

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 18, 2015

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ISRAEL CONSIDERS USING SNIPERS AGAINST ROCK-THROWERS: As part of his declared "war" on rock-throwing terrorists in Jerusalem, PM Binyamin Netanyahu is seeking permission from the Attorney General to deploy snipers to target the attackers. During a meeting with top government and security officials over the deadly violence, which claimed the life of an Israeli motorist this week, Netanyahu highlighted a significant difference between IDF and police open-fire regulations. The army regularly deploys sniper teams to tackle rock- and firebomb-throwing rioters in Judea and Samaria - regulations allow soldiers to use relatively low-caliber Ruger rifles with telescopic sights to target rioters who pose a particularly serious threat to life. In contrast, police are not able to do so under their own current rules of engagement, and are only allowed to respond to rioters with non-lethal riot-control measures, such as rubber-coated bullets, stun grenades and teargas. In an effort to quell the on-off violence that has wracked the capital, Netanyahu is seeking to change that.

Arab rioters this week have rampaged through parts of Jerusalem - particularly the Old City and Temple Mount, in an attempt to force Israel to ban Jews from visiting the Temple Mount. The rioting was also timed to coincide with the Jewish new year (Rosh Hashanah). Jewish worshipers were beaten and chased by Muslim mobs in the Old City during the holiday, and 64-year-old Alexander Levlovitz was murdered by rock-throwers while driving home on Sunday night, 13 September, 2015. Violence continued into

Wednesday, 16 September, 2015 as well, with Arab rioters pelting an Israeli car with rocks, injuring the driver. (Arutz-7)

UN, US, MORE WORRIED ABOUT JERUSALEM POLICE THAN N. KOREA MISSILE: As Pyongyang prepares to launch a ballistic missile, the world's 'policemen' are focused on Jerusalem police's behavior. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern Tuesday, 15 September, 2015 about the latest escalation at the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem – but had nothing to say about North Korea's latest illegal nuclear advancement. Ban mentioned in passing "a stone throwing incident at the beginning of the week which resulted in the death of an Israeli man in East Jerusalem." He did not mention, even in passing, that stones are generally thrown at Israelis by Palestinian Arabs with the purpose of murdering them, nor that the incident happened in a modern Israeli neighborhood populated by tens of thousands of Jews. The United States, too, took an "objective" approach to the anti-Jewish violence that took place in Jerusalem over the two -day holiday. State Department spokesman John Kirby said "we want all sides to refrain from violence and return to peaceful conditions." (INN)

INCITEMENT THE CAUSE OF ROCK-THROWING TERRORISTS: The rising tide of clashes at the Temple Mount and increased incidents of rock throwing in Jerusalem's eastern neighborhoods are no coincidence. The leading cause is the growing incitement on social networks to "defend" the Al-Aqsa mosque. The incitement is also spread by imams, like the notorious Sheikh Raed Salah. The murder of Alexander Levlovitz on Rosh Hashanah makes it very clear that stones and firebombs are deadly weapons. Most rock-throwers are between the ages of 10-20. The 14-year-olds and above have the strength to take a rock or heavy boulder, sometimes a block of concrete, and slam it into the windshield of a Jewish-driven car that passes by. (Ynet News)

ANGRY GAZANS SAY 'ISRAEL BETTER THAN HAMAS': Prolonged disputes between Hamas, the ruling Gaza Strip terrorist organization, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) have left Gazans without electricity for eight-hour stretches and Gazans say that they prefer Israel over their Hamas rulers as the crisis continues. "The Israelis are better," Ibrahim, one Gazan, told media sources, Wednesday, 16 September, 2015. "All talk on the street is about the electricity. All the public talks about is how hard it is in Gaza." This week, amid an unprecedented heat wave in the region, protests turned into violent clashes between Gazans and the Hamas police force over the issue. Hamas threatened further violence against violators of public order and many residents are afraid to express their anger. "They have no mercy," Ibrahim said. "Whoever opens his mouth will be sent to jail for a year or two." "I live in Rafah," another Gazan said to the outlet. "We have electricity for four hours, then 20 hours without electricity. Living in a tent is better than living here." Gaza's main power plant has been out of order since July, 2015 when Hamas accused the PA of raising tax levies beyond the point at which the plant was maintainable. Hamas pays the PA for fuel imported to Gaza, but is short of cash and had been unable to cover the additional costs in tax. Relations between Islamist Hamas and

the PA, which is dominated by bitter rivals Fatah, are at rock-bottom despite an April 2014 agreement that installed a "unity government" and was meant to centralize administration of the two. (Arutz-7)

