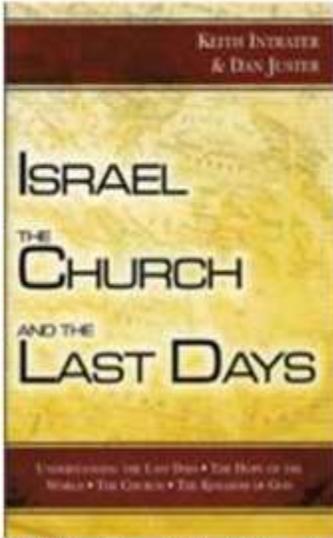


Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 1, 2017 (10th of Elul, 5778)

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PETITION ASKING WHITE HOUSE TO DECLARE GEORGE SOROS A TERRORIST GARNERS ENOUGH SIGNATURES FOR REPLY: A petition asking the White House to declare liberal mega-donor George Soros a domestic terrorist has garnered over 100,000 signatures, or more than enough to necessitate a response from the Trump administration. The petition was posted on the “We the People” section of the White House website 20 Aug. 2017, and needed to crack the 100,000-signature threshold within 30 days to trigger an official response. As of early Saturday afternoon 2 Sep. 2017, it’s been digitally signed over 110,000 times. “George Soros has willfully and on an ongoing basis attempted to destabilize and otherwise commit acts of sedition against the United States and its citizens,” the petition states. “Through creating and funding organizations exclusively devoted to facilitating “the collapse of the systems and Constitutional government of the United States” Mr. Soros “has developed unhealthy and undue influence over the entire Democrat Party and a large portion of the USA Federal government,” according to the petitioners, and “the DOJ should immediately declare George Soros and all of his organizations and staff members to be domestic terrorists.” Mr. Soros, 87, is a Hungarian-born billionaire and businessman who widely known for funding liberal advocacy groups and organizations, both domestic endeavors as well as initiatives abroad. He supported Mr. Trump’s rival during the 2016 race, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. (Washington Times)

USA THREATENS TO LEAVE UN COUNCIL OVER ANTI-ISRAEL BLACKLIST: The Trump Administration is increasing pressure on the United Nations to prevent its publishing a blacklist of companies that do business in Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, and eastern Jerusalem. USA Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley conveyed messages through diplomatic channels to senior UN officials to the effect that the USA

will cut all funding to the UN Human Rights Council if the blacklist the UNHRC drafted is published. Ambassador Hailey also threatened that the USA would leave the council altogether if the blacklist was published. Israel's ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, blasted the blacklist as "an expression of modern anti-Semitism that reminds us of dark periods in history. Instead of focusing on the terrible humanitarian problems plaguing the globe, the Human Rights Commissioner is seeking to harm Israel, and in doing so has become the world's most senior BDS activist. I call on the UN, and the international community as a whole, to halt this dangerous policy and put an end to this anti-Israel initiative," Danon said. (INN)

TRUMP PEACE ENVOY CALLS FOR THE PA TO RE-TAKE CONTROL OF GAZA: Hamas has failed as governors of the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority should take over according to President Donald Trump's foreign negotiations chief. Jason Greenblatt, one of the trio of Israeli-Palestinian negotiators headed by Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, remained in Israel after the official visit by the team last week. On 30 Aug. 2017, Greenblatt toured the Israeli side of the Gaza border and concluded that "the Palestinian Authority needs to resume its role in the administration of Gaza, as Hamas has substantially harmed the people of Gaza and has failed to meet their most basic needs." The PA did control Gaza until Hamas violently took control away from the PA and Fatah in 2007. Greenblatt's comment was the first by a senior USA official affirmatively calling for the PA to take control. Visiting UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also viewed the Israeli side of the border but via helicopter. During the helicopter trip from Jerusalem to Gaza, Guterres received a special briefing on security issues in southern Israel. He then visited a Hamas terror tunnel and met with residents of the border communities. "Hamas continues to arm itself in order to harm Israel as it exploits the generous humanitarian aid provided by the international community," Ambassador Danon told the Secretary General. "Hamas has turned the residents of Gaza into hostages and is investing its resources into digging murderous terror tunnels. At the same time, the Israeli residents of the border communities have stood strong in the face of terror threats, as they build prosperous communities and help further develop the region for the betterment of the next generation." (Medialine/INN)

