimize Israel." *Reuters*: The State Dep't on a UN Human Rights resolution that calls for setting up a database of businesses operating in the W. Bank: "bias against Israel."

**FBI & Israeli Company Crack iPhone** (*Bloomberg*)

The FBI worked w/ Israel's Cellebrite Mobile to crack the iPhone used in the shooting last year in San Bernardino. Cellebrite is a unit of Japan's Sun Corp., whose shares are up ~40% since 3/21 when authorities said a 3rd party had demonstrated a way to crack the iPhone.

**NSA Chief in Israel** (*Times of Israel*)

The director of the NSA, reportedly paid a secret visit to Israel last week to discuss cooperation in cyber-defense, esp. to counter attacks by Iran and Hizbullah. Per the Consul-General of Israel in NY, under Obama and Netanyahu, the bond between Israel and the US has never been stronger. "People can say whatever they want but the relationship between Israel and the United States, but at least when it comes to cooperation between military, and intelligence and gov't to gov't, it is perhaps unprecedented," Consul-General of Israel in NY Ido Aharoni said at a ceremony in memory of Yitzhak Rabin Wednesday night (3/23/2016) at Temple Emanu-El in Manhattan.

**Israeli, Pal. Security Officials Meet in J-lem**

Senior Israeli and Pal. security officials met in J-lem Wed. to discuss the situation in the Pal. territories. The delegation included the chief of Pal. security intelligence, the head of the Pal. liaison and civil affairs dep't, and a third senior security chief. (*Xinhua-China*)

**Druze Businesswoman Conquers Hearts** (*Ynet*)

Jamila Hir, owner of a cosmetics company from the Druze village of Peki'in, represented Israel at the Festival of Women in Segovia, Spain. The festival hosted 6

women from around the world who successfully affected change in their societies. Hir creates natural soaps from olive oil and medicinal herbs, built a factory w/ her own hands; today employs hundreds of Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Druze workers. Her business brings in \$50 million in profits and exports to 40 countries. At the festival, Hir spoke proudly about the peace that exists at the factory between Jewish, Druze, Muslim, and Christian women. "They all work together under the same slogan - only women can give birth to peace." She spoke about how the Druze community lives in peace w/ Jews.

#### **Imaginary Iran** - Michael Rubin

Never in recent history has the US faced a country that has so persistently sought to kill or attack Americans. There is a bizarre effort to whitewash Iranian excesses. Until the US calibrates its policy to the reality of the Iran's ideological prerogatives, terror sponsorship, animosity toward the US and incitement to genocide against Israel, the more likely it is that US policy objectives will fail and Iranian leaders will pursue their aims successfully. Rep. Peter Roskam: Iran is a dangerous geopolitical foe led by a cult of extremists hell-bent on Western civilization's annihilation. It should not be considered open for business. We shall name and shame individuals and businesses that pursue short-term profit at the expense of innocent lives. They'll need to choose between doing business w/ the US and doing business w/ Iran.

#### **US to Give Iran Limited Access to Dollars** (WSJ)

The Administration is preparing to give Iran limited access to US \$. American law prohibits US and foreign banks from dealing in \$ w/ Iran. World banks say they remain reluctant to conduct financial transactions w/ Iran due to fears they might run afoul of US Treasury regulations that ban \$ dealings w/ Iranian firms. Most major int'l trade, particularly in oil and gas, is conducted in US dollars. *Wash Free Beacon*: Some US senators expressed concerns Wed. in a letter to Treasury Sec'y Lew over a plan to provide Iran an expanded package of sanctions relief that would include access to the US dollar.

#### **"In Defiance of" UN Resolution** (Reuters)

By launching nuclear-capable missiles, Iran defied UN Resolution 2231 that endorsed last year's nuclear deal, per US and its allies. Reimposition of UN sanctions may only be triggered by violations of the agreed restrictions on Iran's atomic work. Israel's Amb. to the UN welcomed the countries' call for a united response to Iran.