HAMAS LEADERS REFUSE DEAL WITH ISRAEL FOR MORE ELECTRICITY: The people of Gaza should know that they are sitting in the dark because the leaders of Hamas refused a deal to provide them with more electricity in exchange for releasing two Israeli civilians: Abera Mengisto and the unnamed Bedouin, and the two bodies of IDF soldiers Hadar Goldin and Oran Shaul. This is not the only offer they have turned down. The leaders of Hamas don't give a **** about the people of Gaza - and I say that with a lot of knowledge to back it. The writer, founder of IPCRI - Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information, was involved in efforts leading to the release of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. (Facebook)

REPRESENTATIVE PATRICK MEEHAN (R-PA.) BROUGHT ATTENTION TO THE VICTIMS OF IRANIAN TERROR ON THURSDAY in an article intended to raise awareness about the benefits Iran will receive from the nuclear deal reached in July, while the victims of its global terror campaign still await financial justice. Rep. Meehan explained that hundreds of Americans have been killed at the hands of Iran and that “[t]o date, American courts have awarded some \$43.5 billion in damages to Iran’s victims and their families, all of which has gone unpaid.” Rep. Meehan introduced legislation last week, The Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, designed to prevent the president from waiving or lifting sanctions as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action until Iran pays restitution to the victims. As part of the final deal, the P5+1 global powers will grant Iran relief from sanctions put in place over its nuclear program, and Iran is expected to receive tens of billions of dollars. Meehan argues that part of the relief will go to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) – the group inside of Iran directly responsible for the exporting of terrorism. The IRGC has “funded some of the world’s most violent Islamic terrorist groups and has left in its wake decades of bombings, hijackings, murders and kidnappings.”

The Wall Street Journal reported in June that “the State Department said Iran’s support for terrorism was ‘undiminished’ in 2014, and the U.S. remains very concerned about the activities of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards and its proxies in the Middle East.” The State Department also determined that Iran’s support for Syria will continue unabated because “Iran views Syria as a crucial causeway in its weapons supply route to Hezbollah, its primary beneficiary, and as a key pillar in its 'resistance' front.” In light of the Iran deal, Hezbollah anticipates receiving even more funding from Iran. Matthew Levitt, a terror finance expert formerly at the Treasury Department, told Congress on Thursday, “A newly enriched Hezbollah would be more aggressive at home and abroad.”

AN IRANIAN AIRLINE IS STILL OPERATING IN EUROPE, WHICH IT USES AS A BASE TO PROVIDE ARMS, FIGHTERS, AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

TO THE SYRIAN REGIME DESPITE AMERICAN SANCTIONS AGAINST IT.

Benjamin Weinthal and Emanuele Ottolenghi, fellows at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, reported Tuesday in Politico that Mahan Air continues to expand its European connections in the wake of the nuclear deal. Even after the nuclear deal in Vienna lifted restrictions on the sale of passenger aircraft in Iran, Mahan Air remains sanctioned under U.S. law. Mahan Air is expanding its European destinations regardless, a sure sign that U.S. sanctions against it will be ignored. Europe should closely monitor Mahan aircraft landing at its airports, as there is no indication that the airline has changed its harmful practices. Mahan Air has habitually used the same planes to transport passengers to and from Europe, to ferry weapons and military personnel around the region, and to carry nuclear and ballistic missile technology to the Islamic Republic. Its commercial planes are accessories to the Syrian regime's war crimes, and help Hezbollah fight alongside Syria's army while expanding its 100,000-strong rocket and missile arsenal for war against Israel. These arms shipments are a blatant violation of the arms embargo imposed by UN Security Council Resolution 1747, expanded by UN Security Council Resolution 1929 and retained under the nuclear deal for another five years. They also violate the spirit, if not the letter, of Europe's ban on arms exports to Syria.

