

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 13, 2015

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NEWS REPORTS HAVE REVEALED A SECRET IRANIAN UNIT THAT TRANSFERS ARMS TO TERRORISTS AND SECTARIAN MILITIAS, highlighting Iran's role in fomenting terror and sectarian violence across the Middle East. Iranian Unit 190 is a secret branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that has been smuggling arms and fueling regional conflict and instability. Reportedly, one of Unit 190's warehouses is in the civilian area of the Tehran International Airport. Sources have uncovered the name of an Iranian member of this unit, Behnam Shahariyari, who runs a network of companies that have been evading sanctions by packing RPGs, night-vision equipment and long-range rockets in powdered milk, cement, and spare vehicle parts. Shahariyari and his front companies, Liner Transport Kish and Behnam Shahariyari Trading Company, were sanctioned in June 2011 for providing material support, including weapons, to Hezbollah on behalf of the IRGC. Iran has been actively involved in smuggling arms to the Houthis, Hamas, and Hezbollah. In January 2013, the U.S. Navy seized 40 tons of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles that were being smuggled from Iran aboard a boat called the Jeehan-1 to the Houthis in Yemen. In 2014, the IDF intercepted a ship from Iran carrying advanced missiles bound for Gaza and other Iranian arms shipments destined for Gaza have been intercepted in the past. In 2009, Israeli commandos seized the Francop, a freighter carrying hundreds of tonnes of Iranian arms, including rockets to Hezbollah. The Iranian regime also transfers arms to Lebanese Hezbollah via Syria. On Wednesday at a hearing on Iran at the House Foreign Affairs

Committee, a bipartisan group of lawmakers expressed concern about Iran's regional sponsorship of terror and growing influence in the Middle East. Director of American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project Frederick Kagan claimed that "the global Iranian threat—independent of the status of its nuclear program—is greater today than it has ever been." Vice President of American Foreign Policy Council Ilan Berman argued that sanctions relief provided during the Joint Plan of Action has allowed Iran to increase its support for terror, asserting that "in the interim, in the year and a half that Iran has had greater breathing room... it has also, as the State Department has noted, stepped up its sponsorship of global instability as manifested in places like Syria, Yemen." Finally, Director of Research at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution Daniel Byman warned that a nuclear-armed Iran would increase its sponsorship of terror, stating that Iran could "exploit the perceived protection it would gain if it developed a nuclear weapon to step up support for militant groups in the region."

THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM CLOSED THEIR EMBASSIES IN YEMEN'S CAPITAL SANAA ON WEDNESDAY, citing security concerns in light of the Iranian-backed Houthis' aggressive actions. State Department Spokesperson Jen Psaki issued a press statement on Tuesday to explain the need for the embassy's closure: "Recent unilateral actions disrupted the political transition process in Yemen, creating the risk that renewed violence would threaten Yemenis and the diplomatic community in Sana'a." Thousands of Yemenis took to the streets in Sanaa and Taiz on Wednesday to demonstrate against the Houthi takeover. The Houthis seized Sanaa last September and forced the resignation of the Yemeni president, a firm U.S. counter-terrorism ally, and the entire government last month. An Iranian general crowed about this "historic victory for the Iranian Islamic revolution." A member of the Iranian parliament, Ali Reza Zakani, who is close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said that Sanaa is the fourth Arab capital to join the Iranian Revolution (after Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad). Thousands of pro-Houthi demonstrators marched in the capital last Wednesday, chanting, "Death to America, Death to Israel"; two days later, the group announced that they had taken over the government and had dissolved parliament. On Tuesday, Houthi fighters captured the city of Al Bayda in central Yemen, which lies adjacent to Mareb province, the location of much of Yemen's oil and gas infrastructure. Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commanders are reportedly in Yemen training Houthi fighters and approximately 100 Houthis have trained near the Iranian city of Qom. A Yemeni intelligence officer told the newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat last September that Hezbollah militants were also in Yemen. President Barack Obama touted Yemen as a model of success as recently as last September, just weeks before the Houthi seizure of Sanaa, to market his strategy of defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria: "This strategy of taking out terrorists who threaten us, while supporting partners on the front lines, is one that we have successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years," President Obama said. "It is consistent with the approach I outlined earlier this year: to use force against anyone who threatens America's core interests, but to mobilize partners wherever possible to address broader challenges to international order." Dr. Joshua