#### **Iran Is Buying Syria** (Syrian Observer)

Iranian traders have bought a large amount of Syrian real estate, primarily in central Damascus and Homs. The [Syrian] regime has nothing to offer but real estate to

Iran as guarantees in exchange for the huge amounts of money it spent to support the Assad regime."

#### **IDF: Pal. Terror Wave Decreasing** - Gili Cohen

A relative lull in violence is attributable to hyper-vigilance, preemptive tactics and extensive intelligence coordination. tracking and finding potential terrorists, esp. by social media sites where potential terrorists are making contact w/ one another and transferring information. Police have been able to reach potential terrorists and have them arrested before they can carry out attacks. Per a security source, March saw fewer Pal. attacks than the 155 in Feb. vs. Oct. when there were 620 attacks. *Reuters*: Abbas told Israel's *Channel 2 TV* Thurs. he was working to stop knife attacks. "Our security forces go into the schools to search pupils' bags and see if they have knives.... In one school, we found 70 boys and girls who were carrying knives. We took the knives and spoke to them and said: 'This is a mistake. We do not want you to kill and be killed. We want you to live, and for the other side to live as well.'"

#### **Israel Electric Cuts Supply over Debt** (Times of Is.)

The Israel Electric Corporation on Thurs. cut electricity supply to the Pal. city of Jericho in half, after the Pal. debt swelled to \$451+ million). Power can be made up from other sources without blacking out customers.

#### **British Still Don't Understand** - Melanie Phillips

In Britain, there is virtually no reporting of the murderous Pal. attacks on Israelis; no mention of last year's vetted report stating that the standard the IDF set in protecting innocent Arab civilians during the 2014 Gaza conflict was too high for any of their own countries to match. Europe will defend itself properly only when they treat Israel as their vital ally rather than a cosmic foe. D. Murray: When Israel is attacked, the steps of the Israeli embassies in London and other European capitals are not littered w/ flowers, teddy bears candles, or scrawled notes of sympathy. It is seen as in some way deserving of the violence: disregarding that to most Pals all of Israel is one big "settlement" - to be exterminated, as set forth in both the Hamas and PLO charters. It may take a while to realize it, but we are all in the same boat. (Gatestone) Thousands of Pal. terrorists are given cash handouts from aid money. In the W. Bank and Gaza, despite promises by the PA to end the practice of paying aid money to convicted terrorists, they allow the PLO to hand out the cash instead. The PA awards its "heroes" w/ lifetime payments that rise depending on time spent in jail and the seriousness of crimes. Other "salaries" go to the families of suicide bombers involved in the latest upsurge of deadly attacks on Israel.

### **Jordan's Dealing w/ Terrorists** (*Jordan Times*)

Jordan's method in dealing w/ the scourge of extremism and terror is largely preventative – a painstaking search for the bad apple in a community without causing harm to the relationship w/ the larger group, this by "knowing" the community via tribal and community leaders. Jordan looks at potential terrorists as sons gone astray, thus needing discipline, rather than punishment. The carrot and stick method is used effectively, weighing prison time against restricted freedoms.

### **Ukrainian Jews Fleeing to Israel** – K. Engelhart

Life is bad in Ukraine - and that they are moving to Israel because it's their only viable way out. It's not that anti-Semitism is absent from the Ukraine war. This is Eastern Europe, after all.

### **Dubai Woman Delivers Baby in Israel** (*JPost*)

An Arab woman from Dubai who delivered her baby at the Is.-Jordanian border crossing Tues. named the infant after the Druse IDF officer who serves in the Israeli Civil Admin. who helped her give birth.

### **Hypersensitive, Not to Anti-Semitism** - L. H. Summers

On American college campuses, there is hypersensitivity to prejudice against most minority groups; a clear exception is made on most university campuses: anti-Semitic speech and acts. Nearly a dozen academic ass'ns have enacted formal boycotts of Israeli institutions; even Israeli scholars. Student gov'ts at dozens of universities have demanded the divestiture of companies that do business in Israel or the W. Bank. With few exceptions, university leaders, so quick to stand up to microaggressions against other groups remain silent in the face of anti-Semitism. Indeed, many major Amer. universities, including Harvard, remain institutional members of associations that are engaged in boycotts of Israel.

