

**Israel Today – April 8-10, 2016**  
**Rabbi Howard L. Apothaker, Ph.D.**

**Israel: Stable Growth, Lowest Joblessness** (*AFP*)

In 2015, Israel recorded economic growth of 2.5% and its lowest unemployment rate, 5.3%, since the mid-80s. The projection is 2.8% economic growth for 2016. *Globes*: Israel's foreign exchange reserves stood at a record \$94.8 billion on 4/1/16, up \$4.2 billion from Feb

**China's Fosun to Buy Ahava** (*WSJ*)

Chinese conglomerate Fosun Int'l is near a deal to buy Israeli cosmetics maker Ahava Dead Sea Labs that specializes in skin creams made w/ Dead Sea minerals in a \$77 million deal.

**Tel Aviv: Next Mediterranean Getaway** (*Vogue*)

Tel Aviv is a bubble where history, culture, and what might be the wildest nightlife on earth come together. Wander its streets and you encounter charmingly restored Bauhaus architecture and century-old stone buildings, vibrant markets, and beautiful locals and expats sipping espressos at sidewalk cafes. Did we mention the farm-to-table restaurants and tantalizing cocktail scene? It's all here, just steps from scenic sandy beaches and the sapphire blue Mediterranean.

**The Secret of Israel's Success** (Amb. R. Dermer)

Israel is a tiny country of 8 million people - founded only 67 years ago, possessing few natural resources, and facing constant security threats from its neighbors has embraced capitalism and uses a genius for innovation, per Israel's Amb due to *chutzpah* (insolence, audacity) of the Jewish people was another secret of Israel's success. Israel was the name given to Jacob after he wrestled w/ an angel. "Israel means to struggle w/ God. We've been a questioning, skeptical people for a long time, Dermer said, and "it takes gall and daring to challenge conventional wisdom."

**Technion Friends Worldwide** (*JPost*)

Rather than confront the BDSers, the Technion has developed a proactive globalization policy that seeks to build bridges of goodwill and mutual benefit that serve as solid proof of the fallacy and distortion in the BDS arguments. In under a decade, it has signed 200+ pacts w/ leading academic and research institutions as well as research divisions in large multinat'l corporations worldwide. It isn't Zionism. It's just good business.

**Anti-Israel Charity Loses UK Funding** (*Telegraph*)

The UK's Dep't for Int'l Dev't said Fri. that it no longer supports a British charity that financed "Israeli Apartheid Week." The charity £260,000 in funding over the last 2 years. Many Israeli Apartheid Week speakers seek to destroy Israel.

**F-35 Will Preserve Qualitative Edge** (*Defense News*)

Israel's planned F-35I force will allow it to preserve Israel's qualitative military edge vs. regional adversaries. DM Ya'alon: "We obviously will add our own capabilities, our knowledge and our experience to each plane."

**Bahrain: Iran Bigger Threat than Israel** (*JPost*)

Asked: "Are you saying that Iran is more dangerous than Israel to the Gulf states?" Bahrain's FM responded, "The Iranian danger is what we see before our eyes."

**Turkey's Reconciliation Talks w/ Israel** (*Reuters*)

Turkish and Israeli teams made progress in talks in London Thurs. on an agreement to mend ties.

**Israel, US Sign Joint Energy Deal** - (*Is. Hayom*)

U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz signed a new joint energy deal in Jerusalem on Monday that expands areas of cooperation to include fuels and fuel alternatives, natural gas, smart grid technologies, desalination and water treatment, and the physical and cyber-defense of energy and water installations. Israeli Minister Steinitz met Thurs. with Egyptian FM Shoukry in the highest level meeting of senior ministers from both countries since the ouster of Mubarak in 2011. The meeting dealt w/ regional issues, a possibility of providing Israeli gas to Egyptian liquefaction facilities, and int'l cooperation in preventing radioactive terrorism. In 9/15, Israel reopened its embassy in Egypt, four years after it was shut when a mob stormed the complex.