Teitelbaum, lecturer and senior research associate at Israel's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) at Bar-Ilan University, said in a conference call hosted by The Israel Project Wednesday that America's regional allies, including the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, have a sense of "a lack of U.S. leadership."

NETANYAHU: SPEECH AT CONGRESS NOT POLITICAL, IT'S EXISTENTIAL: PM Netanyahu spoke at a Likud election event Monday night, where he discussed his upcoming controversial trip to speak at the US Congress. "At the time that there are those who are dealing with protocol or politics, there is a bad deal developing in Munich with Iran that will endanger the existence of Israel. It is my obligation to do everything I can in order to prevent it," said the prime minister. "Therefore, I am determined to travel to Washington to represent the position of Israel before the members of Congress and the American people. This is not a political issue; it's an existential issue. That is how I see it," he said. (Jerusalem Post)

CRITICIZING NETANYAHU, OBAMA SAYS 'UNITED' WORLD PRESENTING IRAN WITH NUCLEAR DEAL: US President Barack Obama says that gaps in talks with Iran over its nuclear program have been "sufficiently narrowed and sufficiently clarified" that world powers can now present the Islamic Republic with an agreement. "We are presenting to them a deal that allows them to have peaceful nuclear power but gives us the absolute assurance that is verifiable they are not producing a nuclear weapon," Obama said. "They have to make a decision." The president joined US Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in rejecting prospects for further delays. In a White House press conference hosting German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the president addressed concerns over Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu's upcoming visit to Washington, when he is expected to criticize the diplomatic effort. "It does not make sense to sour the negotiations a month or two before they're about to be complete." Obama also snidely inferred that PM Netanyahu has political motives for coming to Washington: He noted that German Chancellor Merkel "would not seek an invitation to the White House" so close to her own elections. Obama said he will not meet Netanyahu during his visit, which comes a few weeks before the prime minister seeks re-election. The speech before Congress is expected on March 3. Obama's allies fear the trip could be used by Israel and by US Republicans, who control Congress and issued the invitation, to undercut ongoing nuclear talks with Tehran. (Jerusalem Post)

ISRAEL BOLSTERS TIES TO JORDAN AS ISIS LOOMS: The crucial security relationship between Jordan and Israel is gaining new meaning after the brutal execution of a Jordanian pilot who was burned alive by ISIS terrorists in a video shared online around the world. Israel has already flown drone sorties over the Jordanian-Syrian border to help Jordan thwart potential attacks from ISIS. And while Israel isn't a member of the anti-ISIS coalition, Israeli officials consider ISIS a regional threat. That threat is only

becoming more real as heavy fighting rages along the Israeli-held Golan Heights, where stray artillery fire has hit in recent months. The Israeli military has become increasingly focused on its border with Syria concerned that the civil war could spillover as Hezbollah, which is fighting alongside the Syrian government, is gaining territory in Syria alongside the Israeli border. Washington Institute's David Schenker, the Pentagon's former top policy aide on the Levant, said that as Israel and Jordan face "an overlapping threat" from ISIS, each side may look to their relationship with the other - with Israel heavy on technical capabilities and Jordan providing the benefit of decades of human intelligence assets in Syria. Netanyahu last week likened ISIS to Iran, tweeting that "ISIS burn people alive, the Islamic State of Tehran hang them from cranes in the public squares. Both are motivated by Islamic terrorism." And he added: "The greatest danger to the future of the world is that this extremism will be backed up by nuclear weapons, something everyone must oppose." (CNN)

