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Middle East Update



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HEADLINES

US Secretary of State John Kerry said Thursday it is likely that some of the billions of dollars in sanctions relief granted to Iran under a landmark nuclear deal will go to groups deemed terrorists.

Lebanon-based terror group Hezbollah has more than 80,000 rockets, US Secretary of State John Kerry said in Saudi Arabia on Saturday, adding that most of its weaponry comes from its sponsor Iran, through Syria and into Lebanon. "The United States remains concerned about some of the activities that Iran is engaged in in other countries," Kerry told reporters, citing as an example Iran's "support for terrorist groups like Hezbollah."

'20% of Western donations to PA go to terrorists' families' - Palestinian Authority pays terrorists' families yearly stipends to the tune of \$75 million, Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely says: World must "stop incitement and terrorism by truly supervising its donations [to the Palestinians,]"

Houston, we have an ally ... Texas Governor Greg Abbott was very impressed with Israel during his first visit to the country this week • "There is a powerful connection between Israel and Texas," he says, declaring that "Israel has no stronger supporter than the state of Texas."



Bibi and the UN

- ❖ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday accused the United Nations chief of “stoking terror” after Ban Ki-moon said, in connection with the wave of Palestinian deadly terror attacks, **that it was “human nature to react to occupation.”**
- ❖ “There is no justification for terrorism,” Netanyahu said. “The Palestinian terrorists don’t want to build a state; they want to destroy a state, and they say that proudly. They want to murder Jews everywhere and they state that proudly. They don’t murder for peace and they don’t murder for human rights.”
- ❖ The UN has “lost its neutrality and its moral force, and these statements by the Secretary-General do nothing to improve its situation,” Netanyahu said in a furious video statement. Ban’s remarks, said Netanyahu, “stoke terror.”
- ❖ Ban had attributed the terror attacks in the past four months, in which over 25 Israelis have been killed, to “Palestinian frustration.”



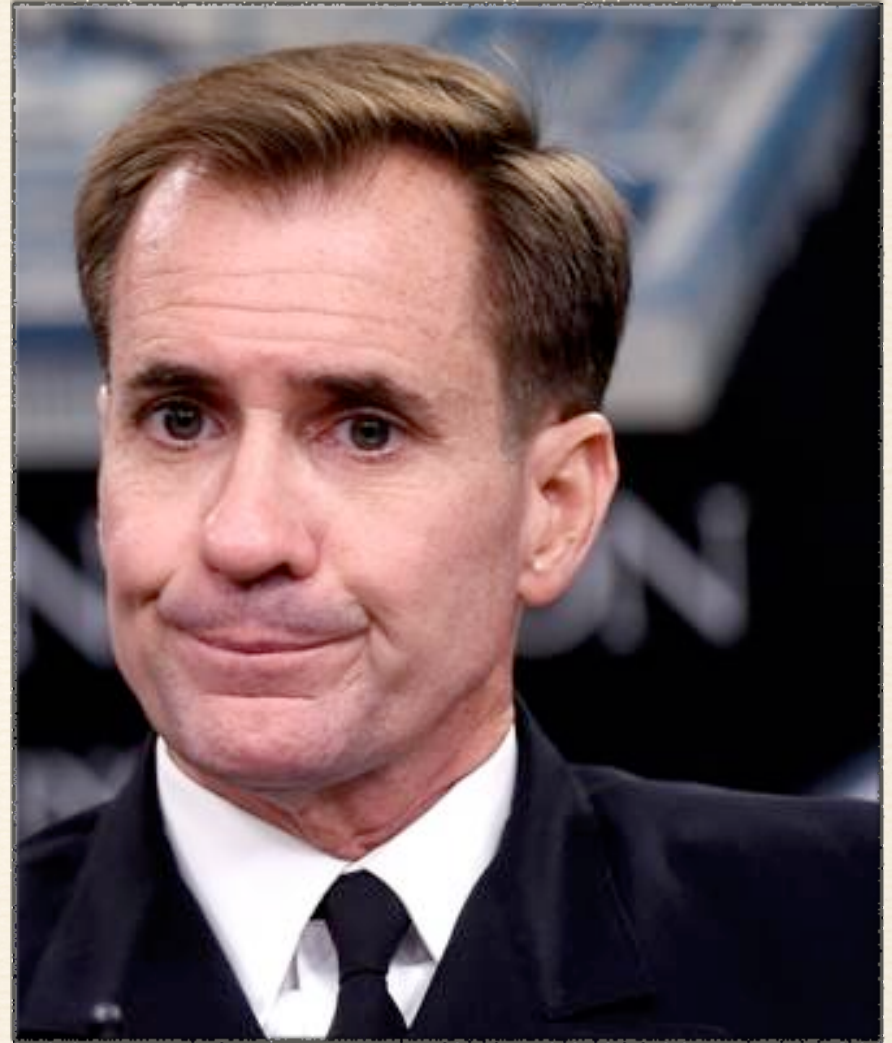
What are the Settlements?