### **Saudi Arabia Puts Heat on Hizbullah** (*Brookings*)

The Saudis have initiated a major campaign to undermine Iran's ally Hizbullah, branding it a terrorist org. and persuading the Gulf Cooperation Council to do the same on March 2. The Arab League will label Hizbullah a terrorist group at a foreign ministerial meeting in Cairo later in the month.

### **"Extrajudicial Killings"?** (*Times of Is.*)

Netanyahu: "Where is the concern for the human rights of the Israelis who've been murdered and maimed by these savage terrorists? Address those who incite youngsters to commit cruel acts of terrorism."

### **Israel as World's Top Human Rights Violator** (*Fox*)

On 3/24/16, the UN Comm. on the Status of Women ended its annual meeting in NY, condemning only Israel for violating women's rights, this even as Arab women

are murdered, subjugated for the sake of male honor, banned from driving, and stoned to death for "adultery." That day, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva condemned Israel 5x. No European state opposed the onslaught of UN resolutions. Germany and the UK occasionally abstained; France voted w/ Arab and Islamic states on all but one Council resolution.

### **ISIS Warns: More Attacks Coming** (*WashTimes*)

After the attacks in Brussels ISIS's media company headlined a column on social media: "America, You Are Next... We will take your children and raise them among Muslim children until they grow up, fight, and break the noses of those who remain among you." The US military has ordered military family members to evacuate S. Turkey, because of the threats concerning possible ISIS attacks.

### **Indonesia: Time for Official Ties** (*Is. Hayom*)

Netanyahu met Mon. w/ a delegation of Indonesian journalists visiting Israel: "The time has come for official relations between Indonesia and Israel.... The reasons that prevented this are no longer relevant and I hope that your visit will help w/ this."

### **Russia Shipping More than Removing** (*Reuters*)

In the weeks since the notice of a partial withdrawal from Syria, Russia has shipped more equipment and supplies to Syria than it has brought back, maintaining its military infrastructure in Syria to supply the Syrian army. Putin "changed the shape of the forces; he didn't evacuate; brought in different assets (attack helicopters) and returned things he had less use for. An Israeli officer praised the manner in which Israeli and Russian forces are working to prevent unintended clashes in the skies over Syria

**When the Necessary Is Impossible** – Tom Friedman  
Crushing ISIS is necessary for stabilizing Iraq and Syria, but it is impossible as long as Shiites and Sunnis there refuse to share power; ignoring the ISIS cancer and its ability to metastasize is impossible. Even if ISIS is evicted from strongholds, if the infighting and mismanagement in Baghdad and sectarian tensions between Shiites and Sunnis are not diffused, "the situation in Iraq could be even worse after" ISIS is toppled. There'll be another huge scramble over who controls these territories now held by ISIS; there is simply no consensus on how power will be shared in the Sunni areas. J. Olidort: ISIS differs from the other Islamists in its drive to create a global caliphate. It appeals to recruits w/ a distinctly apocalyptic narrative of a purist Salafi utopia. The West should try to halt ISIS through stresses on its territorial project, and assemble a broad array of local and regional actors to not only fight ISIS,

but to help in the rebuilding of their countries. Failure to appreciate its spiritual claims risks underestimating the religious hold that ISIS has over its recruits. P. Noonan: Radical *jihadism* is not going to go away. It won't be effectively fought with guilt or ambivalence. The *jihadists'* future weapons will be more sophisticated and deadly. ISIS is essentially "committed to purifying the world by killing vast numbers of people.

### **ISIS' No. 2 Killed in US Special Operations Raid**

Abd ar-Rahman Mustafa al-Qaduli, ISIS' 2<sup>nd</sup> in command and finance minister, was killed in a clandestine raid conducted on the ground in Syria by US Special Operations Forces. (*ABC News*)

### **The Sinai Insurgency Is Spiking** (*Is. Defense*)

Egypt suffered 100+ attacks on average/mo. between 1-8/2015, compared to ~30 attacks/mo. in 2014. However, the total number of terrorist attacks in Egypt from 8-12/2015 dropped significantly to 64, compared w/ 170 in the same period in 2014.

