

Israel Today – February 17-19, 2012
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Israel and PA: Island of Calm in a Storm -

During a visit to tourist spots in Bethlehem we were greeted by a proprietor of the Coffee Shop. I asked him if there was much discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "No ... There is something bigger than the individual Jew or Muslim. The whole Middle East is sinking: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria - and the condition of the population is becoming worse and worse.... When you look at their situation, you can't complain about conditions in Israel and the PA. We have the problems of the rich. What is absurd is that all this time they spoke about Israel and the Palestinians, and in the end the quietest and calmest place in the Middle East is right here." The truth exposed by the "Arab Spring" is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is marginal compared to the region's real conflicts. Int'l news networks are leaving Israel since the conflict there is no longer a story, w/ the focus shifting to Damascus and Cairo. Even if the conflict resumes in the future, it will constitute one conflict among many in the Middle East, rather than the "father of all conflicts" as perceived in the past. (*Ynet News*)

Anti-Missile System To Warn Chileans of Tsunamis -

The Israeli company eVigilo recently completed installing a warning system in Chile to alert Chileans of approaching tsunamis directly to their cellphones. The system is based on the Nat'l Message system originally developed for the IDF's Home Front Command.

Israeli Armor Factory that Saves American Lives

On 1/30, US Amb. D. Shapiro visited the Plasan factory at Kibbutz Sasa which makes vehicle & body armor that has saved the lives of countless American troops.

Israel and Cyprus Upgrade Ties -

Israel and Cyprus agreed Thursday to allow IDF planes and ships to use Cypriot airspace and territorial waters. Netanyahu was making the first ever visit of an Israeli PM to neighboring Cyprus. Cypriot President Christofias condemned the terrorist attacks against Israeli embassies in India and Georgia. He said that Cyprus wanted to combine its gas discoveries w/ Israel's discoveries for the benefit of the people of the region. (*Globes*)

US-Israel Arrow Anti-Missile System Completes Test

The Israel Missile Defense Organization and the US Missile Defense Agency recently completed a successful test of the joint Arrow Weapon System (AWS) over the Mediterranean. The radar transferred information to the battle management controller which prepared a simulated intercept solution. Elements of the US Ballistic Missile Defense System successfully performed interoperability w/ the AWS. This was the final test prior to de-

livery of the Block 4 AWS and a milestone in the dev't of the system and provides confidence in Israeli operational capabilities to counter the developing ballistic missile threat. (*Israel Ministry of Defense*)

France to Cut Its UNIFIL Contingent

France will reduce its UNIFIL regiment to 900 peacekeepers. The source denied that the cut comes in response to attacks on French peacekeepers last year.

Israel/Germany Sign Contract for Sixth Submarine -

Israel & Germany signed a contract finalizing the sale of a 6th Dolphin-class submarine to the Israel Navy. Germany agreed to subsidize its cost. Israel already has 3 Dolphin-class submarines and 2 are currently under construction in Germany with delivery expected later this year. According to foreign reports, Israel's submarines have a second-strike capability and carry cruise missiles armed with nuclear warheads. (*JPost*)

PA Arrest Campaign: Israeli-PA Security Cooperation

Palestinian security forces arrested 55 Palestinians sheltering in the Israeli-controlled zone of Hebron at dawn on Friday. Hundreds of PA security officers set out at 2 a.m. to specific targets. (*Ma'an News-PA*)

Arab Like Me - Lee Habeeb

Arabs don't all think alike. Some of us believe that every Arab deserves to live in freedom, wherever he or she might call home. Some of us want Arab countries to be more like America and Israel, places where the individual can flourish. An Arab American friend of mine is well educated. But mention the word "Israel," and watch his blood boil immediately. Why is all the anger and rage directed at Israel? Why not at Syria or at Hizbullah, which orchestrated the takeover of Lebanon? Or Mubarak when he was in power? Saddam Hussein? Why not at the ways in which some Muslims persecute Christians? Reasons: fear, and envy. To the dismay of Arabs around the world, Jews have turned a piece of real estate in the Middle East into a thriving oasis of intellectual, political, religious, and commercial activity, where people are free to do as they please, w/ a functioning gov't that respects religious & economic freedom. They say that they have no beef w/ Jews; it's Israel they hate. No, this is anti-Semitism, pure and simple. *The writer is VP of content at Salem Radio Network. (Nat'l Review)*