- ❖ The United States, whose ambassador angered Israel this week with criticism of its policy in Judea and Samaria, on Thursday strongly criticized an Israeli initiative to declare 370 acres of land near the city of Jericho as state land.
- ❖ "We strongly oppose any steps that could accelerate settlement expansion, and we believe they're fundamentally incompatible with a two-state solution and call into question frankly the Israeli government's commitment to a two-state solution," State Department spokesman Mark Toner said.
- ❖ The land, in an area fully under Israeli military control and already used by Jewish settlers to farm dates, is located near the northern edge of the Dead Sea.
- ❖ **SETTLEMENTS** - After Israel's victory in the 1967 war, when it began its occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula (later returned to Egypt as part of a peace deal between the two countries), Israeli citizens, sometimes with the help of the government, began establishing settlements in the newly occupied territories. By 2014 there were some 700,000 Israeli Jews living in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Over the years, Israel has abandoned all of its settlements in the Sinai Peninsula (which was returned to Egypt in a peace agreement) and the Gaza Strip, and even a few in the West Bank.



Settlements & BDS

- ❖ The US State Department is backing the European Union's ridiculous claim that the labeling of Israeli products so that they can be boycotted - is not technically a boycott.
- ❖ "We do not view labeling the origin of products as being from the settlements a boycott of Israel. We also do not believe that labeling the origin of products is equivalent to a boycott," spokesman John Kirby stated.
- ❖ The EU issued a directive in November ordering that all Israeli products coming out of Judea and Samaria be specially labeled, effectively singling them out for boycotts.
- ❖ While stating that the US opposed boycotts on Israel, Kirby reiterated that the Obama administration's "longstanding position on settlements is clear. We view Israeli settlement activity as illegitimate and counterproductive to the cause of peace."
- ❖ "The US Government has never defended or supported Israeli settlements, because administrations from both parties have long recognized that settlement activity beyond the 1967 lines and efforts to change the facts on the ground undermine prospects for a two-state solution. We are no different," Kirby claimed.
- ❖ Kirby was referring to some 400,000 Israeli citizens who live in Judea and Samaria, the Jewish People's biblical and historical heartland.



BDS & Anti-Semitism

- ❖ There is a “clear relationship” between anti-Israel boycott, divestment and sanctions activism and the targeting of Jewish students on college campuses across the US, Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, the head of Jewish student advocacy group the AMCHA Initiative, told The Algemeiner on Wednesday.
- ❖ “The more BDS activity there is,” she said, “the more likely it is we’re going to find Jewish students and Jewish events suppressed or shut down.”
- ❖ As for the United States, the report looks at the “new antisemitism” on campuses across America, with 75% of Jewish students saying that they have either experienced or witnessed antisemitism.



Holocaust Remembrance Day

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27—the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the victims of the Nazi era and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.
- ❖ Interesting that we live in a day where more and more people are denying that there every was a Holocaust.
#NEVER FORGET! #6,000,000



Holocaust Deniers

- ❖ "Let us talk logically. Hitler was not morally corrupt. He was daring," Fatah Central Committee member Tawfiq Tirawi tells host of Palestinian television show, who cuts him off saying that "it would be a pity to be put in jail because of this interview."
- ❖ "We are not only talking about Holocaust denial. Many Palestinians who are convinced that the Jews did suffer a terrible fate during those times believe that Zionists encouraged and even initiated these events in a joint effort with the Germans, both to get Jews to emigrate from Europe to Israel, and to dispose of the weak and elderly Jewish people, so that only the young and able would reach Israel," PMW Director Dr. Itamar Marcus told Israel Hayom in 2011. "The word 'Holocaust' has slowly become a word that describes what Israel did to the Palestinians, rather than a description of what happened in the previous century."





Dafna Meir and Shlomit Krigman. Two Israeli women – one a mother of six in her late 30s; the other about to turn 24, just setting out in life. Dafna, stabbed to death by a Palestinian teenager at her home in the settlement of Otniel on January 17. Shlomit, stabbed to death by two Palestinians near the grocery store at the settlement of Beit Horon, where she lived with her grandparents, on January 25.



Huh?

- ❖ Abbas blasts Palestinian groups lauding violence against Israel
- ❖ Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Saturday came out against Palestinian groups he said were encouraging youth to take part in an almost four-month-long surge of violence with Israel, which has raised concern of wider escalation a decade after the last Palestinian uprising subsided.
- ❖ "All the Palestinian political parties are supporting a national uprising," Abbas told journalists during a news conference. "But we support the peaceful national uprising." Abbas condemned the recent surge of violence and vowed that the people involved would be arrested.





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