The UN embargo prohibits Iranian airlines from transporting arms as cargo. The airlines thus falsify flight manifests, lying about the nature of their cargo, and concealing flight records to Syria, all in contravention of international aviation standards. Expecting Iranian and Syrian civil aviation authorities to enforce such standards is absurd. It is up to European authorities to ensure compliance with international standards by ramping up inspections of Iranian aircraft and barring planes and airlines from European airspace that are found to be in violation. Weinthal and Ottolenghi tracked Mahan flights from Iran to Syria several times in recent months. These planes sometimes subsequently traveled to Europe. As recently as May, the United States Treasury Department blacklisted Mahan's newly acquired aircraft, noting that "Mahan Air works with the IRGC-QF [Iran's external paramilitary force] to ferry operatives, weapons, and funds in support of the Assad regime on its flights to Syria, and also provides transportation services to Lebanese Hezbollah, which has been separately designated as a terrorist group." Despite the blacklisting, Mahan reportedly acquired new airplanes anyway. It was later reported that the United States had been informed of Iran's effort to acquire the planes but did nothing to stop it. (TheTower.org)

"I'M A MAN ON A MISSION," SAYS SETH SIEGEL, AUTHOR OF THE NEWLY RELEASED LET THERE BE WATER: ISRAEL'S SOLUTION FOR A WATER-STARVED WORLD (THOMAS DUNNE BOOKS/ST. MARTIN'S PRESS). "My goal is to raise consciousness about the danger of not having a plan to address the coming water crisis. Hundreds of millions of people could find themselves without adequate water in just a few years, and this is not as high a priority as it should be." The New York columnist, entrepreneur, branding guru and Broadway producer was surprised to discover the best working model of a water master plan in Israel. Despite its

desert terrain, rapid population growth and meager rainfall, Israel currently boasts a water surplus. It shares water with Jordan and the Palestinian-administered territories in the West Bank and Gaza. It exports water technologies worth \$2.2 billion and growing. Among Israel's groundbreaking products and policies are drip irrigation and "fertigation," dual-flush toilets, seawater desalination, advanced wastewater treatment and reuse, free-market pricing of water, drought-resistant seeds, cutting-edge metering and leak-detection systems, conservation education and precision agriculture. According to his book, more than 150 countries already have welcomed assistance from the Israeli government, private or nonprofit sectors to address their water problems. Israel provides training in water management and irrigation to its Palestinian and Jordanian neighbors and to more than 100 developing countries, 29 of them in Africa. "Israel has gotten savvy about water use on just about every level, and it's a remarkable story," Siegel tells ISRAEL21c. "I had an ongoing feeling of excitement about telling an unknown story and being inspired at the same time. It was a reaffirmation of why Israel is special." (via Israel21c)

RUSSIA SHIPPING TANKS INTO SYRIA, IN 'FIRST CLEAR SIGN OF OFFENSIVE WEAPONS': Russia's military build-up in Syria has grown to include the shipment of a half-dozen highly sophisticated battle tanks - and more troops - a defense official told reporters, in what the source called the "first clear sign of offensive weapons arriving in Syria." The Pentagon has now tracked a total of 15 Russian Antonov-124 Condor flights into Syria, reflecting a steady stream of military cargo into Syria. According to the latest intelligence, this also includes the arrival of two more Russian cargo ships, containing the tanks. Up to this point, the official said, the Russian cargo and weapons that have been delivered to Syria could be viewed as defensive in nature. The arrival of tanks cannot be viewed this way.

The official said that Russian offensive operations could launch from Bassel Al-Assad International Airport "very soon." The massive Condor flights carrying all kinds of supplies now arrive twice a day through Iran and Iraq into Bassel Al-Assad International Airport outside the port city of Latakia. The cargo is for Russian soldiers, not Syrian government forces, but is seen as a build-up to aid Bashar Assad's embattled regime. The defense official, briefed on the latest satellite photos of the Syrian coastline, said: "This is the largest deployment of Russian forces outside the former Soviet Union since the collapse of the USSR." (Fox)

