

KFIR

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

Week of October 20, 2017



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THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

Israel's top-level security cabinet on Tuesday said the government would no longer hold peace talks with the Palestinian Authority following the reconciliation agreement it reached with Hamas unless the terror group renounced terrorism and recognized the Jewish state.

The Syrian army on Monday threatened "dangerous repercussions" following an Israeli Air Force (IAF) strike on an anti-aircraft battery near Damascus earlier in the day, carried out in retaliation for the Syrian battery firing at IAF aircraft that was flying over Lebanon.



TRUMP & IRAN

US President Donald Trump decertified the Iran nuclear deal, kicking the issue to Congress to decide on sanctions or perhaps withdrawing from the accord. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the move. Iran's clearly angered, but the Associated Press assesses that Tehran still needs the deal.

Meanwhile, the US Treasury Dept. slapped sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) "for providing support to a number of terrorist groups, including Hizballah and Hamas, as well as to the Taliban."



IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARD

The IRGC was established at the end of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution as an elite armed militia whose role was to protect the then embryonic Shiite clerical regime.

The IRGC – a mixture in some ways of the military-industrial complex in the US, the Kremlin and its business links and the keeper of the faith, a modern evocation of the Spanish Inquisition – is known as the *sepah-e-pasdaran* – "army of the guardians."

The IRGC's role is enshrined in the constitution and it answers only to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, thus also endowing it with an enormous range of legal, political and in effect also religious powers.

The group oversees Iran's ballistic missile program and has conducted several tests since the nuclear deal. Its missiles can reach Israel and in March 2016 it launched a ballistic missile with the words "Israel must be wiped out" in Hebrew.



PA & HAMAS UNITY DEAL



First, the notion that Fatah is even remotely interested in defeating Hamas is complete nonsense. For 10 years since its forces were humiliated and routed in Gaza, Fatah has faithfully funded and defended Hamas. Abbas's only concern is staying in charge of his Israeli-protected fiefdom in Ramallah. To this end, he will finance - with US and EU taxpayer monies - and defend another 10 Hamas wars with Israel.

The second lesson we learn from Hamas's victory is that we need to curb our enthusiasm for Sisi and his regime in Egypt, and for his backers in the UAE. Sisi's decision to facilitate and mediate Hamas's newest victory over Fatah shows that his alliance with Israel is tactical and limited in scope. His decision to side with Israel against Hamas during Operation Protective Edge three years ago may not repeat itself in the next war.



KHALED MASHAAL

A cunning plan to pave the way for senior Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal to win the Palestinian Authority presidency after current President Mahmoud Abbas may have been the true aim behind Hamas' willingness to compromise.

This new information was confirmed by senior Palestinian officials as well as Egyptian intelligence officials involved in mediation between the rival factions. According to these sources, one of Hamas' principal aims in the agreement - after the terrorist organization had nixed all previous reconciliation efforts - was to replace the aging Abbas with Mashaal, the former head of Hamas' political bureau.

According to the Palestinian and Egyptian officials, one of the main articles in the intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement deals with the option for significant reforms to both to the PLO and Hamas in the future that would allow Hamas to join the PLO. Such a move would pave the way for Mashaal to declare his candidacy.



FATAH - TRUTH SPOKEN HERE

The Palestinian leadership is persisting with its incitement to terrorism against Israel, despite claims it does not do so, the Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) reported.

Earlier this month, Palestinian Authority (PA) head Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah Movement encouraged Palestinians to die for Allah while committing attacks against Israelis.

In a Facebook post on its official page, Fatah asserted that it is Palestinians dying for Allah, the spilling of "the blood of the Martyrs," that "will create the State of Palestine." "Palestine - From the sea of the blood of the Martyrs (Shahids), we will create the State of Palestine," Fatah wrote in the post, together with a collage of photos of terrorists.



UNCONTROLLABLE LAUGHTER

Palestinian terror group Hamas has agreed to stop carrying out violent terror attacks in Judea and Samaria as part of a [unity deal](#) between Hamas and Palestinian Authority (PA) ruling faction Fatah, according to the Arabic London-based paper *Asharq Al-Awsat*.

