

KFIR

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

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THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

The firing of S-200 missiles at Israeli Air Force planes on Thursday night was an indication of the bolstered confidence Syrian President Bashar Assad is feeling thanks to Russia's backing of his regime, a veteran military analyst for Israel's Channel 2 said on Friday.

IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot said Sunday that Israel's next war would be fought against Hezbollah, the Lebanese terror group that currently operates in the Bekaa Valley, the southern suburbs of Beirut and southern Lebanon, adjacent to the Israeli border.

Shin Bet chief: For Hamas, Passover is prime time for terror.

The IDF bombed Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip on Saturday in response to a rocket attack by Gaza-based terrorists on Israel earlier in the day. Israel's Air Force (IAF) and an IDF tank targeted two Hamas positions throughout the Strip, the IDF said in a statement. "The IDF holds Hamas responsible for all attacks at Israel from the Gaza Strip," an IDF spokesman stated.

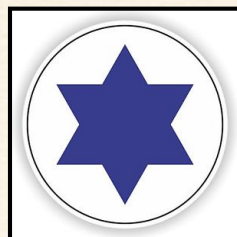


IAF vs SYRIA

- ❖ Israel is said to have struck Syria overnight Sunday-Monday, the second strike in 24 hours and third in three days as tensions escalated between the two countries over the weekend.
- ❖ Syria media reported early Monday that Israeli jets took out a number of targets near the Lebanon-Syria border including a Hezbollah weapons convoy and Syrian military sites.
- ❖ "Syria's forceful response to the Israeli attacks changed the rules of the game," he said.
- ❖ His comments came hours after Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman threatened to destroy Syrian air defense systems for targeting the Israeli aircraft during the bombing run Friday.
- ❖ "The next time the Syrians use their air defense systems against our planes we will destroy them without the slightest hesitation," Liberman said on Israel Radio.



ISRAEL JETS STRIKE SYRIA



SIREN: "Israeli jets strike inside Syria; military site near Palmyra reportedly targeted" by Oren Liebermann and Euan McKirdy: "In the most serious clash between Israeli and Syrian forces since the start of Syria's civil war six years ago, Israeli aircraft struck several targets in Syria overnight... The Syrian military said the strikes targeted a military site near Palmyra... In response, Syrian forces fired anti-aircraft missiles at the Israeli jets, saying they downed one aircraft and hit another. Israeli vehemently denied the assertions... "At no point was the safety of Israeli civilians or the IAF aircraft compromised," a statement from the Israel Defense Forces said. One of the missiles was intercepted by Israel's Arrow missile defense system, marking its first operational use." [[CNN](#)]



NORTH KOREA

- ❖ North Korean exporting of missile and other military systems to countries and terrorist organizations around the world directly threatens the Jewish state, Israel's Channel 2 reported on Monday.
- ❖ According to Channel 2, Arab media outlets reported over the weekend that an arms shipment on its way to Hezbollah was attacked by the IDF in Syria late Thursday night/early Friday morning. The shipment, according to these sources, included advanced North Korean missiles. Channel 2 added that the nuclear reactor in Syria, which Israel destroyed in September 2007, was built for President Bashar Assad with the aid of the regime in Pyongyang.



IRANIAN ROCKETS FACTORY

- ❖ Another escalation? Hezbollah is reportedly producing weapons in factories built by Iran in Lebanon.
- ❖ Iran has established secret rocket factories in Lebanon that are under the full control of the Hezbollah terror group, a top Iranian general told a Kuwaiti newspaper, according to Israeli media reports.
- ❖ In the report published Monday, the al-Jarida newspaper quoted a deputy head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), who said Iran has established underground factories for manufacturing both rockets and firearms in Lebanon, which have begun production in the past three months.



