

Israel Today – April 15-17, 2016
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Alliance w/ Egypt, Saudi Arabia? (*Al-Monitor*)

A well placed Israeli security official said moderate Arab countries are worried about the growing strength and enlargement of Iran and Turkey. Many realize Israel is not the problem, but the solution. Israel's dialogue w/ them remains mainly under the radar, but it deepens all the time and it bears fruit. Elliott Abrams: "Egypt, Israel, and S. Arabia are acting like neighbors.... It is a remarkable demonstration of how the attitude of Arab states toward Israel is changing." The notion that Israel had to solve the Pal. problem before getting along w/ its neighbors has proved false. In *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews*, Michael Barnett posits a world presenting fewer and fewer physical threats to Jews. The reality? In Syria sits Islamist terrorists. Jordan is now burdened by ~1.3 million Syrian refugees. Iran busily builds its ballistic-missile program in service of a nuclear bomb. Sinai is riddled now w/ terrorist groups. Almost each day brings another Pal. terrorist attack. And has not Europe, where in city after city Jews are warned not to walk in the street displaying any sign of their religion, abandoned its Jews to the new anti-Semitism? *Israel Hayom*: Renewed Egyptian-Saudi cooperation aligns w/ Israel's vested interests: to counter the radicalized forces in Egypt and Saudi Arabia; to counter Iran, which Saudi Arabia considers a major threat. Saudi Arabia essentially vowed to comply w/ the terms of the Egyptian peace treaty w/ Israel. That treaty mandates that these two islands remain demilitarized. The treaty also led to the creation of an int'l peacekeeping force to ensure free passage through the straits.

Where Hawks and Doves Fly Together -

M. Raffel and D. Diker: We differ on the history and current status of the Israeli-Pal. conflict and perhaps its ultimate resolution. Our viewpoints converge on the need to develop a Pal. governance and economic infrastructure in the W. Bank and Gaza capable of sustaining a future state living in peace, security and good neighborly relations next to Israel. We believe gov't-to-gov't, civil society and people-to-people initiatives that foster cooperation and bolster trust between Israelis and Pals ought to be supported and expanded.

Trophy Anti-Missile Defense System (*Def. News*)

Israel launched tests this week of combat engineering versions of its Namer troop carrier: a bulldozer, a breaching and obstacle bridging version, and a towing version, all equipped w/ the Trophy Active Protection System against anti-tank missiles, mortars and RPGs. It allows Israeli ground forces to deal w/ terror tunnels, bridge obstacles, and maneuver in high-threat areas.

During the 2014 Gaza war per one commander, the system worked like a charm.... Everything was automatic."

U.S. Reiterates Opposition to Security Council

State Dep't on the Security Council action on the Israeli-Pal. conflict: "Our position hasn't changed in terms of action on this issue at the UN Security Council...[and the U.S. is] opposed to it."

Oracle Buys Crosswise for \$50M (*Globes*)

US software giant Oracle has acquired Israeli big data company Crosswise for \$50 million. Crosswise developed a cross-device ID system based on big data, data science, and machine learning that identifies which PCs, phones, tablets, digital TVs and other connected devices are being used by individual consumers - help advertisers target appropriate consumers.

World Center for Renewing Aircraft (*Times of Is.*)

The budget-challenged IAF has learned to adapt, recycle, and renew equipment. Per a senior officer: "We can turn an old plane into something that is quite capable of competing on the battlefield w/ new planes, and in fact we can ensure that these planes will remain competitive and mission-worthy for another decade."

Jewish Ukrainian Appointed PM (*JTA*)

Vlodymir Groysman was appointed PM by Prez Poroshenko - the first openly Jewish person to hold the country's second highest post. Ukraine's Parliament approved the appointment.

Security (*Defense News*)

Lawmakers are calling 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. The Iron Dome missile defense partnership includes an agreement for co-production that, in 2015, brought 55% of the work to the US. Additional funding for Iron Dome went to the procurement of interceptors that were needed after the 2014 Gaza conflict.

Israel's Nuke Research Centers (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel's nuclear reactor in Dimona is involved in 65 joint research projects w/ agencies abroad, including the US Dep' of Energy, the EPA, the EU, and the Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Ehud Netzer, director of the Nuclear Research Center-Negev, said Tuesday.

