

KFIR

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

Week of September 22, 2017



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Holy Ground Explorations



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THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

Hamas Says Ready to Hand Gaza to a Palestinian Unity Government: [[Reuters](#)]

"Senior US officials have raised the possibility of announcing the relocation of the US Embassy to Jerusalem as a penalty if Abbas uses his UN speech to attack the Trump administration." [[Newsweek](#)]

Netanyahu said that he "shares the desire to reach peace with the Palestinians, but I insist on those vital interests - **the goal is peace, security, security and peace. There will be no peace if we cannot anchor the security of the State of Israel.**"

[BREAKING](#): IDF fires Patriot missile at drone flying over Golan Heights. Army says unmanned aircraft apparently downed as it attempted to enter Israeli airspace from Syria. Details still emerging.



PUTIN - IRAN / SYRIA

"Putin Seeks Syria Deal That Both Iran and Israel Can Swallow" by Anshel Pfeffer:

"According to well-placed sources in Moscow, **Putin is planning to propose a formula to Netanyahu whereby no foreign country will be allowed to turn Syria into a platform for attacking neighboring states.** This won't go as far as Netanyahu's insistence that Iran be prevented from establishing a permanent presence in Syria. If enforced, though, it would prevent them from establishing air and missile bases there. Netanyahu is unlikely to accept such a formula in public, but he is unlikely to have much of a choice."



THE DAMASCUS LINE

Israel wants Russia to prevent hostile elements, such as Iran and Hezbollah, from establishing a presence along Israel's border. In its efforts to keep Iran away from the Golan Heights border, Israel has asked Russia to forbid Iran and its proxies from crossing the Sweida-Damascus line, but the Russians have agreed to allow the Iranians within 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) of the border with Israel. The distance between Damascus and the Israeli border, incidentally, is about 40 kilometers (25 miles).



IRAN / SUNSET CLAUSE

Closing ranks with Israel, Tillerson takes aim at 'sunset clause' in nuclear deal: "If we're going to stick with the Iran deal there has to be changes made to it. The sunset provisions simply is not a sensible way forward," Tillerson said [on Fox News]. "It's just simply ... kicking the can down the road again for someone in the future to have to deal with." [[Ynet](#); [FoxNews](#)]

Iran will not be bullied by the United States and will react strongly to any "wrong move" by Washington on Tehran's nuclear deal, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Sunday.



TRUMP / NIKKI

"The U.S. won't let Iran gain control over Syria. The U.S. won't leave Israel alone in the battlefield," a senior White House official quoted U.S. President Donald Trump as saying unequivocally in a meeting on the topic over the weekend, amid reports suggesting that Iran was cementing its foothold in Syria and building precision missile factories in the south of the war-torn country.

"He slaps the right people, he hugs the right people and he comes out very strong in the end," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said Friday as she previewed the speech Trump intends to deliver on Tuesday.



NIKKI HALEY

A senior administration official... said that during a National Security Council meeting on Iran this month, Trump specifically asked Haley's opinion about what strategy to pursue. "She gave her opinion, and he liked her point of view," the official said... **A senior Iranian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "This lady for some reason is very angry with Iran."** [Reuters] • When U.N. Envoy Nikki Haley Talks, Does President Trump Listen? [NYTimes]



US BASE IN ISRAEL

The U.S. military has established its first permanent base on Israeli soil located inside an Israeli Air Force base in southern Israel. “We’ve established, for the first time in the state of Israel, the IDF, a permanent U.S. military base, flying the American flag,” Brig. Gen. Zvika Haimovich, commander of the Israeli Air Force’s Aerial Defense Division, said in a statement.

The base is located within the IAF’s School of Aerial Defense and will house dozen of U.S. soldiers permanently stationed in Israel as part of a task force. “This symbolizes the strong bond that exists between the United States and Israel,” Maj. Gen. Josh Gronski, deputy commanding general for the U.S. Army National Guard, said during a visit to the base.

According to the IDF, the base will provide space for the Israeli Air Force and American task force to improve detection, interception and deployment in aerial defense, while strengthening cooperation.