**IDF: Terrorist Attacks Declining** (*Times of Israel*)

There have been a significant recent decrease in the # of Pal. terrorist attacks. Security forces arrested Pals in the W. Bank for throwing stones and firebombs at cars on Rte. 443 N. of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, a Pal. was charged Thurs. for planning a shooting attack on security forces near J-lem's Malha Mall. Charges were also brought against 3 Pals from the W. Bank village for using laser beams to try to blind drivers on Rte. 465. A bomb was detonated near an IDF bulldozer on the N. Gaza border Fri., causing no damage or injuries.

**Drug May Be Prostate Cancer Cure** (*Times of Is.*)

Scientists at the Weizmann Inst. may have found a cure for prostate cancer if caught in its early stages - via a drug injected into cancerous cells treated w/ infrared laser illumination. It targets and destroys cancerous prostate cells. In Phase III clinical trials, 80+% of the subjects remained cancer-free 2 years after treatment.

## *Iran*

### **US Confronts New Iran Challenges** (*NYT*)

While Iran is observing the nuclear agreement to the letter, its missile launches, arms shipments and Syrian involvement have accelerated. Sec'y Kerry arrived in Bahrain to assure Arab states this week w/ an array of plans for missile and cyber-defenses. He was briefed at the Fifth Fleet base in Bahrain on recent intercepts of Iranian shipments of arms headed to Yemen. *Tasnim-Iran*: A factory was opened in Tehran Wed. for the production of Octogen explosives. Octogen is a powerful explosive used almost exclusively in military applications, including as a solid rocket propellant. *Fox*: A month ago, Sec'y Kerry told Congress that Iran was moving troops out of Syria. The bigger picture is that the Iranian military are deploying and sustaining ground forces in major combat operations far from Iran's borders. They are also building up capacity to do more of the same.

### **Russia: No Ban on Jets, Tanks to Iran** (*Fars-Iran*)

Russian FM: "We are of the opinion that the possible sale of Sukhoi-30 fighter jets and T-90 tanks of Russia to Iran have not been prohibited in [Security Council] Resolution 2231, that resolution permits Iran to purchase such military hardware." The US will veto the sale.

### **Iran Should Pay a Price for Tests** (*WashPost*)

Senate For. Rel. Chair Bob Corker and ranking member Ben Cardin are discussing sanctions vs. any Iranian entity, including financial institutions, connected to the missile program and renew the broader Iran Sanctions Act. *WashPost*: Iran has yet to see the economic growth it wants from the nuclear deal; it's demanding additional concessions. Congress should make clear that until the Iranian regime drops its illicit missile program and funding of terrorism, it won't receive sanctions relief.

**One Year After Iran Nuke Deal** - Yousef Al Otaiba  
Iran sees the deal as an opportunity to increase hostilities in the region. The int'l community must intensify its actions to check Iran's strategic ambitions. If the carrots of engagement aren't working, we must not be afraid to bring back the sticks. *The writer is the UAE Amb. to the US. Bloomberg*: (1) The Iranians have disposed of nuclear material, (2) modified sites and (3) allowed more monitoring; they keep haggling over the terms. Now the US is considering a rule to allow some Iranian businesses to use offshore financial institutions to access US dollars in currency trades. *Nat'l Interest*: Recently not only have the threats on Iran diminished, but a power vacuum has emerged. Iranian bids for hegemony in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen. Its footprint is be found in Eritrea, Gaza, Bahrain and Shiite regions of S. Arabia, in Central Asia and the Caucasus. It competes w/ major regional powers over footholds and clients. Iran

has managed to alienate, antagonize most regional powers. The unexpected outcome of Iran's policies is a new coalition of its own making of many regional players opposed to Iran.

