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HEADLINES

The US State Department confirmed it is began withholding money it originally planned to provide the UN agency for Palestinian refugees. The US transferred \$60 million to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) but held back on a further \$65 million “for future consideration.”

The Palestine Liberation Organization voted yesterday to call for the suspension of the Palestinian Authority’s 1993 recognition of Israel. The non-binding vote was followed by the reaffirmation of a 2015 resolution to suspend security coordination with Israel, which was never implemented.

In a speech on Wednesday, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas issued an ultimatum to US President Donald Trump, saying he must choose between peace or war. “Jerusalem is the gate of peace and war – Trump must choose,” Abbas said, stating that the city would be “a gate for peace only when it’s the capital of Palestine.”



NEW YORK TIMES

The
New York
Times



The New York Times devoted its entire editorial page in today's paper to featuring letters from Trump supporters -- Steven Sanabria from Oakdale, California writes:

"Donald Trump has succeeded where Barack Obama failed. The economy is up, foreign tyrants are afraid, ISIS has lost most of its territory, our embassy will be moved to Jerusalem and tax reform is accomplished. More than that, Mr. Trump is learning, adapting and getting savvier every day... Who knew that all it would take to make progress was vision, chutzpah and some testosterone?"



NIKKI HALEY



HEARD YESTERDAY -- Ambassador Nikki Haley on Voice of America with Greta Van Susteren: "Why does the United States have to be the only one that bails out everyone? Why do we continue to give the money? You have 120 countries who voted against us, that could more than take up the level of debt that UNRWA has... We want a peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians... By the Palestinians cutting us out of the peace process, it shows... that they're not serious in truly getting to peace. So, we're trying to make sure that if we're going to spend taxpayer dollars, that we're not spending it on something that doesn't move U.S. interests forward."



TERRORIST SHOT



In an operation in the West Bank city of Jenin early Thursday morning, Israeli special forces killed a Palestinian terrorist believed behind the murder last week of Israeli rabbi and father-of-six, Raziel Shevach.

An elite Border Police unit was searching for Shevach's killers when troops came under fire, leaving two officers injured, police said early Thursday.

"Two officers from the counter terror unit were injured. One seriously and the second lightly, both were taken to hospital for treatment," according to police.

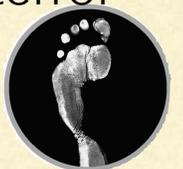


ABBAS FAREWELL?



Sunday's address by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to the Palestine Liberation Organization's Central Council sounded like the farewell of a leader at the end of his political path, and he admitted as much.

"This may be the last time that you see me here," Abbas said in his speech in Ramallah. In March, Abbas will celebrate his 83rd birthday, and he will be hard-pushed, in celebration, to point to a single significant achievement over the past few years. With no political solution on the horizon, the idea of a two-state solution becoming a sad joke, and the prospects of a unity deal with the Hamas terror group fading daily, it seems that even Abbas has thrown up his hands in despair.



ABBAS IS LOSING IT



In his desperation, Abbas hurls abuse and in all directions. He has resorted to his old-new strategy of warning us that if his demands are not met, World War III will break out. Abbas would like us to believe that the Palestinian issue should remain at the center of the world's attention -- otherwise, there will be bloodshed and violence on the streets of most countries. Should anyone take Abbas's threats seriously? The answer is simple: No.

His hateful remarks against the US administration and Israel reflect the growing state of isolation in which the Palestinian leader recently finds himself. Although Abbas did not mention the Arab countries by name, it was obvious that he was referring to Saudi Arabia and Egypt when he demanded that the Arab world stop meddling in the affairs of the Palestin



TRUMP PEACE PLAN



The reason Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas is ruling out US mediation for peace talks is because parts of the Trump administration's peace proposal – yet to be issued – were leaked by the Saudis to Ramallah. According to Israeli media reports, Jerusalem isn't the issue, it's the excuse:



According to the reports the Trump plan being written by his son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner would create a Palestinian entity that is less than a state, and it would not be based on the pre-1967 lines. Israel would control its borders and the Jordan Valley, Jerusalem would be an issue for negotiations, settlements might not have to be removed, and the Palestinian refugee issue would not be addressed.