Overseas Visitors Demand to Study the Holocaust -

Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum, recently completed a 10-day seminar for 35 teachers and professors from Taiwan, most of whom

had never before met a Jew. There were sessions on Nazi disputes over how to murder the Jews; propaganda art in the Third Reich; encounters w/ survivors; a history of anti-Semitism; and the dilemmas faced by leaders of the Jewish ghetto councils. "This week, I learned that inside the death camps people helped each other. It gives new meaning to human values," said Jen Hsiu-mei, a psychologist and early childhood educator. Seven decades after the Holocaust, w/ its survivors rapidly dying, Yad Vashem produces material in more than 20 languages, is active in 55 countries and puts on 70 seminars a year for groups of visiting educators. (*New York Times*)

Suspects in Botched Terror Plot (*AP-WashPost*)

Thai police said they are searching for 12 more suspects in a botched terror plot against Israeli diplomats. One of the two new suspects may have been providing training in the use of explosives to three Iranian men who were detained after the plot. An Iranian woman wanted over a failed bomb plot targeting Israeli diplomats in Bangkok has fled to Tehran, Thai authorities said Thursday.

Cleric: Appeal "Even" to Israel in Treating Wounded

Syrian opposition cleric Sheik Adnan Al-'Ar'our told *Al-Safa*: "I think we should even appeal to Israel. Maybe that would be easier... If it is possible, we appeal to them to treat the wounded."

Threats to Cut US Aid Could Imperil Peace w/ Israel

Mohammed Morsi, the leader of the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood rejected US threats to cut aid over a dispute about nonprofit groups operating in the country, saying they are out of line and could imperil the peace deal w/ Israel. The Brotherhood's deputy chairman said that US aid should not be conditional and should continue to flow as "compensation" for years of supporting Mubarak's autocratic regime. (*AP-WashPost*)

Administration to Seek Waiver on UNESCO Funding

The Obama administration announced its intention to ask Congress to waive a ban on funding UNESCO over its recognition of Palestinian statehood. Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said she plans to oppose such a waiver. (*JTA*)

Israel Calls on UN to Condemn Attacks on Diplomats

Israeli Amb. to the UN Ron Prosor called upon the int'l community to condemn the recent terrorist attacks against Israeli diplomats around the world. Prosor requested that a strong message be transmitted to Iran, who, he said, is directly responsible for the bomb attacks in Georgia and India earlier in the week, as well as explosions in Thailand that were aimed at Israeli targets.

E. Barak: Iran's Claim of Nuke Advance Exaggerated

Turning India Into a Conflict Zone - B. Raman

The terrorist attack w/ a magnetized improvised explosive device (IED) on an Israeli diplomatic vehicle in New Delhi on February 13 was well planned and well executed. Detecting and neutralizing the Iranian network in India is going to be a difficult task. Indian intelligence agencies will have to pay greater attention and devote greater resources for coverage of Iranian intelligence activities, as well as its links w/ Hizbullah and the Iranian student community in India. *The writer is former additional secretary, cabinet secretariat, gov't of India. (Times of India)*

A New Wave of Anti-Americanism in Cairo -

The ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has reneged on its promises to allow the American groups to reopen their offices. Egypt's military rulers are doubling down on their bet that they can get away w/ this persecution of American democracy-assistance groups.. (*Wall Street Journal Europe*)

On Iran, a Stark Choice - Benny Morris

Israel's leaders take seriously Iran's oft-repeated threat to create a second Holocaust, to wipe "the Zionist entity" off the map. An Israeli or American attack on Iran will rile much of the Muslim world, causing wide-ranging political fallout. But the consequences of nuclear bombs hitting Tel Aviv and Haifa - effectively destroying Israel - are more dire. (*LATimes*)

The Causes of Stability and Unrest

Most Middle East and North African states have no real political parties or pluralistic structures, only the monarchies. There is no clear basis for representative gov't, no experience w/ political compromise, and no pattern of effective governance to build upon. Ethnic and religious issues cut deep and have been repressed for decades. Justice systems are weak and/or corrupt, religious extremism challenges necessary social and economic change, and the security forces are often an equal or more serious problem. The West may think in terms of rapid, stable democratic change, but none of the proper conditions exist in many states. Too many revolutions eat their young and the hopes of those who cause them. Sudden successes are unlikely and even the best regimes will take years to meet popular hopes and expectations. (*Center for Strategic & Int'l Studies*)