BELGIAN TEACHER TO JEWISH STUDENTS: ‘WE SHOULD PUT YOU ALL ON FREIGHT WAGONS’: A Brussels high school teacher was summoned to appear before a local school board for telling a Jewish student, “We should put you all on freight wagons.” The incident occurred at the Belgian capital’s Emile Jacqmain school and involved a 16-year-old female student and her mathematics teacher. The teacher was summoned to appear before the board following a complaint filed against him for inciting racism and anti-Semitic hatred. The student, according to the report, told the teacher that “one does not joke about such subjects.” Tens of thousands of Belgian Jews, along with countless other Jews from across Europe, were transported by the Nazis to deaths in cattle and freight wagons. The pupil’s parents filed a complaint, which the school board processed promptly, earning praises from Joel Rubinfeld, president of the Belgian League Against Anti-Semitism. (Jerusalem Post)

PROPOSAL: INTERNET ‘RESTRAINING ORDER’ FOR ANTISEMITISM: A group of British MPs, released a condemning report on antisemitic violence online this Monday. MPs in the group called 'urgently' on the police, the government, and the Jewish community to protect Britain's Jewish community, including calling for government funding for synagogue security, ensuring a balanced view on the Middle East in classrooms, and establishing an independent council on anti-Semitism. The steps include issuing "asbos," or restraining orders, against repeat offenders of anti-Semitic bullying online. Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky stated on Tuesday that he welcomed the latest efforts of British MPs to bolster the fight against anti-Semitism in the UK. (INN)

FRENCH EXODUS UNDERWAY: RECORD NUMBERS ATTEND ALIYAH FAIRS: A record number of French Jews flocked to "Israel opportunities" fairs throughout France this week, as Israeli officials anticipate an unprecedented wave of French aliyah to only increase in 2015. Some 8,000 people, mostly between the ages of 16 and 35, have visited the "Orient-a-Sion" fairs taking place in Paris, Lyon and

Marseilles - well over 1% of the entire French Jewish community. Dozens of representatives from Israeli organizations and government bodies, presented families in attendance with housing options, employment opportunities, and educational programs available to them in Israel. "We have been doing this for years, and we could not believe our eyes," said Daniel Benhaim head of the Jewish Agency delegation in France. "By 10 a.m., there was a line around the block." Echoing statements by other Israeli officials - including Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky - Benhaim expressed confidence that the number of Jews leaving France for Israel would break last year's record figure of more than 7,200. Those numbers were more than double the previous year (3,400) and triple the number seen in 2012 (1,900). France's Jewish community is the largest in Europe and third largest in the world, after Israel and the United States. (Arutz-7)

WITH AN EYE ON IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE, EGYPT, JORDAN, AND TURKEY LOOK TO BUILD THEIR OWN NUCLEAR PROGRAMS, raising concerns that the failure to halt Iran's nuclear program could trigger a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Today Egypt and Russia announced a plan to build Egypt's first nuclear power plant with four reactors. Egypt's move to acquire a domestic nuclear program underscores the position of some analysts that Iran's program has already sparked such a race. Last July, Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claimed that giving Iran "any enrichment will trigger an arms race in the Middle East." In November 2013, the P5+1 global powers negotiated the Joint Plan of Action with Iran, which explicitly allows Iran to enrich uranium up to five percent. In response to Iran's nuclear program, states in the region have threatened to acquire programs of their own in the interim. In 2009, the late Saudi King Abdullah reportedly told Ambassador Dennis Ross that "if they get nuclear weapons, we will get nuclear weapons." The Daily Beast reported a conversation between Senator Lindsey Graham and former intelligence chief Saudi Prince Turki al Faisal. Graham asked the Prince, "If any final agreement that allowed Iran to maintain an enrichment capability would cause Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to invoke their own right to enrich uranium." He responded, "I think we should insist on having equal rights for everybody, this is part of the (Non-Proliferation Treaty) arrangement." To gain access to U.S nuclear technology and equipment for its nuclear facilities, the UAE agreed not to enrich uranium. However, an agreement with Iran may lead the UAE to demand to renegotiate or abandon this agreement. Furthermore, last December Russia and Jordan signed an agreement to build the first nuclear power plant in Jordan. Turkey, a rival that competes with Iran for influence in the Middle East, may also acquire nuclear weapons. In January 2014, Turkey and Japan signed a nuclear agreement that included a clause that allows Turkey to enrich uranium and extract plutonium, raising concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation. In 2009, a Turkish Foreign Ministry official claimed that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, Turkey will do the same.

SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TROOPS, BOLSTERED BY HEZBOLLAH MILITANTS AND OFFICERS OF IRAN'S ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY

GUARD CORPS (IRGC), launched an offensive on Sunday in southern Syria. The purpose of the offensive is reportedly to cut opposition fighters' communications between a triangular area southwest of Damascus and Quneitra and Daraa. Opposition forces had been making inroads in the region, and on Tuesday the pro-regime forces had "taken a string of villages and hills" along the border of the Israeli Golan Heights. Al-Quds Al-Arabi, a London-based Arabic daily, reported that more than 4,500 Syrian soldiers, reinforced by hundreds of Hezbollah fighters and IRGC officers, were involved in the offensive. According to a source close to the Free Syrian Army, the Syrian military handed the offensive over to a joint Hezbollah-IRGC command. As Oliver Holmes of Reuters points out, "[t]he south is one of the last remaining areas where mainstream, non-jihadist rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad have a foothold. Just a short drive to Damascus, the area remains a risk to the Syrian leader, who has otherwise consolidated control over much of the west." As-Safir, a pro-Hezbollah and pro-Assad Lebanese newspaper, called the offensive "statement number two," as a prelude to a larger counter-attack on the southern front, with statement number one being the Hezbollah attack on Israeli troops on the Israel-Lebanon border that took place on January 28. Two Israeli soldiers, Captain Yohai Kalangel, 25, and Sergeant Dor Nini, 20, were killed in that attack. Iran and Hezbollah have provided firm support to the Assad regime during the Syrian civil war, which has claimed the lives of at least 200,000 people. Hezbollah has deployed thousands of fighters to Syria to fight alongside Bashar al-Assad. Hezbollah and Iranian support has been critical to the regime's survival and was particularly evident in the seizure of Qusayr, a city in western Syria, from rebel control in June 2013. Analyst Jeffrey White of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy called Qusayr "a battle the regime must win," because of the city's strategic location between Homs and the Mediterranean coast and because "a victory would boost [the regime's] resilience and affirm the commitment of its supporters."

UNICEF CALLS PNEUMONIA "THE FORGOTTEN KILLER OF CHILDREN."

This severe infection in the lungs causes more deaths in kids under five years old than AIDS, malaria and measles combined. Treatment is simple and effective, but in developing countries the problem is diagnosing it in the first place. Two Israeli startups with promising products to meet the acute need for diagnosing pneumonia recently won seed grants from Grand Challenges Israel, a program launched last year by MASHAV-Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation with the Office of the Chief Scientist at the Israeli Ministry of Economy and the Israeli Prime Minister's Office. "The goal of this program is to steer Israeli entrepreneurs towards finding solutions for developing nations — those markets in which there's a real need for urgent solutions — as well as opening up a huge, untapped business potential for Israeli entrepreneurs and industrialists." RespiDX has designed the Respiometer, which looks like a cross between a pacifier and a digital oral thermometer. The mouth stop just under the child's nose would be embedded with sensors to measure breathing. "We filed a patent and now we're looking to use the grant to make a prototype and test it against existing means of measuring respiration rate to prove it's good enough to be out in the market," says Ian

