



S. DANIEL ABRAHAM
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Israel and the Middle East News Update

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News Excerpts

October 3, 2018

Times of Israel

PM Says IAEA Hasn't Checked Iran Site He Revealed

Israel accused the International Atomic Energy Agency of failing to inspect a suspected nuclear site in Iran Tuesday, pushing back against claims by the agency's chief that it had checked all relevant nuclear sites. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the IAEA had failed to look into an alleged nuclear warehouse he revealed during an address to the United Nations General Assembly last week. Earlier Tuesday, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said that his agency had checked all relevant sites for breaches of the nuclear deal.

Reuters

ICJ Orders US to Lift Some Iran Sanctions

Judges at the International Court Of Justice have ordered the United States to lift sanctions on Iran that affect imports of humanitarian goods and products linked to the safety of civil aviation. Tehran had argued that sanctions imposed since May violate the terms of a 1955 Treaty of Amity between the two countries. The ruling is likely to have at most limited practical impact on the implementation of sanctions, which Washington is reimposing and tightening after pulling out of a 2015 nuclear deal that Iran signed with world powers.

Times of Israel

Khan al-Ahmer Living on Borrowed Time

Residents of Khan al-Ahmar were operating on borrowed time Tuesday as the deadline set by Israel to demolish the Palestinian village had passed nearly 48 hours prior. Classes continued at its elementary school, but a sense of urgency persisted, as over activists, journalists and Palestinian supporters congregated around the village's welcome tent. The residents had been given until October 1 to leave before the state demolished their community, which was built without permits.

Ynet

Netanyahu to Be Questioned for 12th Time in Case 4000

Netanyahu will be questioned on Friday for the 12th time in the Bezeq corruption affair, also known as Case 4000, in his residency in Jerusalem. In addition, the Lahav 433 unit is likely to complete the investigations of Case 1000—which concerns illicit gifts Netanyahu allegedly received from business moguls, and Case 2000—in which he is suspected of holding talks with Yedioth Ahronoth owner and publisher Arnon Mozes, discussing favorable coverage for the prime minister in return for Netanyahu working promote legislation that would weaken Yedioth's rival Israel Hayom. The police have recommended for the prime minister to be indicted for bribery.

Associated Press

UN Workers in Gaza Protest Layoffs Amid Funding Woes

Workers for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees went on strike Tuesday to protest job cuts due to a funding crisis sparked by President Donald Trump's aid cancellation. The agency's operations were largely paralyzed in the Gaza Strip where its schools, health care centers, and food distribution offices play an important role. UNRWA, as the agency is known, runs more than 270 schools with some 280,000 students in the strip, where the Hamas terrorist organization is in power. The two-day strike follows more than 250 job cuts in Gaza and the West Bank. More than 500 full-time roles have also become part-time.

Ha'aretz

Police Arrest Four in Attack on Jerusalem Palestinians

Four Israeli men were arrested during investigations into the aggression against four Palestinian students in a public park in southern Jerusalem, Israeli police said in a statement Tuesday, adding that they are treating the attack as racially motivated. The Palestinian students, from Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem and from Beit Safafa in West Jerusalem, were sitting in Gonenim Park near the Railway Park, when dozens of Jewish youth - most of them Orthodox- approached them and started attacking them. The students were severely beaten, police said.

Jerusalem Post

Lieberman: Bennett Wants to Give Palestinians Citizenship

Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman claimed on Tuesday that Education Minister Naftali Bennett wants to give Israeli citizenship to "tens of thousands" of Palestinians. Lieberman spoke against Bennett's well known plan to annex Area C to Israel, including the Palestinians that live there, which could number up to 300,000. "I live in Nokdim [a West Bank settlement] in the Judean Desert and he lives in Raanana [a city outside of Tel Aviv]," Lieberman said. The fight between the two ministers, whose parties compete over votes on the Right, returned last week when Bennett said that Lieberman's Gaza policies were a failure and were endangering residents of the south.

Times of Israel

Erdan: PA Soccer Chief Should Be Banned for 'Incitement'

Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdan on Tuesday called on the International Olympic Committee to ban Palestinian soccer chief Jibril Rajoub for "inciting violence" in athletics. In a letter to the IOC president, Erdan noted that international soccer body FIFA slapped a 12-month ban on Rajoub earlier this year for calling on fans to burn pictures and jerseys of Lionel Messi as part of a campaign to stop Argentina's national team playing in Israel. There was no immediate response from the IOC.