### **Iran Blames Washington** - Patrick Clawson

Past penalties have made many banks cautious. Having been subject to more than \$15 billion in US fines for poor enforcement of sanctions and regulations, and tens of billions more for other deceptive practices, major banks have adopted a "derisking" strategy predicated on leaving markets where they judge the risk of violating rules - inadvertently or not - is too high to be worth the limited returns.

### **Iran's Entrenchment Threatens Israel** (*Is. Hayom*)

The entrenchment of Iran in Damascus, w/ Russian help, constitutes a critical nat'l security threat to Israel: a new front opening on the Golan Heights. Israel works under the assumption that Syria cannot easily be fixed and that conflict is likely to continue.

## *Palestinians*

### **Moves at UN Make Peace Less Likely** (*Ha'aretz*)

The last time the Sec. Coun. voted on a resolution condemning the settlements was in 2011. It garnered the support of 14 of 15 Sec. Coun. members; the US opposed; after failing to get the Pals to withdraw it, cast a veto, the only time in the past 7 years that Mr. Obama used his veto.

### **The Pals' Homemade Misery** (*Commentary*)

Over Hamas confiscating sizable portions of cement shipments to build tunnels w/ which to attack Israel, the UN's special coordinator for the ME peace process, fingered Hamas this week for "stealing from their own people and adding to the suffering of Pals in Gaza." 95% of Gaza's tap water is undrinkable. The quickest way to solve the shortage is to buy water from Israel; the PA rejects this solution though it buys water from Israel for the West Bank. An Israeli-Pal. business center to facilitate commerce between Israel and the W. Bank was shuttered because the PA forbade Pals to go there. Even if Israel left the W. Bank tomorrow, it would solve very few of the Pals' problems: stealing cement; end the PA-Hamas feud; stop the PA from impeding its people's business activity. Israel this week suspended the delivery of cement to Gaza; Hamas has been diverting the material.

### **1,000 Pals Are Digging Tunnels in Gaza** (*JPost*)

Hamas employs 1,000+ operatives to excavate tunnels in Gaza, paying each operative \$300-400/mo. A unit trains for incursions into Israel through the tunnels.

### **UN Agency Regularly Manipulates Data** (*JPost*)

NGO Monitor Thurs. reported saying that the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Pal. Territories (OCHA) "regularly presents data in a manipulative way that erases the context of terrorism and distorts law and morality," fails to distinguish between Pal. civilians and attackers, so amplifying Pal. casualty claims, and draws a false symmetry between legal Israeli self-defense and illegal terrorist. OCHA promotes BDS and 'lawfare' campaigns against Israel. It parrots "the false and distorted NGO claims," giving credibility to misleading accusations, rarely citing relevant Israeli gov't information.

### **Senior Pal. Economist Cites Protocols** (*MEMRI*)

On 4/5/16, on Lebanon TV, Pal. economist F. Bseiso: Global Judaism is responsible for the financial crisis of 2008. "The 4th protocol of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* [a classic anti-Semitic forgery] is now being implemented.... Global Judaism constitutes a virus and plague which strikes at the entire world."

### **No Peace in Coming Years**

76% of Israeli Jews, 62% of Israeli Arabs not believe that talks between Israel and the PA. The chief Pal. negotiator: "Netanyahu should first announce an end of settlement, release prisoners arrested before signing [the] Oslo peace accords in 1993 and recognize all the signed peace treaties between the two sides." Bibi: "A few days ago on Israeli TV, I heard President Abbas say that if I invited him to meet, he'd come," Netanyahu said. "So...I'm inviting him again."

### **Teaching Pals to Hate** (*Israel Hayom*)

The Mideast Freedom Forum, a German think tank, is focusing a spotlight on the PA educational system. It shows that PA textbooks reveal messages of burning hatred, w/ condescending and degrading language about Jews. Tel Aviv and kibbutzim are universally referred to as "settlements." "Israel" = "the occupation regime" = "the Zionist terrorist org." Calls to initiate violent attacks against Israelis appear frequently; to use violence to resolve the diplomatic conflict. Since PA schools are chiefly funded by EU donations, blame for teaching hate and its consequences falls on its leaders.