Boycott Israel Campaign Is Wrong - David Adelman

Before his trip to Israel, a South African human rights

activist, Tshediso Mangope, advocated a boycott of Israel. He changed his mind. The BDS movement selects Israel as the only candidate for discrimination. Israel could withdraw from the entire West Bank tomorrow and the boycotters would still find a reason to continue their malicious campaign. Tshediso Mangope: I visited the Israeli and Pal. people and was shocked by the amount of falsehoods upon which my views on Israel were edified. There has been a sustained campaign to demonize the State of Israel without understanding the real issues. This is what continues to undermine the possibility of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Celebrating extremists as martyrs undermines efforts to resolve the conflict. Jewish people too deserve protection. Boycotting one side and exonerating the other can only perpetuate the conflict, not resolve it. *The writer is a South African human rights activist. (Politicsweb-S. Africa)*

Anti-Israel Human Rights Rapporteur *(NY Post)*

Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, wrote to UN S-G Ban calling on the UN to rescind its app't of Canadian law professor Michael Lynk to a key post in Israeli-Pal. relations. Lynk argued that "the int'l community must isolate Israel through a trial before the Int'l Criminal Court." The Canadian FM called on the UN to reconsider its choice of Lynk.

U.S. Frowns on New Iran Sanctions *(Bloomberg)*

The US Treasury Dep't oppose new legislative sanctions on Iran: "New mandatory non-nuclear sanctions legislation would needlessly risk undermining our unity w/ int'l partners." The US already can impose new sanctions on individuals and entities for ballistic missile violations. The US won't provide Iran access to the US financial system. *Forbes*: The Iranian economic sector. It is extremely difficult for an int'l company to be sure that it is not doing business w/ the IRGC.

Israel Foils Recent Hamas Terror Plots *(JPost)*

Israeli security forces have quietly foiled a large number of Hamas mass-casualty terrorism plots in the West Bank recently, often at a very advanced stage of preparations, on what Pals term "Quality attacks." Still, (1) A Pal. attacked an IDF soldier w/ an ax Thurs; troops shot and killed him. (2) 2 12-year-old Pal. boys were arrested in J-lem's Old City after police discovered knives concealed in their coats.

Does the Pal. Leadership Want Peace? - Alan Baker

It is time that the Pal. leadership invests the funding it receives to serve the needs and interests of the Pal. public rather than wasting funds on political and public relations exercises and expensive travel for the sole purpose of perpetuating conflict and Pal. victimhood.

Pal. Educational System Inculcates Hatred

In March, the Hamas-affiliated *Shihab News Agency* issued a video showing a Pal. teacher indoctrinating school children w/ hatred for Israel and support for an armed struggle. Children undergo military training to prepare for joining Hamas when they are older.

Sides in the War within Islam - Bernard-Henri Levy
Genuine anti-racists, anti-imperialists, and believers in republican democracy must take the side of the Islam of moderation and peace in its war against the criminal Islam of the Salafists. *(Project Syndicate)*

Charm Offensive to Africans *(The East African)*

African ambassadors to the US attended a presentation in Wash. on 3/22 by the former head of Israel's counter-terrorism operations: "African countries could do more - including in partnership w/ Israel - to combat the threat" of terrorism. African countries' open embrace of Israel could signal an important diplomatic shift. African solidarity w/ the Pal. cause may no longer be relevant. The Africa-Israel Initiative (AII) has challenged African gov'ts to align themselves w/ the nation of Israel in order to benefit from Israel's technology and industry.

Iran's Special Forces Suffer Heavy Losses *(JPost)*

Iranian Pilot Threatens to Seek Asylum in Israel

A pilot in the helicopter unit of the Iran fled Iran to Turkey in March 2015. He warned the regime in an interview, "If you do not leave me alone and stop harassing my family [who are still in Iran], I will seek asylum in Israel and start fighting you." *(Times of Israel)*

US Campaign Takes Toll on Islamic State *(NYT)*

American airstrikes have killed 25,000 ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria and incinerated millions of dollars plundered by the militants. Iraqi and Kurdish forces have taken back 40% of the militant group's land in Iraq. Yet the fight against ISIS is likely to go on for years. The US and Europe must now also engage in a complex struggle against homegrown militants who need few resources to sow bloodshed in the West. "The ideology of *jihadism* continues to evolve and continues to exist," said a former terrorism finance analyst at the Treasury Dep't.