Detente in Doha? - Zvi Mazel

The Abbas and Mashaal agreement is incompatible w/ the nature and objectives of the 2 movements. silent on 2 key issues: relations w/ Israel, and the return of Gaza and the placement of its Hamas security forces under the authority of the central gov't in Ramallah. (*JPost*)

Brotherhood Backs Military in Disputes

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Wed. threw its weight behind the country's military-backed gov't. Cairo has referred 16 Americans to criminal court. Six Americans are barred from leaving the country. (*AP-WashPost*)

Containment Won't Work Against Iran - Daniel Schwammenthal (*Wall Street Journal Europe*)

Attempt on DM Barak's Life Foiled in Singapore (*Ynet*)
Kuwait's *Al-Jarida* newspaper reported Thursday that Israel - w/ Singapore authorities - was able to prevent an assassination attempt on Ehud Barak during his visit to the Singapore Air Show. The assassination was to take place in Barak's hotel. Three suspects were arrested.

Bomb Suspects Planned to Target Israeli Diplomats (*AP*)
Iranians detained after setting off explosives in Bangkok were planning to attack Israeli diplomats. The plot in Bangkok was discovered Tuesday by accident, when explosives stored in a house occupied by several Iranian men blew up by mistake.

Napolitano: Hizbullah Attack on US Possible - Jeff Bliss

Homeland Security Sec'y Napolitano said she is concerned that Hizbullah will attempt an attack on American soil: "Israeli and American security officials in the US are on high alert."

Turkey vs. Iran - Soner Cagaptay (*New York Times*)
Hardly a day goes by that an Iranian official doesn't threaten Turkey. Turkey is now supporting, hosting, and reportedly arming the Syrian opposition. Iran's response has been to strike at Turkey by once again supporting the PKK, which has launched dozens of deadly attacks, killing more than 150 Turks since the summer of 2011.

Egypt State Media Accuses US of Spreading Anarchy - Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a US Senate hearing Tuesday: "I spent about a day and a half in conversation w/ them encouraging them in the strongest possible terms to resolve this so that our mil-to-mil (military-to-military) relationship could continue. When I left there, there was no doubt that they understood the seriousness of it."

Congress to Increase Israel Missile-Defense Funding - Congress will increase funding for Israeli missile defense. The budget proposal unveiled Monday trims \$6 million in spending from the Arrow & David's Sling programs in an across-the-board defense cuts. A Cong. aide said that if the Israelis seek more missile defense funding, "w/out a doubt they would get it." (*JPost*)

The US-Israeli Trust Gap on Iran - Editorial
Israelis judge that once Iran has prepared a new nuclear

facility located under a mountain, Israel's capacity to disable the program w/ air strikes will be greatly reduced. The US would retain a military window of opportunity for longer. Panetta and Obama should be clearly spell out US willingness to take military action if Iran takes steps toward bomb-making. Saying "all options are on the table" is not enough; the administration should be explicit about Iranian actions that will violate its red lines - and what the consequences will be. (*WashPost*)

Israeli Diplomats Worldwide Take Extra Precautions - Veteran diplomat Eli Shaked: Diplomats must make efforts to break their routine to "confuse the enemy." "You do everything not to be where you're supposed to be, in order to avoid the spot where (a terrorist) might be staking an ambush.

Israeli Earthquake Relief Delegation Feted in Turkey - A Defense Ministry team Monday visited the district in Turkey that suffered a recent earthquake. Israel transported 130 structures to the area by air & sea. The District Vice-Governor: "After the harsh quake that occurred here, you came, you Israelis, w/ a lot of material and a lot of willingness to help. And for this I thank you very much, from the bottom of my heart." "You are our true friends, and the proof is what we see here. Only true friends can help so quickly and w/ such concern for their partners. Thanks to these structures we will be able to put life back on track here. We will finally be able to re-house the families and students."

Hamas: No Compromise, Only Armed Resistance
Hamas PM Haniyeh said Monday in Iran, the "gun is our only response to the Zionist regime. In time, we have come to understand that we can obtain our goals only through fighting and armed resistance and no compromise should be made w/ the enemy."

The Saudi King's Hypocrisy - Editorial
Saudi's King Abdullah Friday delivered a speech denouncing the Security Council's failure to act on Syria. The same day, the Saudi ruler's security forces were firing on protesters near the town of Qatif. Meanwhile, the regime's diplomats were arranging for the deportation from Malaysia of a Saudi journalist who fled the country after tweets he authored about the prophet Muhammad led to demands for his arrest and execution. Justice and fairness are in short supply not only in Damascus but in the royal palaces of Riyadh as well.