ROUHANI UN SPEECH

NEW YORK – Iran's President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday derided US President Donald Trump as a "rogue newcomer" and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the leader of a "rogue and racist regime," and vowed that Tehran would respond "decisively and resolutely" if the Iran nuclear deal is remade or canceled.

In an address to the UN General Assembly, Rouhani also castigated "the ignorant, absurd and hateful rhetoric" delivered before the Assembly on Tuesday – when Trump and Netanyahu spoke – saying the speeches were "filled with ridiculously baseless allegations."

Where Netanyahu and Trump had castigated Iran for its terrorist activities, Rouhani claimed Iran was "on the front lines of fighting terror and religious extremism in the Middle East."

"We in Iran strive to build peace," he said. "We never condone tyranny. We never threaten anyone, but we do not tolerate threats from anyone."

He said Iran has never sought nuclear weapons, and that its military arsenal, including its missiles "are solely defensive deterrence."



ABBAS UN SPEECH

Palestinian President Abbas has said 2017 should become the year when the Israeli occupation of Palestinian comes to an end, in an address to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Abbas pledged to submit a resolution to the UN Security Council opposing "*the terror of the settlers against the Palestinian people.*"

The Palestinian leader also said that Britain should apologize for the 1917 Balfour Declaration that endorsed the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

The president said that there is the need for a peace conference, but that Israel is "*trying to avoid*" meeting. He expressed hope that all UN member states would apply pressure to Israel and that the conference would take place before the end of 2016.

"If there is no conference and no contacts between us, how can peace be made?" Abbas asked, according to Haaretz.

Abbas blamed Israel for sabotaging the peace efforts made by the US over a 13-year period.



HEZBOLLAH THREATS

“Hezbollah has over 10,000 fighters deployed in southern Syria. Hezbollah is an army of infantry, rockets, tanks, elite forces,” the Hezbollah official [told the Middle East Eye](#) website this week, amid tensions surrounding the shooting down by the Israeli Air Force on Tuesday of an Iranian-built drone launched by the group as it attempted to cross into airspace.

The commander said the fighters were based in areas surrounding the Golan Heights and that tunnels and military bases were being built for a possible confrontation with Israel. “We are operating as we do in south Lebanon, but of course in a veiled manner,” he said.

Speaking of the truce in southern Syria, under the auspices of Russia and the United Nations, the commander said that the “de-escalation plan is better for us. We are working with more freedom, there are no more bombings.”

The commander said that the next war with Israel may start from Syria but “what really matters is where will it end, will it be in Netanya, Haifa or Kiryat Shmona?”



PENCE / SHANA TOVA

Vice President Mike Pence on the Jewish High Holy Days: "The most important word during this most important period of the Jewish year is "Teshuvah," or Repentance. Teshuva tells us we can change. It tells us that what we have been until this moment need not limit what we can become from this moment. It says we can be better tomorrow than we were today, and that in the affairs of humankind, nothing is fixed. Of all the manifold gifts bestowed upon us by the Almighty, is there any gift greater than the power He gave us to change?"

Shana Tova
שנה טובה



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Though the righteous one may fall seven times, he will arise. – King Solomon
(Proverbs 24:16)

In Jewish thinking, a great person isn't one who never fails; it's one who fails and keeps trying. You can only become a truly great person through the crucible of failure and perseverance.



L'SHANAH
TOVAH
TIKATEV
V'TAIHATEM
MAY YOU BE
INSCRIBED
AND SEALED
FOR A GOOD
YEAR.

HGE UPCOMING TOURS

HOLY GROUND EXPLORATIONS ISRAEL TOURS

'OFF THE BEATEN PATH' TOUR

HIGHLIGHTS: Jeep Tours - Judean Desert and the Golan Border

Pre Tour - PETRA*

***Nov 9-12 / Beaten Path -Nov 12-20, 2017**

2018 ISRAEL TOURS

'EXPERIENCE ISRAEL' - APR 22-MAY 1

'JOURNEY THRU ISRAEL' - MAY 2-10

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