

**HGE - MIDDLE EAST UPDATE - WEEK OF FEBRUARY 16, 2018**

**KAFIR**



**YOUNG LIONS CLUB**



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# DAN IN ISRAEL



We have had an amazing tour with our friends from Anthem Church. The Jeep ride to the North was especially insightful because of the F16 going down the day before and the heightened tensions. But remember this is Israel ... this is the Middle East, so the next day we were on the Syrian border being briefed by Israeli intelligence. One thing that was mentioned was that it is suspected that this whole drone thing was some kind of planned ambush. Also, as we all know the gloves are coming off between Israel and Iran and when asked about an Israeli pre-emptive strike I was told that currently "all options are on the table!"

Our Anthem Group leaves on Friday and our Talmidim Work Group comes in on Saturday, so we will be able to continue to report from Israel over the next few weeks.





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# HEADLINES

Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran are on a collision course, a leading expert said on Sunday in the wake of Saturday's clash between the Jewish state and forces loyal to Iran in neighboring Syria. The IDF believes its air strikes on Saturday destroyed nearly half of Syria's air defenses.

According to Haaretz, Israel was considering further military action against the Iranians and Syrians when Russian President Vladimir Putin told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to cool the guns.

Netanyahu says Israel 'Absolutely correct' about Iran

Lebanese leaders vowed Tuesday to take action to prevent Israel from building a wall on the border between the two countries, along what is called the "Blue Line." *(Hezbollah has hundred of thousand rockets ready to be fired at Israel at any moment and Hamas is drumming for a war!)*





# ISRAELI F16 DOWNED



The F-16 was one of several scrambled to conduct strikes in Syria early Saturday after an Iranian drone infiltrated Israeli airspace. The army responded with a strike on the drone's launch site, including a control facility manned by Iranian operators. The military later launched a second wave of raids on a dozen Syrian and Iranian targets inside Syria.



The air force was met with heavy anti-aircraft fire, including multiple missiles. The F-16 that crashed was apparently targeted by one such missile.

The exchange of fire was the most serious between Israel and Iran since the start of the civil war in Syria in 2011. It marked the first time Israel publicly acknowledged attacking what it identified as Iranian targets in Syria since the war began.





# IDF SOLDIERS ATTACKED



Two IDF soldiers were violently attacked by a Palestinian mob on Monday after mistakenly entering the Palestinian city of Jenin. The soldiers, a male and a female, were driving a vehicle when they were suddenly surrounded by a mob that threw rocks at the car. Both soldiers were wounded, and one of their service weapons was stolen.



They were finally secured by Palestinian police who led them out of the city. The female soldier was taken for treatment at an Israeli hospital with light to moderate wounds.

Similar occurrences have ended more violently, the most notorious in 2000 when Yosef Avrahami and Vadim Norzhich, two IDF reservists, were lynched by a Palestinian mob at a Ramallah police station.





# RIISING TENSIONS



Reading the headlines, there is a clear sense that Israel will soon enter a two-front war against Hamas in Gaza and against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Statements made by senior officials, lawmakers, ministers and military personnel, one after the other, seem to be prepping their respective constituencies for such a scenario.



While tensions are rising on both fronts, it is the northern border that presents the more combustible situation and higher likelihood of actual conflict breaking out.





# ISRAEL – IRAN



Iran has big plans to create a military outpost in Syria, right on Israel's doorstep. From there, the Islamic Republic could threaten and attack Israel in the future.

Israel is currently employing two tools to try and prevent this from happening: diplomacy and deterrence. Diplomatically, Jerusalem is reaching out to global powers and the international community, informing them of the consequences of Iran's actions in a bid to create pressure on Tehran. To achieve deterrence, Israel is making clear to Iran and its agents that it has no intention of allowing them to proceed with their plans. The stakes in Syria are very high. Russia has thus far appeared to help restrain its radical allies in Syria, but its role in any potential escalation remains unclear.





# WHITE HOUSE DENIAL



The White House has denied that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in talks with the Trump administration regarding the incorporation of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria into the rest of Israel.

"Reports that the United States discussed with Israel an annexation plan for the West Bank are false," stated White House spokesman Josh Raffel on Monday.

"The United States and Israel have never discussed such a proposal, and the president's focus remains squarely on his Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative."





# THE M.E. AND TRUMP



The Donald Trump administration today unveiled a budget blueprint for next year that calls for slashing the US contributions to the United Nations mission in Lebanon by almost half while pursuing similar cuts to international peacekeeping missions around the world.



The State Department budget proposed for fiscal year 2019 seeks a 42% cut over fiscal 2017's request for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), from 146.1 millions to \$84.2 million. Funding for UN missions in the Golan Heights, Western Sahara and Cyprus is also to be slashed.





# PAL AUTHORITY



"The Palestinian Authority-not Hamas, but the so-called moderates in the Palestinian Authority- name schools after terrorists, give them honours and pay them monthly salaries. At the same time, they delegitimise the existence of the state of Israel and the Jewish presence in the region, and deny the Jewish connection to much of the region's history.



Let us also call for the Palestinian Authority to stop honouring terrorists and build a society where children are less easily radicalised."

[House of Commons, [Parliamentlive.tv](http://Parliamentlive.tv), Feb. 7, 2018]





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# QUOTE

Harry Emerson Fosdick put it well when he famously said, "Hating people is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat."





# UPCOMING TOURS

ENGAGING ISRAEL - MARCH 8-16

EXPERIENCING ISRAEL - APRIL 22-MAY 1

OFF THE BEATEN PATH - OCTOBER 9-18

PETRA / JERASH / MT. NEBO EXTENSION OCTOBER 18-23