The reconciliation deal, signed by the PA and Fatah in Egypt on Thursday, stipulates that Hamas halt terror activity against Jews in the 'West Bank' so as to avoid sparking confrontations with Israel which could jeopardize diplomatic relations.

In exchange, Hamas will have an equal voice with the PA in making decisions related to Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations or declarations of war, *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported.



ISRAEL BOMBS SYRIA

The IAF destroyed a Syrian SA-5 battery after it fired at IAF aircraft in Lebanon.

Israeli warplanes bombed a Syrian anti-aircraft battery near Damascus on Monday morning in retaliation for the battery firing at Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft.

An IDF spokesman announced that the SA-5 anti-aircraft battery, situated inside Syria, fired a missile at IAF aircraft flying a routine reconnaissance mission in nearby Lebanon.

In retaliation, IAF warplanes attacked the battery with four projectiles and destroyed it. No Israeli casualties were registered in both incidents.

The Israeli strike on Monday targeting an anti-aircraft missile battery in Syria was an "important" event that sent a message to the Jewish state's enemies, a former IDF Military Intelligence chief said. "It demonstrates that Israel will not shy away from its need to collect intelligence on the buildup of Hezbollah with the support of Iran and the Assad regime," Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin



RUSSIA & ISRAEL

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu arrived in Israel on Monday for a two-day visit to meet with his Israeli counterpart, Avigdor Liberman, for discussions on Iran and security coordination in Syria.

Russia agreed to keep Iranian and Hezbollah and forces away from the Israeli-Syrian border.

The Jerusalem Post picked up on Arab reports that visiting Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu told Israeli officials that Moscow was willing to extend a 10-15 km (6-9 miles) off-limits zone, but not to the full 40 km (about 25 miles) which Israel seeks.

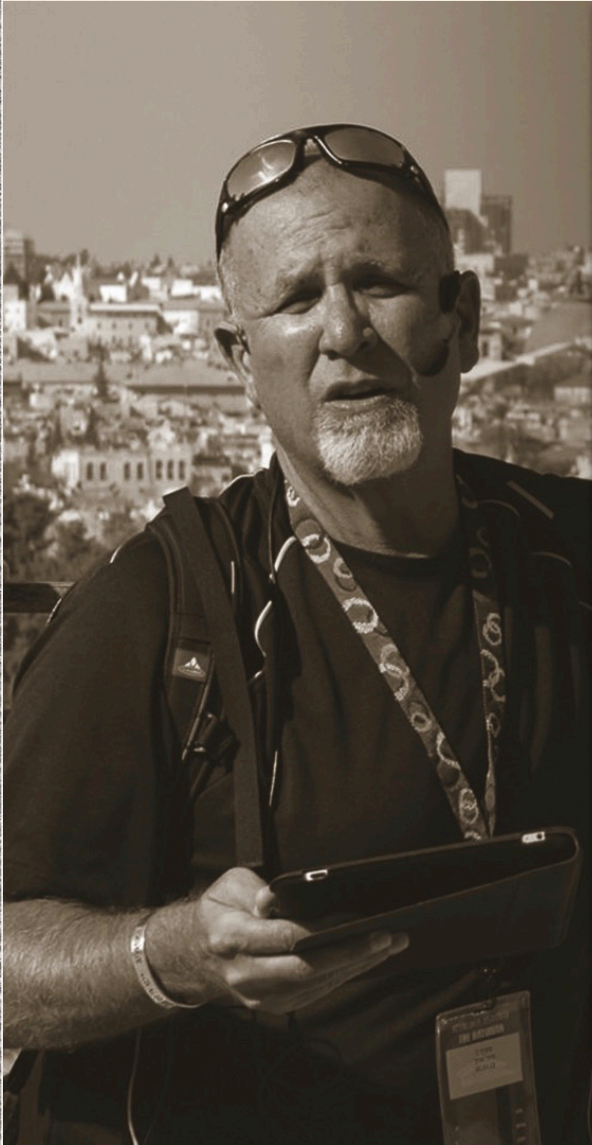


QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday addressed the Christian Media Summit held at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, during which he lauded the close ties between Israel and Christians around the world as he declared that *"Israel has no better friends - I mean that - no better friends in the world than the Christian communities around the world."*



HGE UPCOMING TOURS



JOURNEY THRU ISRAEL

MAY 2-10, 2018



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