Report: PA Rejects Israeli Incentive Package - The PA has recently rejected an Israeli "incentive package" meant to encourage the PA's return to the negotiating table. The incentives were offered via a Quar-

tet envoy, but the PLO's Executive Committee decided to reject the gesture. (*Ynet News*)

The "Blame Israel Firsters" and Iran - Walter R. Mead
The "blame Israel first" crowd continues to interpret the Iran-US crisis as an example of a sinister Israel lobby pushing the US into a war to serve the ambitions of the Jewish state. This misses the reality that for several years now some of the strongest, most consistent pressures on Washington to act against Iran have come from the Arab world. The Arab Lobby's strong pressure for war against Iran is a major factor in French, British and even German hawkishness as well in this crisis. But the blame Israel firsters don't care; if we have a war w/ Iran they will know who to blame. (*American Interest*)

Ready for Statehood? - David M. Weinberg
The Palestinian gov't(s) are far from being "ready" for statehood or peace w/ Israel, for reasons that range from impotency to insolvency and raw anti-Semitism. The PA has a budget deficit of over \$1 billion and almost no self-generated income? Is this a well-functioning, self-governing authority ready for statehood? Over the past ten years, the Palestinians have received more than \$25 billion in int'l assistance: \$1,000/person/year. Only one sewage plant has been built in the West Bank in the last 15 years, despite a \$500 million int'l donor fund available for this purpose: no recycling of water takes place and no treated water is used for agriculture. A well-functioning national authority? (*Israel Hayom*)

Money to a Palestinian Gov't that Includes Hamas? -
How should the Administration respond to the news that Abbas has signed a deal with Hamas to form a unity gov't? The US has budgeted \$500 million in direct assistance to the PA for the current fiscal year, plus another \$232 million for the UN welfare agency that deals with the descendants of Palestinian refugees. U.S. law prohibits aid to any Palestinian gov't that includes Hamas. Would the US continue to fund and train a Palestinian security apparatus that merges with Hamas' paramilitary units? Let's hope not. Eventually the US will have to make some determination about the utility of funding a Palestinian government that scorns negotiations with Israel and rarely bothers to pay even lip service to US interests. (*WSJ*)

Israel Praises U.S. Measures Against Iran
Israeli FM Lieberman Wednesday said that he and US Sec'y Clinton were in agreement on most of issues raised in their meeting Tuesday in Washington. Most importantly, "there is understanding and agreement that Iran must be prevented from getting a nuclear weapon.

Israeli Radio in Farsi Transmits Peace to Iran - (*AP*)
Radio *Radisin*, a Farsi-language radio station based in

Tel Aviv, airs Iranian music, poetry and current affairs shows aiming to spread peace between the Israeli and Iranian people. "We, the people in Israel, are a peaceful nation and not an enemy, or the 'little Satan' as we are described by the Iranian regime," said the station's CEO, who left Iran for Israel after the 1979 Islamic revolution. "For 32 years, the regime has poisoned its people against Israel. We are here to tell the truth." Israel's state-run radio station has been broadcasting in Farsi for 50 years and chats with Iranians via a switchboard in Germany.

Photo of "Israeli Soldier" Was Taken in Bahrain
A photo circulating on the Web said to show an Israeli soldier abusing a Palestinian girl has been identified as having been taken in Bahrain during a street theater performance in 2009.

On Jan. 26, the *Int'l Herald Tribune* published a photo across 4 columns with the caption: "A Palestinian construction worker screamed in pain Wednesday after he tried to block an Israeli Army driver who drove a trailer over his legs near Hebron." The *Wash. Post* ran the color image across 5 columns, and several news websites featured the photo: *WSJ* the *Guardian* and MSNBC. Well, the "injured worker," Mahmoud Abu Qbeita was not actually injured nor is there evidence that he was even run over. An IDF spokesman said soldiers were on site to protect officials who were confiscating Palestinian construction equipment in an area not permitted for building. Abu Qbeita was on the ground blocking the trailer; he started screaming that he had been run over; no one saw it happen. Initially, he complained his left leg was injured. After a medic's examination found no wound, he then claimed his right leg was injured. The Palestinian Red Crescent likewise found nothing wrong with him.