The Public Health Impacts of Gaza's Water Crisis

By Rand Fellows Shira Efron, Jordan Fischbach, Ilana Blum, Rouslan Karimov and Melinda Moore

- Gaza has long had water and sanitation challenges, but today it is in a state of emergency. Its dual water crisis combines a shortage of potable water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene with a lack of wastewater sanitation. As a result, over 108,000 cubic meters of untreated sewage flow daily from Gaza into the Mediterranean Sea, creating extreme public health hazards in Gaza, Israel, and Egypt. While these problems are not new, rapidly deteriorating infrastructure, strict limitations on the import of construction materials and water pumps, and a diminished and unreliable energy supply have accelerated the water crisis and exacerbated the water-related health risks. Three wars between Israel and Hamas since 2009 and intra-Palestinian rivalry between Hamas and Fatah have further hindered the rehabilitation of Gaza's water and sanitation sectors.
- This report describes the relationship between Gaza's water problems and its energy challenges and examines the implications of this water crisis for public health. It reviews the current state of water supply and water sanitation in Gaza, analyzes water-related risks to public health in Gaza, and explains potential regional public health risks for Israel and Egypt. The authors recommend a number of steps to ameliorate the crisis and decrease the potential for a regional public health disaster that take into consideration current political constraints. The audience for this report includes stakeholders involved in Gaza, including the Palestinian, Israeli, and Egyptian governments, various international organizations and nongovernmental organizations working on the ground in Gaza, and the donor community seeking to rehabilitate Gaza.
- Finding 1: Gaza's young and growing population lacks water not only for drinking but also for hygiene and sanitation. More than a quarter of all reported disease in Gaza is caused by poor water quality and access. Chemical and biological contamination could lead to bacterial (cholera, Salmonella, Shigella), parasitic (Giardia), and viral (polio, viral meningitis) infections. If present trends continue, Gaza and the surrounding region are at risk of a disease outbreak or another water-related public health crisis.
- Finding 2: Recent events have accelerated Gaza's longstanding water challenges. The main source of Gaza's water, its aquifer, is being depleted and its quality diminished by seawater intrusion, wastewater seepage, and agricultural runoff. Gaza's inconsistent energy supply greatly limits the operations of its water and wastewater treatment facilities. Recurring wars between Israel and Hamas have damaged Gaza's water infrastructure.
- Finding 3: Gaza's water crisis could be resolved through greater investment in water and power infrastructure as well as additional water or electricity purchases, but many barriers remain. Israel and Egypt, Gaza's neighboring states, severely restrict access and movement of goods into Gaza, including materials needed for repairs and construction of electricity, water and

wastewater infrastructure. Intra-Palestinian strife and a governance vacuum in Gaza have exacerbated externally inflicted damage in severely limiting the power supply and hindering reconstruction. International aid has been pledged inconsistently yet not followed through in full. Political complications hinder the implementation of all proposed solutions.

- Recommendation 1: Increase the quantity and consistency of Gaza's electricity supply through infrastructure and other investments such as advancing the "161kV Line;" upgrading and expanding the electricity transmission network to and inside Gaza; restoring the fuel storage tank at the Gaza Power Plant and connecting it to a natural gas pipeline; investing in solar energy; developing the Gaza Marine gas field; increasing the supply of purchased power from Egypt; ensuring consistent supply of electricity for the Khan Yunis Short-Term Low-Volume desalination plant; and improving fee collection to cover the ongoing cost of electricity.
- Recommendation 2: Increase Gaza's water supply and improve wastewater treatment, including by increasing water purchases from Israel; expanding desalination capacity; improving water storage and distribution systems; investing in household and industrial wastewater treatment; distributing chemicals and spare parts for household treatment systems; constructing more wastewater treatment plants; using treated wastewater to recharge the aquifer; repairing the wastewater collection system, and connecting all of Gaza residents.
- Recommendation 3: Protect public health and promote hygiene and sanitation practices by preventing and preparing for disease outbreaks (e.g., cholera vaccinations and rehydration salt packets); maintaining basic health services; promoting more-rigorous hygiene and sanitation education in schools; and creating a regional pandemic task force to prevent a disease outbreak and implement containment.
- Recommendation 4: Reduce implementation barriers and work within political differences through creating a follow-up mechanism on donor pledges; increasing funds for public health risk mitigation initiatives; relaxing restrictions on access and movement; and identifying trusted third parties to mediate political disputes over payments for water and electricity.