### **Pals on the Knife Intifada** (*Mosaic*)

2 terrorists who repeatedly stabbed a British woman and left her for dead, after killing her friend in a brutal attack near J-lem, are now each receiving a monthly stipend of £750 w/ the help of UK aid. Per 57% of the residents of the W. Bank/J-lem, most of the Pals who fell in attacks did not try to stab Israelis, despite widely accessible videos of the stabbings; family members of many publicly took pride in their deeds; leading Pal. figures and media

celebrated the attacks. 62% reject a 2-state solution modeled on the Clinton formula; 61% reject mutual recognition between "Israel as the state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the state of the Pal. people." 43% think current confrontations will serve Pal. nat'l interests more effectively than negotiations. *JPost*: This generation of Pals is not interested in a diplomatic solution; it doesn't care if Israel negotiates or not w/ the PA. The terrorists, mainly from middle class families read a lot of ISIS content on smartphones; they are not themselves religious. They hate the PA; condemn existing terror orgs such as Hamas, Fatah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

### **Trees for Terror** (*Fox News*)

A UN-funded Pal. charity planted 200+ olive trees in the W. Bank over the weekend, each to honor the terrorists who killed 34 Israelis and wounded 400+ since September. The UN sponsors the Pal. group through UNRWA and UNDP; it receives funding from the gov'ts of Australia, Spain, Netherlands and Japan.

### **Anti-Israel Protesters Crash Talk** (*JPost*)

Pro-Pal. protesters Wed. barged into a lecture by J-lem Mayor Barkat at SF State U., to prevent him from speaking: "We will continue to build, develop and strengthen the State of Israel and within it a united Jerusalem, and we will continue to voice our opinions and our legitimacy when we are invited to do so, even in places where they try to stop us."

*Etc.*

### **Israel's Christian Minority** (*Gatestone*)

Israel is the only island of safety that allows Christians, Druse, Muslims, Baha'i and other minorities freedom and democratic rights in this region. Christians and Muslims fill all types of high positions, e.g., a Maronite Christian Supreme Court judge. An increasing numbers of Christians are applying to serve in the IDF. 1,000+ Muslim Arabs serve in the IDF.

### **Christians Bitter over Church Destruction** (*JPost*)

Construction workers in Gaza found the remains of a 1,500-year-old church where a shopping mall is being built. Bulldozers removed the antiquities and continued their work. A Nablus Christian: "How are the Wakf officials in Gaza different from ISIS when they bulldoze antiquities and a religious and cultural treasure?"

### **UN Censors Israeli Exhibition** (*JPost*)

The UN disqualified 3 of 13 displays at an exhibition initiated by Israel's Permanent Mission to the UN that opened at UN HQ Monday: one about Jerusalem, another about Israeli Arabs and a 3<sup>rd</sup> about Zionism. Israeli UN Amb. Danon: "Zionism and Jerusalem are the

foundation stones and the moral basis upon which the State of Israel was founded. We will not allow the UN to censor the fact that Jerusalem is Israel's eternal capital."

**Anti-Zionism = New Anti-Semitism** - Jonathan Sacks  
Chris Bryant, the Shadow Leader of the House of Commons and senior member of the British Labour party, warned that questioning the right of the State of Israel to exist is a "not too subtle form of anti-Semitism. In the Middle Ages, Jews were hated because of their religion; in the 19th and 20th because of their race. Today they are hated because of their nation state, Israel. Anti-Zionism is the new anti-Semitism. Israel is regularly accused of 5 crimes against human rights: racism, apartheid, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and attempted genocide. This is the blood libel of our time. Hate that begins w/ Jews never ends w/ Jews. People of all faiths and none must stand together, not just to defeat anti-Semitism but to ensure the rights of religious minorities are defended everywhere.