NO PEACE – UNLESS



The existing approach of a "peace process," which goes back 30 years, is not working. It can be improved, which the Trump administration is doing, but it ultimately will crumble because it depends on Palestinian acceptance of Israel, which has not come about, and *is* not coming about. And that is the problem that needs to be addressed, a problem that cannot be addressed by diplomacy. It needs to be addressed in a very different way.



RIBI COMMENTS



“Three things are happening in the United States that never happened before,” Netanyahu said. Besides the cut to UNRWA and the Jerusalem embassy shifts, “there is a dramatic change toward Iran. The president gave a time limit for the necessary change in attitude to the nuclear program. Rest assured this is going to happen. He’s the one talking about canceling the deal.”

“This is very important,” Netanyahu said, according to the *Jerusalem Post*. “Otherwise Iran’s train will be going to just one place,” meaning building nuclear weapons, Netanyahu warned.



TERROR TUNNELS



The IDF has developed cutting-edge counter-tunnel technology that will enable it to destroy all Hamas terror tunnels by the end of 2018, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Sunday.

Lieberman's remarks followed the detection and destruction over the weekend of a Hamas terror tunnel running under the Egypt, Gaza and Israel borders. It was the third terror tunnel the IDF has destroyed in recent months.

In an interview with Hadashot evening news, Lieberman lauded the technological breakthrough that enables the tunnels to be detected, but declined to elaborate on it.

"By the end of 2018, we will have eliminated all of Hamas' attack tunnels.



TRUTH OR RUMORS

The White House has decided to quietly withdraw from all its ties with the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority and Mahmoud Abbas. The Trump administration has therefore set out an eight-point program of sanctions, which is first revealed here:

1. The Israeli-Palestinian peace plan under preparation in Washington will not be submitted to Ramallah – only to Israel and the relevant Arab governments.
2. US-Palestinian interaction is to be suspended – not just at the senior levels but in day-to-day interchanges. The administration has notified Palestinian and other Arab parties to stop addressing queries on political and economic matters to the US consulate in Jerusalem, because they will not receive answers.
3. The status of the PLO office in Washington will be reevaluated with a view to shutting it down.



4. Palestinian officials will no longer be invited to Washington by the US government, including the State Department and Department of Treasury.

5. Above all, they will not be welcome at the White House or the National Security Council where US Middle East policy is designed. Senior US officials congratulated the senior Palestinian negotiator Saab Erekat, who also holds the PA's American portfolio, on his recovery from illness, at the same time warning him that he would no longer be received at the White House.

6. The Trump administration will not make any public announcement of the cutoff of financial aid to the Palestinians. Since the funds are mostly earmarked for specific economic projects, each allocation will simply be held back on the pretext of the need for a "reappraisal."

7. The US will halt its contributions to the UN Work and Relief Agency (UNWRA), an estimated one billion dollars per annum.

8. The US administration moreover intervened with the governments of Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Qatar with a request that they freeze or slow their economic aid to the Palestinian Authority.

QUOTES



The sad and horrible conclusion is that no one cared that Jews were being murdered... This is the Jewish lesson of the Holocaust and this is the lesson which Auschwitz taught us.

Ariel Sharon

aish.com

“I am not a Jew with trembling knees. I am a proud Jew with 3,700 years of civilized history. Nobody came to our aid when we were dying in the gas chambers and ovens. Nobody came to our aid when we were striving to create our country. We paid for it. We fought for it. We died for it. We will stand by our principles. We will defend them. And, when necessary, we will die for them again, with or without your aid.” - **Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Senator Joe Biden, in June 1982**, who threatened to cut off US aid to Israel



UPCOMING TOURS

ANTHEM ISRAEL - FEB
TALMIDIM WORK TRIP - FEB
ENGAGING ISRAEL - FEB
EXPERIENCING ISRAEL - APRIL
OFF THE BEATEN PATH - FALL 2018