NETANYAHU TO TELL PUTIN IN RUSSIA: MILITARY AID TO SYRIA THREATENS ISRAEL: PM Netanyahu will travel to Moscow next week to discuss with Russian President Vladimir Putin the deployment of Russian forces in Syria, the Prime Minister's Office said on Wednesday, 16 September, 2015. "The prime minister will present the threats against Israel that arise as a result of the increased flow of advanced weapons into the Syrian arena and the trickle of deadly weapons to Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations," the PMO said. Russia declined earlier this week to

comment on claims by USA officials that it has positioned at least seven tanks at a Syrian airfield at the center of a military buildup. The Russian T-90 tanks were observed at the airfield near Latakia, a stronghold of Syrian President Bashar Assad. The two USA officials said Russia had also positioned artillery, which appeared to be arrayed defensively to protect Russian personnel stationed there. The officials said that Russian movement on the ground suggests Moscow wants to create a forward air operating base at an airfield south of Latakia that has been at the center of a recent Russian military buildup in Syria. (Ha'aretz)

ICELAND'S CAPITAL ADOPTS MOTION TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI GOODS:

The city council of Iceland's capital, Reykjavik, has adopted a motion to boycott Israeli-made goods. Reykjavik City Council voted in favor of the motion, put by Björk Vilhelmsdóttir, councilwoman for the Social Democratic Alliance, on Tuesday, 15 September, 2015. The boycott will be in place "as long as the occupation of Palestinian territories continues," the motion said. Not everyone is in favor, however. Eisner Gautur Steingrímsson, a lawyer, said it goes against Iceland's constitution. "This is as illegal as refusing to do business with red haired people and it makes no difference whether they justify their decision with references to some alleged actions by the Israelis," he told a local news site. Israel's Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Emanuel Nachson said in response that, "A volcano of hate is currently exploding in Reykjavik's city council building. There is no reason or justification for this move, besides hate itself, which is being heard in the form of calls for a boycott against the Jewish state. We hope that someone in Iceland will wake up and stop this blindness and one sidedness which is aimed against the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel." (Ha'aretz)

JEWISH NEW YEAR STATISTICS: HOW MANY WERE BORN IN ISRAEL:

As a new Jewish Year began this week, the Population and Immigration Authority summarized the outgoing one. According to the data, 161,081 were born in Israel 5755, and 40,636 passed away. The number of Israelis who married this past year is 58,512, and the number of new immigrants is 28,645. Among those born in the past year, the most common first names for boys in the Jewish sector are Ori, Eitan, Ariel, Noam, David and Yoseph. Among the Jewish girls, the most common names are Tamar, Noa, Talia, Shira, Yael and Avigayil. (Israel National News)

LUNAR ECLIPSE, BLOOD MOON: Dear friends, for those of you who will be visiting, or who live in Israel, please note the schedule for the Lunar Eclipse as it is recorded to be: Sept. 28 Schedule (early morning hours): Begins 3:11 AM, Maximum at 5:47 AM, and Ends at 8:22 AM. The time it will begin to show and remain red-colored will be 5-6:30 AM. The total time will be 5 hours and 11 minutes. We include the following link for updates and further information: <http://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/in/israel/jerusalem>

FRESH CLASHES AT TEMPLE MOUNT AFTER DAY OF VIOLENCE: Muslims and Israeli police clashed at Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on the Temple Mount for a second straight day on Monday, 14 September, 2015. Two people – a policeman and a young Jewish man — were hurt and nine people were arrested. "As the police entered the compound masked youths fled inside the mosque and threw stones at the force," a police statement said. Masked Palestinians also attacked police with metal bars before fleeing into the mosque. Police said they entered the hilltop compound to ensure that Muslim youths massing there did not harass Jews or tourists during the morning visiting hours. The site is sacred to both Jews and Muslims. Security forces the previous day found pipe bombs on the Temple Mount, in an operation carried out hours before Jews prepared to celebrate the new year. The Shin Bet security service alerted police to the cache, apparently an effort by Palestinians to stock up on bombs, flares and rocks ahead of an organized riot. Police said Monday that three protesters were arrested and visits went ahead as planned to the site. Clashes between security forces and Palestinians at the Temple Mount continued for the third consecutive day on Tuesday, 15 September the second day of Rosh Hashanah. (Times of Israel)

ISRAELI INJURED IN STONE THROWING ATTACK DIES: Alexander Levlovitz, who was gravely injured after unknown assailants attacked his car with stones in the southern Jerusalem neighborhood of Arnona, succumbed to his injuries overnight, Sunday, 13 September, 2015. The 50-year-old man suffered a heart attack as a result of the assault, causing him to swerve into a pole and off the road. Two additional passengers were lightly injured after the vehicle swerved off the road. The three individuals were returning from a family dinner celebrating the Jewish New Year which began earlier that evening. Border Police forces carried out three arrests following the murder before dawn Wednesday 16 September, 2015 at the Tzur Baher neighborhood in southeastern Jerusalem. The arrests were carried out as residents gathered in rage to demand an end to Arab terror attacks. (i24)