TRUMP & the PLO

- ❖ To build up his credibility with the PLO , Trump put his electoral pledge to move the US embassy to Jerusalem on ice. The real estate mogul ordered Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to deny Jews the right to their property and their legal right to use state lands in Judea and Samaria.
- ❖ And swift on the heels of that conversation with Abbas, Trump's chief negotiator Jason Greenblatt was dispatched to Jerusalem to begin empowering the PLO at Israel's expense.
- ❖ According to media reports, Greenblatt intended to use his meeting Monday with Netanyahu was to reject Netanyahu's commitment to build a new Israeli town in Samaria. Greenblatt was also reportedly intending to dictate the parameters for yet another round of negotiations with the PLO.
- ❖ After meeting with Netanyahu, Greenblatt continued on to Ramallah to embrace Abbas.



MILLENNIALS & ISRAEL

- ❖ Anti-Semitic incidents are exploding across America, with more than 100 recent bomb threats to JCCs, overturned gravestones at Jewish cemeteries, and other troubling incidents. This “unprecedented and inconceivable escalation of anti-Semitic acts in the United States ... is “chillingly reminiscent of the pogroms in Eastern Europe and ... the Nazi rise to power,” warned World Jewish Congress President Ronald S. Lauder.
- ❖ The wave also pervades college campuses around the nation under the guise of protecting “oppressed” Palestinians from “colonial” Israel. In a survey of 50 U.S. universities, more than half the students reported observing or experiencing anti-Semitism from peers or staff. BDS—boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israeli businesses, academics, and cultural events—often accompanies these incidents; though proponents claim to eschew racism, its real purpose is to delegitimize Israel.
- ❖ What makes the millennials so vulnerable to exploitation? They have no memory of the Holocaust or the 1967 war started by Arab states intent on destroying Israel. Although a majority (54 percent) of Americans support Israel, several polls report that millennial support for Israel is weakening as their enthusiasm for the Palestinian cause grows.



IRAN & the TEMPLE

- ❖ Regarding Purim a Iranian minister then went on to claim that his country had saved the Jews three times throughout history. Zarif gave a distorted version of the Book of Esther, claiming that the hero was the Persian King Ahashverosh, and not the Jews, Esther and Mordechai. Zarif also reminded Netanyahu that it was Cyrus, a Persian king, who had facilitated the Jews' building of the Second Temple. The nascent Sanhedrin choose to see this exchange as an opening and an affirmation of Iranian national pride in helping the Jews build the Temple. The rabbinical court sent a letter to Zarif inviting him to manifest this historic Persian mission.
- ❖ "We were overjoyed to hear of your reference to the wonderful and unique chapter in our nation's history, in which the Cyrus, as king of the Persian Empire, gave his permission for the building of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem," the letter read. "It is also recognized that he aided the project by returning the holy vessels that were taken from Solomon's Temple by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. "It is to be understood from your statements that you support the actions of King Cyrus and that your country supports the establishment of a Temple on Mount Moriah even today. We invite you to opening a dialog regarding this. We will be happy to hear your response to this invitation." If the Sanhedrin's offer of friendship bears fruit, it would truly be the type of miracle expected to usher in the Third Temple.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

It is our actions in this world and not our declarations that define who we are and what we are willing to stand up for. It is our deeds that bring sanctification into this world. Without a focus on what and how we live our life great levels of spiritual fervor could easily be perverted into idolatry and even violence. The service that reminded mortals of that was truly a life and death necessity. It then truly needs to be enacted in every transitionary moment in our lives. The spiritual education we give over to our children cannot be centered on the simple doing of rituals and the recitation of verses and prayers. It must focus on how our spiritual purpose must be defined by how our spiritual identity makes us walk, talk and act differently. It must transform us to be the "language of Hashem" in all that we do.

"With revelation comes responsibility. The greater the revelation, the greater the responsibility. Seeking God and finding Him comes with a price. It also comes with great reward." **Michael Utterback**



BEWARE OF JEWS?

- ❖ Anti-Semitism or art? A London photographer was arrested for hanging a street sign perceived by local Jews as anti-Semitic.
- ❖ A triangle sign featuring a silhouette of an Orthodox Jewish man with a red border, similar to traffic signs, was spotted near a synagogue in Stamford Hill, London, on Tuesday.



PICTURE OF THE WEEK



ISRAEL365 by Boruch Len

This vibrant photo by Boruch Len shows flower picking in the Elah Valley. This beautiful area of Israel, west of Jerusalem, is rich with history and is where David fought Goliath.



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