IRAN: OUR MILITARY SITES ARE OFF LIMITS: Iran on Tues. 29 August 2017, dismissed a USA demand for United Nations nuclear inspectors to visit its military bases as "merely a dream." The USA ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, recently asked the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to seek access to Iranian military bases to ensure that they were not concealing activities banned by the 2015 nuclear deal reached between Iran and six major powers. Iranian government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht rejected the demand on state television last week. "Iran's military sites are off limits. All information about these sites is classified. Iran will never allow such visits. Don't pay attention to such remarks that are only a dream." USA President Trump has been a vocal critic of the Iran nuclear deal, which was signed during the term of the Obama administration, describing it as "the worst deal I've ever seen negotiated". The USA continues to maintain sanctions on Iran that are related to its ballistic missile tests. Rouhani recently threatened that Iran would walk out on the nuclear deal if the United States continued to apply fresh sanctions. (Reuters)

ISRAEL TO ADVANCE PLANS FOR 3,000 SETTLEMENT HOMES: The Defense Ministry body responsible for authorizing construction of Israeli settlements in Judea & Samaria will be advancing plans for some 3,000 new housing units in September 2017. Included in the plans set to be advanced by the Civil Administration are 700 housing units in Ariel, 260 and 97 units in the northern Judea & Samaria settlements of Tzofim and Rechalim, respectively, 86 units in the Binyamin region's Migron, and 192 in the South Hebron Hills' Negohot, the report said. The Defense Ministry body, which has already approved 3,400 housing units this year, will reportedly also work to shorten the planning process for the settlements. Much of the international community views settlements as illegal and an obstacle to peace with the Palestinians. (Times of Israel)

ISRAEL LAUNCHING \$20 MILLION PROGRAM TO TEACH SCHOOLKIDS BETTER ENGLISH: Israel will spend nearly \$20 million on a new program to improve the English skills of its schoolchildren. At a

news conference on 30 August 2017, Education Minister Naftali Bennett said that not knowing how to speak English well is hurting Israelis in business and in life. The plan will enable the hiring of 1,000 teachers who are fluent in English. Israeli students start learning English in the third grade. The focus will be on speaking the language. More classes will be dedicated to verbal skills, and matriculation exams will include more verbal testing. "We want to see children who are able to engage in an intelligent conversation anywhere in the world, who are able to correspond via email at a high standard, who can consume literature at the highest level," Bennett said at the news conference. (JTA)

FOLLOWING MODI'S VISIT, ISRAEL HOPES TO WELCOME 100,000 INDIAN TOURISTS IN 2018: The number of Indian tourists visiting Israel is said to be surging following PM Narendra Modi's visit to the Jewish state earlier this summer. An Israeli tourism official, during a recent visit to the subcontinent stated his country was hoping to welcome 100,000 tourists from India next year. Modi's July trip to Israel, Hassan Madah - the director of the Israeli Tourism Ministry's India section - noted, delivered a "positive message." According to Madah, 44,672 Indians traveled to Israel in 2016 and the number for 2017 is expected to rise to around 55,000. Ties between the two countries have flourished in recent years and Modi's tour of Israel was the first ever by a sitting Indian prime minister. (Algemeiner)