PRIME MINISTER: COUNTER TERROR STEPS TO BE INCREASED: PM Netanyahu held an emergency security meeting at his office in Jerusalem on Tuesday night, 15 September, 2015 after the wave of terror attacks in Jerusalem over the Rosh Hashanah holiday, which included massive riots on the Temple Mount as well as lethal rock attack. "We will fight through all means necessary against rock throwers, firebomb and pipe bomb throwers, and those who shoot fireworks to harm citizens and police officers," said Netanyahu. "On the eve of the holiday it was again proven that rock throwing can kill," he added. "These activities will meet a very strong response of punishment and prevention. We will lead a systematic change and set a new standard of deterrence and prevention." In the meeting, it was decided to raise the harshness of counter-terror steps in a few fields, including the possible changing of orders to open fire giving security personnel a freer hand to take action against terrorists. Likewise it was decided to set a minimum penalty for crimes such as rock throwing, and to impose high fines on minors conducting the attacks and their parents. (Arutz-7)

TOP IRANIAN SPACE SCIENTIST AMONG THOSE KILLED IN MECCA CRANE COLLAPSE: Top Iranian space scientist and university professor Ahmad Hatami was killed in the crane collapse in Mecca's Grand Mosque on Friday, 11 September, 2015, which destroyed the lives of 107. Doctor Hatami was a renowned member of the Iran Space Research Center. Hedayatollah Mir-Moradzehi, a member of the Iranian parliament who is Sunni, said that following the deadly crane accident, Saudi Arabia should no longer be in charge of the Haj ceremony at the Muslim holy site. "This incident is the result of the Saudi regime's carelessness and they should have increased the safety factor for the construction projects around Kaaba," Mir-Moradzehi told the Iranian Fars news agency. He added that if Islamic countries within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) take the responsibility of handling the Haj ceremony, much greater safety will be yielded. (J. Post)

SAUDI ARABIA HAS 100,000 AIR CONDITIONED TENTS THAT CAN HOUSE 3 MILLION PEOPLE SITTING EMPTY - YET HAS TAKEN ZERO REFUGEES: While European countries are being lectured about their failure to take in enough refugees, Saudi Arabia – which has taken in precisely zero migrants – has 100,000 air conditioned tents that can house over 3 million people sitting empty. The sprawling network of high quality tents are located in the city of Mina, spreading across a 20 square km valley, and are only used for 5 days of the year by Hajj pilgrims. For the rest of the year, Mina remains deserted. The tents, which measure 8 meters by 8 meters, were permanently constructed by the Saudi government and are fire proof. They are divided into camps which include kitchen and bathroom facilities. The tents could provide shelter for almost all of the 4 million Syrian refugees that have been displaced by the country's civil war, which was partly exacerbated by Saudi Arabia's role in funding and arming jihadist groups. However, wealthy Gulf Arab nations like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and others have taken in precisely zero Syrian refugees.

While it refuses to take in refugees, Saudi Arabia has offered to build 200 mosques for the 500,000 migrants a year expected to pour into Germany. Saudis argue that the tents in Mina are needed to host the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, but given that the Arabic concept of Ummah is supposed to offer protection to all Muslims under one brotherhood, surely an alternative location could be found so that Mina can be repurposed to house desperate families fleeing war and ISIS persecution? While Europe is being burdened by potentially millions of people who don't share the same culture or religion as the host population, Gulf Arab states refuse to pull their weight. The thousands of empty tents serve as a physical representation of the hypocrisy shared by wealthy Gulf Arab states when it comes to helping with the crisis. (Prison Planet)