**Hizbullah Building Base in Syria** (*Stratfor*)  
Sources say there are long-range Iranian missiles including the Shahab-1, Shahab-2 and Fateh-110, any of which could be used to strike Israel.

**Israel Anticipates ISIS' Downfall in Syria** (*Ha'aretz*)  
On Syria's part of Mt. Hermon there is no trace of the Syrian army. The coalitions attacking ISIS have complete aerial superiority. A senior Israeli security source: "The defeat of ISIS in Syria is a matter of time."

**Pulling Troops from Sinai Due to ISIS** (*CNN*)  
The Administration is considering pulling troops out of the Sinai Peninsula in part due to the growing threat from ISIS. Some 700 U.S. troops are currently stationed in Sinai to support the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. U.S. defense officials believe the threat of militant attacks in northern Sinai is growing.

*Ending with Better News*

**Israel "Indispensable Ally"** (*Times of Is.*)  
Paul Ryan chose to visit Israel now "to reinforce our alliance.... We are partners in this war on radical Islamic terrorism. Israel is an indispensable ally in that. Israel is on the front line in so many ways w/ respect to it." Ordinary Americans understand "that our ties w/ Israel are deep and strong, and that they're mutual....We need Israel for our own national security."

**Israel Is Not an Apartheid State** – E. Mirvis  
Israel's Arab, Druze, Bedouin, Ethiopian, Russian, Bah'î, Armenian and other citizens have equal status under the law. One who truly understands what apartheid was cannot possibly look around Israel today and honestly claim there is any kind of parity. (*New Statesman*)

**First Ethiopian-Born Brigade C'mder** (*Is. Hayom*)  
Lt. Col. Avi Yitzhak, who immigrated in 1991, has become the 1<sup>st</sup> Ethiopian Israeli to graduate the IDF brigade commanders course. He heads the Combat Medical Branch in the Medical Corps. "I believe, ultimately, that everything is dependent on the individual and the sky is the limit. In my community, people need to understand this."

**French Court Upholds Hate-Crime Sentence** (*JTA*)  
A French appeals court upheld the hate-crime convictions of activists who called for a boycott of Israel at a demonstration outside a supermarket in 2010. French law views BDS as discriminatory; in 2003 it extended anti-racist legislation to include boycotts against countries or their peoples.

**Israel Expands Gaza Fishing Zone** (*JPost*)  
Israel Sun. extended the distance Gaza fishing vessels are permitted to travel from 6 to 9 nautical miles off the coast of S. Gaza. Off of N. Gaza, the 6-mile restriction remains.

**Israel to Hire Jordanian Workers** (*Albawaba*)  
Israel will allow another 500 Jordanians to work at its hotels in the Red Sea resort of Eilat, joining 400 Jordanians already employed. Plans are to eventually employ 1,500 Jordanian workers.

**Refusing the Headscarf on Iran Flights** (*Guardian*)  
2 female crew refused to don a "loose-fitting jacket and headscarf" before leaving the plane in Tehran. "It's not professional and they see it as an insult to their dignity," said union leader Francoise Redolfi.

**2,200-Year-Old Bronze Artifacts** (*Times of Is.*)  
An ornate Second Temple era bronze incense shovel and bronze jug were recently unearthed at the biblical site of Magdala, on the W. shore of the Sea of Galilee. The town is known by Christians as the birthplace of Mary Magdalene. Digs there have uncovered the remains of a synagogue, ritual baths, streets, factories and a marketplace from the Second Temple-era town

**Israeli Doctors, Security Save Syrian** (*Times of Is.*)  
A 5-year-old Syrian girl arrived at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa in recent weeks w/ serious wounds from the fighting in Syria. Doctors discovered the young girl had cancer. When a search for a bone marrow donor led to a relative living in an enemy state, Israel's security services mounted a secret operation that helped smuggle the relative out of that country and into Israel.