

HGE - MIDDLE EAST UPDATE - WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2, 2018

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK

HEADLINES

Netanyahu: Iran Turning Lebanon Into 'Giant Missile Site' Aimed At Israel

In case you were wondering about the Palestinians freed in the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap of 2011, more than one-third of them returned to terror. Israel HaYom explains that freed terrorists make up a who's who of the Palestinian terror scene.

Hamas official dies of mysterious gunshot wounds. Mystery still shrouds the incident that caused the death of Hamas leader Imad Al-Alami.

A sequel to Mel Gibson's 2004 film "The Passion of the Christ" about the crucifixion of Jesus is reportedly in the works and will be the biggest movie ever created, an actor told USA Today. Jim Caviezel, 49, who will reprise the role of Jesus. Gibson said in an interview last year that the film is going to focus on the Resurrection.

Caviezel, who hasn't acted in a biblical film since then, will portray Luke in "Paul, Apostle of Christ," slated for a March 28 release.



ISRAEL / RUSSIA



Prime Minister Netanyahu told Putin in Moscow on Monday that if Iran continues to try and entrench itself in Syria, if it doesn't stop by itself, we will stop it," Netanyahu told Israeli reporters, moments before taking off Russia en route to Tel Aviv. "We also spoke about Lebanon, which is becoming a factory for precision-guided missiles that threaten Israel. These missiles pose a grave threat to Israel, and we will cannot accept this threat," he added.



Netanyahu said that the weapons factories are currently "in the process of being built" by Iran. "I explained our policy. These are not idle words," he added. "The Russians understand our position, they understand well the significance that we give to these threats," he said, acknowledging, however, that he could not say the Russians "accepted" the Israeli position.

Israel is determined to do whatever is necessary to prevent those two developments, Netanyahu said.



DANON TO UN



Danon called on the Security Council to prevent Iran from turning Syria into “the largest military base in the world.” Today, there are 82,000 fighters under Iran’s authority in Syria. This includes 3,000 members of Iran’s infamous Revolutionary Guard, 9,000 fighters from Iran’s proxy Hezbollah and 10,000 members of violent Shia militias. In addition, Iran also directly commands 60,000 local Syrian fighters,” he continued.



Danon warned the UNSC about Iran’s intentions in Syria. “Why does Iran keep recruiting these extremists to be killed in the battlefields of Syria? The answer is clear. To further destabilize Syria and our region. To further threaten Israel, and to further terrorize the entire free world,” Danon stated.



SYRIA V2.0



The new contests in Syria derive not from internal Syrian dynamics, but from the rival interests of outside powers pursued over the ruins of Syria: Turks against Kurds, Israel against Iran and its proxies, the United States against Iran, and now, potentially, Ankara against Washington.

These external forces are all determined to gain advantage over one another in Syria. And so, even as Syria's two longstanding conflicts wind down, war and strife are not departing the area. Welcome to Syria 2.0.



HOLOCAUST



Israel called on Poland to amend a bill approved this week by Polish lawmakers that would make it illegal to suggest Poland bore any responsibility for crimes against humanity committed by Nazi Germany on its soil.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said he instructed his ambassador to meet with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki to express Israel's dismay at the bill, which would make using phrases like "Polish death camps" punishable by up to three years in prison.

The law is baseless; I strongly oppose it. Poland cannot change history and the Holocaust cannot be denied.