### **Attack on Jewish Schools in Turkey** (*Sky News*)

ISIS advanced plans to murder Jewish children in Turkey at kindergartens, schools and youth centers. Information on an "imminent" attack was obtained from ISIS operatives arrested last week. Jacques Neriah: Turkey shelters, trains, arms, and finances rebel groups, and allow almost total free movement of *jihadists* inside Turkey en route to their units in Syria. In its efforts to destabilize Assad, Turkey may take advantage of the already boiling situation inside Lebanon between Hizbullah and its Sunni opponents and try to provoke a renewed civil war in Lebanon..

### **ISIS Driven from Ancient Palmyra** (*USA Today*)

Syrian gov't forces backed by Russian airstrikes recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from ISIS Sunday. Avi Issacharoff: The victory is important mostly at the symbolic level. Its recapture was not particularly arduous or prolonged, as ISIS fighters withdrew east toward its power centers. Y. Kuperwasser: ISIS is losing ground both in Syria and in Iraq, but losing ground to the Iranian Empire, a zero-sum game. The ultra-radical Sunni party led by the Islamic State is losing ground to the ultra-radical Iranian party.

### **Golan Druze Accepting Israeli Citizenship** M. Arens

30% of the residents of Druze village of Majdal Shams have taken out Israeli citizenship; the rest of the Druze villages may follow suit after many years of the community's anticipation that the Golan Heights would be turned over to Syria by Israel. Watching from afar the bloodbath in Syria, many consider themselves to be fortunate to be part of Israel. (*Ha'aretz*)

### **Dealing w/ European Terrorism**

Both the attack in Brussels and the Nov. 2015 attack in Paris involved a single network. Westerners who went to Syria in recent years were trained to carry out terrorist attacks in the West. Europe requires a concrete policy of preemptive measures: closer supervision of religious institutions, heightened monitoring of charity orgs; strengthened security systems at public facilities. Arrangements between Turkey and the EU to slow the flow of refugees from Syria and other areas of the ME and N. Africa indicate a material change in Europe's attitude. (*Ins. for Nat'l Security Studies*)

### **How to Defeat Islamic State** Tony Blair

Confront only the violence and fail to confront the ideology. The roots remain untouched. Islam as practiced by a majority of the world's Muslims is an honorable and peaceful faith. But over the past half-century there has developed a narrative within Islam that changed the character of its interaction with those of different faiths. It is fundamentally incompatible with the modern world. Many millions of Muslims w/ semi-official support are teaching an ideology uninterested in coexistence, that does not seek dialogue but dominance; it cannot be contained; it has to be defeated. Saudi Arabia is our ally. Egypt is our ally. Israel also is our ally. The Pal. issue remains of huge importance. But Israel's security is our security. Ground forces are necessary to win this fight and ours are the most capable.

### **Is. Intelligence Has Prevented Attacks** (*Is. Hayom*)

The former head of IDF military intelligence: Israeli intelligence shared w/ intelligence agencies throughout the West had prevented terrorist attacks and bloodshed. In the UK, at least 7 terror plots were stopped. Belgian authorities foiled numerous plots, and French authorities tell *NBC* that they have foiled dozens more.

“Old” News

### **Foreign Investment Up 90% in 2015** (*Times of Is.*)

Foreign direct investment in Israel - \$11.6 billion in 2015, a 90% increase over 2014. 270+ multinational companies have set up shop in Israel, w/ 320 world-class R&D centers. Israel's workforce has the highest concentration of PhDs and engineers per capita in the world, and Israel invests more than any other country in R&D as a percentage of GDP - 4.2%.

### **Israel Among Happiest Places on Earth** – Z. Chafets

Year by year, Israel gets bigger, stronger, richer, more technologically advanced and better accepted by the countries that matter (Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia). Israelis get happier.