U.S. May Replace Troops w/ Sensors *(Reuters)*

The US has notified Egypt and Israel that it is reviewing whether to automate aspects of multinational peacekeeping operations in the insurgency-wracked Sinai, possibly allowing a reduction in US deployments. Using remote surveillance tech. could allow the withdrawal of hundreds of its 700 peacekeeping troops.

Freedom of Passage in Tiran Straits (*Ha'aretz*)

A document handed to Israel ensures the commitment of S. Arabia, which doesn't have formal agreements w/ Israel, to carry on w/ the principles reached by Israel and Egypt in their 1979 peace agreement: that the Gulf of Aqaba is an int'l waterways open to free sailing and flying. The 2 islands control entry to the Gulf of Aqaba and the Israeli port of Eilat.

Case of the One-State Advocates - Joseph S. Spoerl
The one-state proponents whitewash Pal. political culture by denying, ignoring, or obscuring its Islamist and anti-Semitic aspects to distract their readers from the illiberal, undemocratic aspects of Pal. society.

Israel Is Here to Stay - Aaron David Miller
The threats from Hizbullah, Hamas, and ISIS aren't existential security threats to the state. Iran's putative quest for a nuclear weapon has been constrained for now. Functional cooperation w/ Jordan, improving ties w/ Turkey, close relations w/ Egypt, and an emerging alignment of interests w/ Saudi Arabia against Iran, all suggest a certain lessening of the Arab state allergy to Israel. Washington will almost certainly continue to look to Israel as an ally in the region. Terror attacks on domestic soil from a ME in meltdown provides a set of talking points for the continuation of the U.S.-Israel special relationship. Israel is a highly functional state that has powerful agency, extraordinary human resources, a demonstrated capacity to deal w/ its security challenges, and neighbors who seem to be growing weaker, not stronger.

Abbas' Brother Hospitalized in Israel - Elijah Levy
(*Ynet News*)

Abbas' younger brother, who lives in Qatar, is hospitalized in severe condition w/ cancer at an Israeli hospital in Tel Aviv.

Pal. Faction in Gaza Burns Pictures of Abbas (*JPost*)

The PFLP is the second largest group in the PLO after Abbas' Fatah faction.

Pals to Build West Bank Power Plant (*Ynet*)

Israel has approved in principle the construction of a Pal. power station in the Jenin Industrial Zone in the W. Bank. The station, which will take 4 years to build, will be fueled by Israeli gas from the Leviathan field in the Mediterranean. *AFP*: The only power plant in Hamas-run Gaza has been closed since Sat. due to a shortage of fuel caused by a dispute over taxes between Hamas and the PA. The PA in Ramallah has gradually removed a tax exemption on fuel, demanding that Hamas pay taxes on imports to Gaza.

Britain's Muslim Problem - (*WSJ*)

More than a third of Muslims think Jews have too much power in Britain, compared w/ 9% of the general population

Russian Military Is as Busy as Ever (*WashPost*)

Russian special forces are on the front lines, calling in targeting info for airstrikes. Russian warships deliver supplies to Assad. Russia's helicopters are taking a newly prominent role in the fighting.

Muslims Responsibility for Terrorism (*Mirror-UK*)

In a broadcast on S. Arabian TV, a newsreader: "Whenever terrorism massacres peaceful civilians ... hypocrites vie w/ one another in saying that these people do not represent Islam or Muslims.... It is we who blow up others.... The perpetrators emerge from our environment. Their families belong to our society.... We must admit ... that their nationality is Arab, and that they adhere to the religion of Islam. We must acknowledge that we are the ones who gave birth to them."

Changing Demographics of J-lem Area - H. Frisch

The PA, w/ the help of the EU, has succeeded in housing 120K Pals in recent years in a 9-sq.-km. area mostly within the official boundaries of J-lem. All of this construction is illegal. These neighborhoods are a human disaster. The only road ... is 2 lanes wide. Fire trucks find it impossible to reach the scene in the event of emergencies. Garbage burns in the open.