Solomon, a serial medical-device entrepreneur who is part of a group that founded RespiDX a couple of years ago with the encouragement of pediatric pulmonologist Dr. Israel Amirav of the University of Alberta in Canada. Solomon tells ISRAEL21c that the Respimometer could be integrated into a regular digital thermometer. "This is something people are familiar with, so while taking the child's temperature the device could also detect pneumonia immediately." (via Israel21c)

EU FUNDING ILLEGAL PALESTINIAN BUILDING: The EU is acting illegally by funding more than 400 unauthorized Palestinian homes in 17 locations in Area C of Judea & Samaria, which was placed under Israeli jurisdiction during the Oslo Accords, say an NGO, international lawyers and MEPs. The Palestinian buildings, which have no permits, have raised concerns that the EU is using valuable resources to take sides in a foreign territorial dispute. The structures come at a cost of tens of millions of Euros in public money. Official EU documentation reveals the building project is intended to 'pave the way for development and more authority of the PA over Area C (the Israeli area)', which some experts say is an attempt to unilaterally affect facts on the ground. The EU logo is placed on the structures in the belief that this will prevent Israel from demolishing them, and thus far the Israeli government has not removed the buildings hoping to avoid a diplomatic tangle with the Europeans. NGO Regavim claims EU support for these structures is part of a Palestinian plan to gradually take control of large parts of Area C, the 60% of Judea & Samaria that, according to the Oslo Accords, is under full Israeli control. (Jerusalem Post/Daily Mail)

BIDEN WILL NOT ATTEND NETANYAHU'S CONGRESS SPEECH: Despite claiming to be "buddies" with the Israeli leader, the Vice President of the United States will not be attending Netanyahu's upcoming speech to Congress. "The Vice President's office expects that the Vice President will be traveling abroad during the joint session of Congress," an official said Friday. House Democrats Reps. John Lewis of Georgia, G.K. Butterfield of North Carolina and Earl Blumenauer of Oregon have also said they won't attend Netanyahu's March 3 speech. Biden's announcement came two days after the Democratic senators said they were considering boycotting Netanyahu's address before Congress, in an act of protest against House of Representatives Speaker, Republican John Boehner, who invited Netanyahu without the knowledge of either the White House's or Democratic leaders in Congress. Netanyahu's speech is expected to focus largely on Iran - and the necessity of halting its nuclear program - amid delicate negotiations involving the US, other Western powers and Tehran. (Arutz-7)

THE EMERGING IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL RAISES MAJOR CONCERNS: As the Obama administration pushes to complete a nuclear accord with Iran, numerous members of Congress, former secretaries of state and officials of allied governments are expressing concern about the contours of the emerging deal. A process that began with the goal of eliminating Iran's potential to produce nuclear weapons has evolved into a plan to tolerate and restrict that capability. In the course of the negotiations, the Obama administration

has declined to counter increasingly aggressive efforts by Iran to extend its influence across the Middle East and seems ready to concede Tehran a place as a regional power at the expense of Israel and other US allies. At the heart of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a goal of destroying the Jewish state. In November 2014 the all-powerful Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said that the Jewish state "has no cure but to be annihilated." The tragic history of the Jewish people in the 20th century has taught them that threats of annihilation must be taken seriously. This is particularly so in the case of Iran which is moving inexorably toward a nuclear weapons capability. (Washington Post)

SHI'ITE REBELS BACKED BY IRAN TAKE OVER YEMEN: Yemen's powerful Shi'ite rebels announced on Friday that they have taken over the country and dissolved parliament, a dramatic move that finalizes their months-long power grab. The development also plunges the impoverished country deeper into turmoil and threatens to turn the crisis into a full-blown sectarian conflict, pitting the Iran-backed Houthi Shiites against Sunni tribesmen and secessionists in the south. It could also play into the hands of Yemen's Al-Qaida branch, the world's most dangerous offshoot of the terror group, and jeopardize the US counter-terrorism operations in the country. (Ha'artz)