BRITISH JEWS JOLTED BY ELECTION OF TERRORIST SYMPATHIZER, ISRAEL CRITIC: Last weekend's election of far-Left candidate Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the British Labor Party has U.K. Jews worried about the repercussions for their

community and their country's relationship with Israel. It is not merely Corbyn's sympathy for "father of communism" Karl Marx that has put a majority of the country's estimated 290,000 Jews on edge. According to a Jewish Chronicle poll conducted during the election campaign, more than 80 percent of Jews said they were concerned about Corbyn's anti-Israel positions and affiliations with anti-Semites. With ties to Holocaust deniers and terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah – whom he referred to as "friends" – Corbyn has been alienating and angering the Jewish establishment, which has traditionally voted Labor. A recent interview with Iran's Press TV, during which Corbyn called the assassination of Osama bin Laden a "tragedy," only served to strengthen this ill-ease. (Algemeiner)

RUSSIA IS ACTIVELY INCREASING ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN SYRIA IN SUPPORT OF THE BASHAR AL-ASSAD REGIME AMID REPORTS OF A SECOND TRIP BY IRGC GENERAL QASSEM SULEIMANI TO MOSCOW. CAPTAIN JEFF DAVIS, a Pentagon spokesman, was quoted as saying, "We have seen movement of people and things that would suggest the air base south of Latakia [a city on the Mediterranean coast] could be used as a forward air operating base." The New York Times reported that the Russian military has delivered six T-90 tanks, 15 howitzers, 35 armored personnel carriers, 200 marines, and prefabricated housing for up to 1,500 people, with more to come. Russian President Vladimir Putin stated, "We provide and will continue to provide military assistance [to the Assad regime]. We call on other countries to join with us." Captain Davis said, "We welcome Russia participating in the global anti-ISIL efforts, but to do that via the Assad regime is unhelpful and potentially destabilizing." Reports have also surfaced indicating that Russian personnel and equipment arrived in Hama, Syria's fourth-largest city, from Latakia on Monday.

Stephen J. Blank, an expert on the Russian military, told the Times, "This is the most important Russian power projection in the region in decades." Writing in Haaretz, journalist Anshel Pfeffer described the division in labor among pro-Assad forces in Syria: Russians are securing the Mediterranean coast, Hezbollah the Beirut-Damascus highway and Syria-Lebanon border, and Iran is focused on protecting Damascus. Amos Harel, Haaretz's military and defense analyst, emphasized that increased cooperation between Russia and Iran, as indicated by Suleimani's reported visits to Moscow, will have the effect of giving Assad a better chance to survive. The Russian presence, Harel wrote, will force Israel to reconsider its regional strategy as it could constrain Israeli efforts to prevent the transfer of more advanced weapons systems from Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. The Lebanese newspaper As-Safir reported on Tuesday that Suleimani, a U.S.-designated terrorist, had visited Moscow to discuss strategy in Syria. Last month, Western intelligence sources said that Suleimani had visited Russia to meet with President Putin and the Russian Defense Minister. This was in violation of a travel ban on Suleimani as well as UN Security Council resolutions that prevent him from leaving Iranian soil.

A PROMINENT IRANIAN DISSIDENT HAS EXPOSED THE EXTENSIVE COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL IRANIAN AMERICAN COUNCIL (NIAC) AND A NUMBER OF KEY FIGURES IN THE IRANIAN REGIME, including current President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. Writing in the Daily Beast under the pseudonym “Alex Shirazi,” the dissident – who concealed his identity out of fear of reprisals against his family in Iran – chronicled NIAC’s evolution within the broader ambitions of the Namazis, a little-known but influential Iranian family that first rose to prominence under the Shah and returned to Iranian public life following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Under the 1989-97 Presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani, who combined doctrinal orthodoxy with an eye for a smart deal, the Namazis were again in their element.

Continued American sanctions against Iran blunted the Namazis goal of bringing international business back to Iran, though the family profited from its association with Rafsanjani and his relatives. Not much changed during an ensuing decade that was dominated by the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who accelerated Iran’s uranium enrichment activities at the same time that Iranian forces were supporting Shi’a militias against U.S. troops in Iraq.

During this time, Bijan Khajepour developed a relationship with Hassan Rouhani, a former nuclear negotiator for the regime with slowly growing political influence – Rouhani’s 2013 election was a major boost for the Namazi family. Meanwhile, Bijan’s relative Siamak Namazi had already teamed up with Trita Parsi, a Swedish-Iranian academic and political activist who presently heads NIAC. Urging political dialogue and educational exchanges between the U.S. and Iran, Namazi and Parsi’s efforts culminated in the creation of NIAC in 2001. At the same time that Parsi was at NIAC’s helm, writes Shirazi, he continued to work as a paid consultant for the Namazis’ company. Shirazi also quotes Carl Gershman, the president of the Congressionally-financed National Endowment for Democracy, as regretting a decision to fund NIAC and its Iranian partner Hamyaran, a regime-sanctioned NGO, to the tune of \$200,000 between 2002 and 2006.