Poll Proves Israel's Isolation as Adoring Trumpland

By Chemi Shalev, Senior Columnist

- Now it's official. A new report by Pew Research conclusively proves that Israel is Trumpland. Most of the world, especially its democratic part, is wary of the U.S. president, but for Israelis, everything seems dandy. Among the 25 countries included in Pew's latest Survey of Global Attitudes and Trends, Israel is in second place in its confidence in Trump's ability to manage the world, closely behind the Philippines, led by our newfound buddy and alleged mass murderer Rodrigo Duterte. Israelis trust Trump more than anyone in the world to look out for their country's interests. And only in Israel is support for Trump actually increasing, by leaps and bounds.
- Outside the Israeli bubble, the world's confidence in American leadership is collapsing, especially when compared to the latter years of Barack Obama's tenure as president. Confidence in the U.S. president has plummeted from 83%-25% in Canada, from 86% to 10% in Germany, from 84% to 9% in France from 75% to 7% in Spain and so on. Even Israel's new ethnocentric and authoritarian Eastern European allies registered a sharp drop in trust in the U.S. president, in Poland from 58% to 35% and in Viktor Orban's Hungary from 58% to 31%. Only in Israel did trust in the U.S. presidency jump from 49%, when it was last measured by Pew in 2016, to 69% support for Trump today, at a rate matched by only one sector of Western European politics, which deserves mention: The far right.
- Once again, the biblical curse of Balaam from the Book of Numbers - considered a blessing by many Jewish sages - of Israel as "a people that dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations", is manifested for all to see. Apparently things that we can see from here, in the center of the Middle East cauldron, can't be seen from there, in the hallways of most of the world's capitals. Only we can truly understand Trump and appreciate his positive leadership that lies behind the smoke screen of his deficiencies and scandals. In Israeli eyes, and in Israeli eyes only, the change from Obama to Trump is an improvement, not a disaster. And the fact that hypocritical Europe, weakly Canada, detached Australia or delusional Latin America are united in their disdain for Trump is proof positive, according to local logic, that our way is just.
- The anomalous Israeli support obviously stems, as the poll's presenters suggest, from Trump's unilateral pro-Israeli decisions to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and to abandon the Iran nuclear deal. As an added bonus, Trump is also tormenting the Palestinians, just as most Israelis believe they deserve. And Benjamin Netanyahu is constantly harping about Trump, our one and only true friend, the likes of which Israel has never seen before. Under such circumstances, if only in response to the cognitive dissonance, it's reasonable that Israelis convince themselves that if Trump is good for the Jews, he must be good for the entire world. If only this was the sole explanation for Israel turning into a groupie of a president that the world detests and one that most Americans, as of today, despise.

- Israelis for some reason aren't interested the fact that Trump has ruptured traditional alliances, sown division and distrust in the West and continues to maintain his peculiar relations with Vladimir Putin as well as his truly perverse love affair with Kim Jong Un. It doesn't seem to matter to most Israelis that Trump licenses and encourages destroyers of democracy everywhere, or that he has abandoned America's traditional pose as preacher and paragon of human rights, a term that has in any case been turned into a code word for Hussein Obama, George Soros and the New Israel Fund. Indeed, it is his indifference to refugees, cruelty to immigrants, war against the rule of law, hatred for foreigners, never-ending lies, abusive invective, nod to racists and disdain for women that make Israelis, for obvious reasons, feel right at home with Donald Trump.
- The abrasive, impatient shoot-from-the-hip novice who speaks the favorite Israeli lingua franca called dugri - roughly translated as "in your face" - is one of us, an honorary member of the Israeli tribe, the macho man of our dreams, and whoever doesn't like it can lump it. But you can rest assured that if the day comes when Israel is forced to pay a price for its unhesitating and nearly unequivocal embrace of a leader so universally abhorred, the dynamic duo of Trump and Netanyahu will be quick to agree that Fake News liberals are once again to blame.