Iran Retracts Claim on Missile System (*Times of Is.*)

Clinton, Sanders Clash on 2014 Gaza War (*Politico*)

Clinton touted Israel's right to defend itself after Sanders called Israel's response "disproportionate." Clinton: If "your soldiers are under attack, you have to respond.... Hamas provokes Israel. They often pretend to have people in civilian garb acting as though they are civilians who are Hamas fighters.... And I think Israel has had to defend itself, has a right to defend itself." Sanders: "We will not succeed to ever bring peace in that region unless we also treat the Pals w/ dignity and respect." The Hamas war vs. Israel left 66 Israeli soldiers and 6 civilians dead; there were a total of 842 Israeli casualties. UN and Pal. sources claimed 2,100 Pals in Gaza were killed. The Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center reported in its name-by-name analysis that 55% of those killed were combatants. D. Benjamin: On 11/6/14, Gen. Dempsey, Chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Israel went to "extraordinary lengths" to limit civilian casualties and collateral damage during the 2014 Gaza war.

Rapprochement w/ Turkey? - Aykan Erdemir

I have serious concerns about the foundations of Turkish-Israeli rapprochement, and remain unconvinced about its sustainability. Turkey turns a blind eye to years of anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli propaganda disseminated by its own official mouthpieces. *Ha'aretz*: Israelis Warned to Leave Turkey Immediately

Substantial Decline in Attacks - Herb Keinon

The steps taken by Israel to thwart attacks were done while trying to retain, as much as possible, the normal fabric of daily life for the Pal. population not involved in terrorism and preserving cooperation w/ Pal. security services. *Ynet*: The commander of the IDF's Gush Etzion Brigade, has succeeded in stopping tens of attacks, as well as offering "carrots" to the Pals to lighten the atmosphere. He has held many candid talks in recent weeks w/ village leaders. Pal. security services are also doing much more to stop the terror wave.

Abbas Blunting Terror Wave? (*Ha'aretz*)

Abbas' recent fruitful effort to reduce the terror wave reflects the pressure he is facing for controlling it. The campaign reconfirms the Israeli Jewish public's sobriety about the chances of peace in this generation. The int'l attitude toward boycotting Israel is also beginning to change dramatically: an inclination to condemn BDS for its fundamentally anti-Semitic stance which denies the Jewish nation-state's right to exist.

Support for ISIS Slides (*WashPost*)

Overwhelming majorities of Arab teens and young adults now strongly oppose ISIS; nearly 80% rule out any possibility of supporting ISIS. 60% saw the US as an ally, w/ the strongest positive rankings coming from Persian Gulf states such as S. Arabia and the UAE. 90%+ of Iraqis regard the US as an enemy, nearly as high in Yemen and in the Pal. territories.

3 Pal Killed in Gaza Tunnel Collapse (*i24news*)

3 Pals Arrested w/ Grenades, Guns (*JPost*)

PA security forces arrested 3 Pals Sat. after finding grenades, guns, and an M-16 semi-automatic rifle in their backpacks.

Hospital Seeking Medical Professionals (*Ynet*)

A new hospital being built in Ashdod, is seeking 200 doctors and 450 nurses. "Our goal is for at least 20% of the hospital staff to be new immigrants, specifically from France and the US," said the hospital's manager.

Roman-Era Glass Kilns Discovered

The remains of the oldest kilns in Israel were discovered where commercial quantities of raw glass were produced. These Late Roman period kilns indicate that the

Land of Israel was a foremost center for glass production. The Valley of Akko was renowned for the quality sand highly suitable for the manufacture of glass.

New Radar Gives 15 Seconds (*Times of Is.*)

The IDF Home Front Command installed a new radar that improves the warning system for incoming mortar shells to residents of Israeli communities adjacent to Gaza, allowing a 15-second warning. During the conflict w/ Hamas in 2014, mortars were one of the deadliest means of attack, claiming the lives of 10 IDF soldiers in a single week, 3 civilians and a Thai national.

"Drone Dome" Neutralizes Hostile Drones (*JPost*)

Rafael Advanced Defense Systems unveiled the Drone Dome, designed to detect and neutralize hostile drones. It detects drones and disrupts their electronic systems.

Old News Renewed

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

In 2015, Israel recorded 2.5% economic growth and its lowest unemployment rate, 5.3%, since the mid-80s. A 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*)

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."

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

The US Energy Sec'y and Israeli Energy Min. Steinitz signed a new joint energy deal 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. w/ 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.

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.