HEZ CYBER ATTACKS



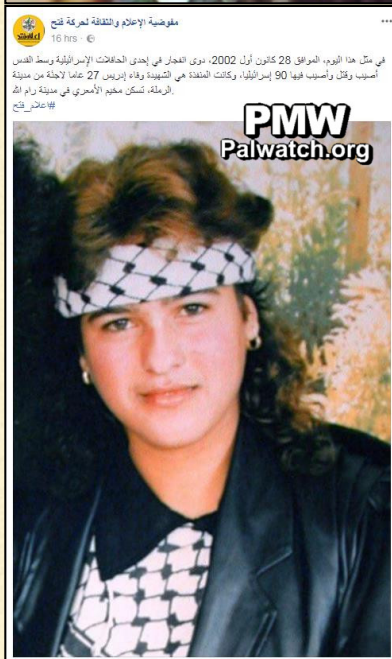
DEEP DIVE: "Hezbollah Goes on the Cyber Offensive with Iran's Help" by Levi Maxey: "Hezbollah has proactively sought to develop its cyber capabilities, expanding its potential disruptive and influential reach into the digital sphere. While the group has long used the internet to disseminate recruitment messaging, propaganda, and operational know-how, it also has begun leveraging it as an attack vector to gain valuable intelligence, undermine the reputation of opponents and hold its adversaries, especially Israel, at risk."



PA - GONE CRAZY



In a post on Facebook, the Fatah praised one of the planners of the Munich massacre in which Palestinian terrorists murdered 11 Israelis at the Olympics in 1972. Fatah called terrorist Ali Hassan Salameh a "heroic commander" and specifically mentioned the Munich attack as one his achievements: Today is the anniversary of the death as a Martyr (*Shahid*) of a heroic commander of the Black September terror organization, who was called 'the Red Prince.' His name was linked to the famous operation in Munich (i.e., terror attack, 11 murdered). [Former Israeli Prime Minister] Golda Meir was attributed with the statement: 'Find this animal and kill him!'



Another "Martyr" murderer promoted by Fatah this week was the female suicide bomber Wafa Idris who murdered one and wounded over 100 when she blew herself up on Jaffa Street in Jerusalem in 2002.



PA INCITEMENT



Palestinian incitement against the US has reached new heights. While the Palestinians have never been fans of the US, the past few weeks have revealed the extent to which they truly loathe Americans. This is how the Palestinian incitement machine works: PA leaders and officials set the tone, while ordinary Palestinians take to the streets to express their hatred of the US.

The US and other Western countries would do well to take the Palestinian campaign of threats and incitement extremely seriously – and severely counter these threats. Submission to the intimidation will simply result in even more intimidation, more violence and more threats.



HAMAS BLACKLISTED



The US put the head of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh on its terror blacklist and slapped sanctions on him. Haniyeh has close links with Hamas's military wing and has been a proponent of armed struggle, including against civilians," the State Department said in a statement. "He has reportedly been involved in terrorist attacks against Israeli citizens. Hamas has been responsible for an estimated 17 American lives killed in terrorist attacks."



Haniyeh is now on the US Treasury sanctions blacklist, which freezes any US-based assets he may have and bans any US person or company from doing business with him.



GERMAN ANTI-SEMITISM



Lack of knowledge and empathy for the victims of the Holocaust remains a serious challenge in German schools. A study conducted last year found that 41 percent of German children over the age of 14 had not even heard of Auschwitz.

A 93-year-old survivor of Auschwitz stunned the viewers of one of Germany's most popular political talk shows on Sunday night when – asked to compare the Nazi era with the situation today – she asserted that the two periods had more in common than many people may care to admit.

"I think that Germany was always antisemitic, that has not changed much," Esther Bejarano – who was enslaved in the infamous "women's orchestra" of the Auschwitz death camp.



STATE OF THE UNION



In his first State of the Union Address, U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday touted his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, accusing countries that tried to undercut this move of being ungrateful for American assistance.

"I recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Shortly afterwards, dozens of countries voted in the United Nations General Assembly against America's sovereign right to make this decision," he said. "In 2016, American taxpayers generously sent those same countries more than \$20 billion in aid. That is why tonight I am asking Congress to pass legislation to help ensure American foreign assistance dollars always serve American interests and only go to friends of America, not enemies of America."



QUOTES



Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement.....get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.

— *Abraham Joshua Heschel* —

AZ QUOTES

Great is the power of prayer. For to worship is to expand the presence of God in the world. - **Abraham Joshua Heschel**



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