During the Obama Administration’s second term, NIAC has nonetheless emerged as a notable influence on Iran policy, with Parsi openly touting his connections to the regime’s foreign minister, Javad Zarif. Despite these connections to senior figures within a regime whose slogan is “Death to America,” NIAC officials like its Research Director Reza Marashi have taunted Jewish opponents of the Iran nuclear deal with the smear of dual loyalty. After Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) came out against the deal, Marashi accused him of putting “Israel’s interests before America’s interests.” NIAC’s targeting of its critics has also landed the lobby group in legal hot water. In March this year, NIAC was fined \$200,000 by a judge who found that “in the process of suing blogger Hassan Diaoleslam, a critic of the group, [NIAC] had “flouted multiple court orders.” (via TheTower.org)

WHEELCHAIR-BOUND US ARMY VETERANS WILL BE AMONG THE FIRST USERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ACROBAT WHEEL CREATED BY

ISRAELI COMPANY SOFTWHEEL TO INCREASE THEIR MOBILITY SIGNIFICANTLY. As described in ISRAEL21c's previous coverage, SoftWheel literally reinvented the wheel by incorporating a patented selective suspension mechanism that kicks in when impacted above a certain threshold. Riders can go over a rocky or uneven terrain, get down a curb or down stairs, while the shock is absorbed by the wheel rather than by the chair or the user's body. SoftWheel CEO Daniel Barel tells ISRAEL21c that the company is "very veteran-oriented in Israel and abroad," and therefore contacted the US Veterans Administration (VA) to initiate a working relationship. Human Engineering Research Laboratories, run by the VA and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, has tested and approved the Acrobat wheel. "We are in advanced talks with the VA now; these things take time. Meanwhile, there are some private funds in the United States that support veterans," says Barel. "If someone was turned down by the VA, they can get equipment through these organizations. "A few months ago, we contacted the Independence Fund, a \$15 million fund that buys medical equipment for veterans. They were very excited to provide vets with the SoftWheel Acrobat until the VA partners with us officially." (via Israel21c)

ROSH HASHANAH 2015: Rosh Hashanah - the Jewish New Year also known as the Feast of Trumpets begins in the evening of Sunday, 13 September and ends the evening of Tuesday, 15 September. The first of the Biblical autumn festivals, Rosh Hashanah celebrates the birth of the world and humanity. Symbolic foods such as apples and honey are central to the holiday, symbolizing the sweetness, health, success and good deeds which we hope the coming year will bring. In the midst of the troubled Middle East, we will pause in Israel to thank G-d for His sovereign goodness to us throughout the exiting year. May His blessing be showered upon all of you who love Israel. A sweet and a good year from your friends at Vision for Israel.

'THE SENATE BLINKED WHEN CONFRONTED BY EVIL': Senator Tom Cotton (R-AK) issued a strong statement on Thursday, 10 September, 2015 after Senate Democrats blocked a Republican bill of disapproval to the Iran nuclear deal, sparing President Barack Obama from having to use his presidential veto to ram the deal through. "Political fealty to President Obama's hoped-for legacy in foreign affairs means this dangerous deal will likely move forward, despite the overwhelming and bipartisan opposition to it in Congress and the clear will of the American people," warned Cotton. "Obstruction on the part of a minority of legislators is not the foundation on which lasting, consequential arms control agreements are built. A majority of Americans oppose the Iran deal because it compromises the safety and security of not only the United States, but also of the rest of the world." Cotton took a long perspective in noting that "history will remember this stunning display of partisan loyalty and willful blindness. And it will remember this Senate as the one that - when given the chance to stop the world's worst sponsor of terrorism from obtaining the world's worst weapons - blinked when confronted with that evil." On the Senate floor, Cotton made an impassioned plea to

support the bill against the deal, warning of the consequences of the controversial agreement. (INN)

HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTION TO RESTART IRAN DEAL REVIEW: Democrats in the Senate on Thursday, 10 September, 2015 foiled a Republican bill of disapproval to the Iran nuclear deal sparing President Obama from needing to use his veto. However, the same day a resolution calling to restart the 60-day Congressional review period of the deal passed in the House. House Resolution 411, presented by Congressmen Mike Pompeo (R-KS) and Lee Zeldin (R-NY), states that Obama has not complied with the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 given that the classified side deals between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency were never submitted for Congressional review. The resolution passed on Thursday in the House by 245-186, with a clean divide between Republican support and Democrat opposition. The resolution notes there are two secret side deals between the IAEA and Iran, one on "Possible Military Dimensions" of Iran's nuclear program, and another on the covert Parchin military base where Iran has reportedly conducted nuclear detonator testing. Given that the deals were not disclosed to Congress for review, the resolution calls to find Obama non-compliant with the nuclear deal review act, and significantly states that the period of Congressional review of the deal "has not commenced because the agreement has not yet been transmitted to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership." (INN)

PROSOR: INSTEAD OF FLYING PALESTINIAN FLAG, UN CAN WAVE WHITE FLAG IN SURRENDER OF PRINCIPLES: The UN General Assembly voted 119-8 on Thursday, 10 September, 2015 to fly the flag of non-member observer state, Palestine, at UN Headquarters in New York. The USA, Canada and Israel voted against the Palestinian-drafted resolution. After the UN approved the Palestinian request to fly its flag, Israel's UN ambassador Ron Prozor said that rather than flying the Palestinian flag, the UN might as well wave a "white flag" and surrender its principles. "In my four years, I have seen hypocrisy, I have seen duplicity, and I have seen a triple standard - one for democracies, one for dictatorships, and a special standard designed only for Israel. I thought I had seen everything," he continued. "But I have to admit, this time, the Palestinians managed to take cynicism to a whole new level. The UN – with some EU countries in tow – would pass a resolution stating that the world is flat were such a resolution brought by the Palestinians" Prozor said "The goal of this resolution is a photo op. You must tell the Palestinians: 'Enough with empty symbols, enough with political showmanship, enough with hijacking the UN agenda. Stop stalling, and start negotiating.' The international community must make it clear to the Palestinians that the only way to achieve statehood is through direct negotiations," said Prozor. (Arutz-7/J.Post)

SYRIAN CONFLICT WORSENS AS OUTSIDE STATES RAISE INVOLVEMENT: Russia and Iran are increasing their support for Bashar Assad's

regime, just as Western countries contemplate increasing their involvement in the war-torn country. The fact that Iran, plus the Lebanon-based terrorist group, Hezbollah, and Russia are willing to escalate the conflict by placing forces on the ground and increasing arms shipments means that Assad's position in power is assured for the near future. This is likely to remain the case so long as the West does not make any concrete effort to tip the scales in the other direction. Russia and Iran assume that increasing their military support will not only strengthen the regime's position during negotiations over any political settlement, but will also work to solidify Assad's Alawite coastal enclave in the absence of one. (Jerusalem Post)

UNICEF SAYS MILLIONS MORE SYRIANS COULD HEAD TO EUROPE: Millions of people in Syria could become refugees and head to Europe if there is no end to the war, Peter Salama, UNICEF's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, said on Friday 11 September, 2015. "There could be millions and millions more refugees leaving Syria and ultimately going to the European Union and beyond," he said, adding that almost 8 million people were displaced within Syria. (J. Post)

SAND STORM STILL SUFFOCATING UNTIL ROSH HASHANAH: The severe dust storm that struck Israel on Tuesday, 8 September, 2015 showed no signs of disappearing on Friday, with the dense clouds of particulates and sand that are enveloping the Jewish state set to remain through the weekend. While the high temperatures, dust and haze are to remain through Shabbat, they are predicted to largely dissipate by the Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashanah, which starts Sunday night 13 September, 2015. The dust and sand in the air has been accompanied by a suffocating heat that had yet to relent on Friday. Ushering in Rosh Hashanah on Sunday evening the temperatures are expected to fall, and on Monday during the first day of the holiday they are to drop even further and return to near normal degrees for the season. Local rain in the eastern part of Israel is anticipated on Monday afternoon, 14 September, possibly cleaning the dusty air. (INN)



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