SYRIAN DEATH TOLL CROSSES 210,000 AS JORDAN HITS ISIS TARGETS: The death toll after nearly four years of civil war in Syria has risen to 210,060, nearly half of them civilians, but the real figure is probably much higher, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Saturday. The Observatory, which is based in Britain and has a network of activists across Syria, said that 10,664 children and 6,783 women were among the dead. Meanwhile, Jordan carried out air strikes on Islamic State targets for the third day running on Saturday, mainly targeting the jihadist group's Syrian stronghold of Raqqa, a security source said, highlighting how the ongoing conflict has metastasized into an international crisis. Security sources said Jordan had conducted at least 60 raids over the past three days, mainly on targets in Islamic State-controlled territory in Syria but also on several in Iraq. Jordan's King Abdullah has vowed to avenge pilot Mouath al-Ka saesbeh's brutal killing and ordered his commanders to prepare for a stepped-up military role in the US-led coalition against Islamic State. (Ynet)

A MONTH AFTER KOSHER MARKET ATTACK, FRENCH JEWS PLAN AN EXODUS: An Israeli flag still hangs from a gate outside the Hyper Cacher in Saint-Mandé, nearly a month after a gunman launched a siege inside the kosher market that left four Jewish hostages dead. For all her 30 years, Jennifer Sebag has lived in a community that embodies everything modern Europe is supposed to be. Inclusive, integrated, peaceful and prosperous, the elegant city of Saint-Mandé has been a haven for Jews like Sebag whose parents and grandparents were driven from their native North Africa decades ago by anti-Semitism. "I've always told everyone that here, we are very protected. But in an instant on the afternoon of Jan. 9, Sebag's refuge became a target. A gunman who would later say he was acting on behalf of the Islamic State walked into her neighborhood's kosher market and opened fire, launching a siege that would leave four

hostages dead – all of them Jewish. A month later, the Jews of Saint-Mandé are planning for a possible exodus from what had once appeared to be the promised land. In homes, in shops and in synagogues guarded night and day by soldiers wielding assault rifles, conversations are dominated by an agonizing choice: Stay in France and risk becoming the victim of the next attack by Islamic extremists, or leave behind a country that Jews say they are proud to call home. “The question is not will they leave or won’t they leave,” said Alain Assouline, a prominent Saint-Mandé doctor and president of a Jewish community center. “The question has become when they will leave.” For Sebag, her husband and their three young sons, after pondering a move for years for economic reasons, the attack on a market where they regularly shop erased all doubts. They will travel this summer from the only home they have ever known to Israel, where they have no close friends or relatives, where they don’t speak the language, and where war flares all too regularly. Since the Hyper Cacher attack, calls to the Jewish Agency’s Paris office have more than tripled, Mayer said, and the agency is predicting that 15,000 French Jews will move to Israel in 2015. (Washington Post)

TECHNION PRINTS PARTS FOR SPACE INDUSTRY WITH ADVANCED 3D PRINTER: Haifa's Technion-Israel Institute of Technology has installed a million-dollar 3D printer for printing out metal products such as titanium parts for the space industry, dental crowns and implants, bone replacements and more. The printer melts metal powder with electron beams and forms it into a customized solid. The printer has already been used to print a prototype of a satellite fuel container. In the future, the engineers will print engine blades and metal implants for knees. (J. Post)

MOBILE SNIFF PHONE DETECT CANCER ON A USER’S BREATH: The NaNose breathalyzer technology developed by Prof. Hossam Haick of Israel’s Technion will soon be installed in a mobile phone - to be called the SniffPhone. A tiny smell-sensitive sensor will be installed onto a phone add-on and, using specially designed software, the phone will be able to "smell" users' breath to determine if they have cancer, among other serious diseases. The NaNose system can detect the presence of tumors, both benign and malignant, more quickly, efficiently and cheaply than previously possible, said Haick. The system has a 90% accuracy rate. (Times of Israel)

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