ISRAELI DOCTORS SUCCESSFULLY OPERATE ON GAZA 'TREE MAN': Doctors at Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center successfully operated on a Palestinian man from the Gaza Strip suffering from a rare disease known as "tree man syndrome." Mohammed Taluli, 42, arrived at the hospital with large, bark-like growths on his hand, caused by complications from human papillomavirus infection, which can be cancerous. Dr. Michael Chernofsky, an orthopedist and hand specialist operated on Taluli. Chernofsky said the surgery was successful and that Taluli is now receiving medications and vaccines to complete the treatment. Taluli said he sought treatment for his rare condition at hospitals in both Egypt and Judea & Samaria, but was unable to find a cure until the Palestinian Authority coordinated his treatment in Israel. "After years in which I sat at home embarrassed and could not work because of the limitation and feared cancer, the experts here at Hadassah were the only ones who gave me hope," Taluli said. "The treatment here is excellent and it is possible to say that everything is good today; the team here is very nice and helps a lot," he added. "I really hope that my past life is already behind me to see my family, my wife and my six kids." (Times of Israel)

VICTORY FOR ISRAEL IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL: Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, on Wed. 30 August 2017, welcomed the adoption of a new UN Security Council resolution regarding the mandate of the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). UNIFIL is now required to expand its reports to the Security Council and take deliberate action against Hezbollah's violations. UNIFIL's presence on the ground will increase significantly, and troops will be required to tour the Hezbollah-controlled areas of southern Lebanon. UNIFIL must also report all instances of Hezbollah's violations and attempts to deny access immediately. "This is a significant diplomatic achievement that could change the situation in southern Lebanon and expose the terror infrastructure that Hezbollah set up on the border with Israel," Danon said on Wednesday. "The resolution requires UNIFIL to open its eyes, and forces it to act against Hezbollah's terror buildup in the area. Until now, and especially in the last few years, UNIFIL forces have rarely patrolled the area in southern Lebanon, refrained from entering villages widely agreed to be Hezbollah terrorist strongholds, and failed to report Hezbollah's violations. As such, from now on, UN forces will be required to demonstrate a robust physical presence on the ground, to enter every village and to report, in real time, Hezbollah's violations of Security Council Resolution 1701, negotiated by then Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni to end the Second Lebanon War, and ignored by Hezbollah ever since. (Arutz-7)

ISRAEL: WE'LL BOMB ASSAD'S PALACE IF IRAN EXPANDS IN SYRIA: A senior Israeli official has issued a warning to Russia that the Israeli military will bomb Syrian President Bashar Assad's palace in Damascus if Russia allows Iran to make military advances in Syria. The official

added another caution in the Al-Hayat al-Jadida newspaper that if regional changes don't take place in the current advance by Iran, Israel will act to scuttle the Syrian ceasefire deal recently concluded by the USA and Russian governments in Kazakhstan. The warnings came during a meeting last week on the Black Sea between Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Netanyahu told Putin, "Iran is already well on its way to controlling Iraq, Yemen and to a large extent is already in practice in control of Lebanon." He said Israel will act unilaterally if need be to halt Iran's influence in Syria and added, "We cannot forget for a single minute that Iran threatens every day to annihilate Israel." (Reuters/CBN)

ISRAELI CHIEF FOR MILITARY INTELLIGENCE WARNS ABOUT IRAN: Major General Herzi Halevi, the head of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate, on 27 August 2017 met with visiting UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Halevi briefed the Secretary-General on the intelligence situation in various sectors, and explained, among other things, Iran's entrenchment in Syria and Hezbollah's power buildup in Lebanon. The head of Military Intelligence emphasized that Iran's desire to produce precision weapons for Hezbollah on Lebanese soil and in the Syrian military industry is a serious development to which Israel cannot remain indifferent. The head of Military Intelligence also noted that the Hezbollah terrorist group is tightening its grip on Lebanon and that there were serious and prolonged violations of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. The UN forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL), said Halevi, is an important part of the solution and could, by increasing pressure on Hezbollah, make its efforts to build up militarily more difficult. According to him, more can be done, and there should be action not only to preserve peace, but also to prevent the next war. "The establishment of Iran and the Shiite axis in Syria, and the strengthening of Hezbollah in Lebanon are two processes that could lead to an undesirable escalation in the north," Halevi said. Israel's UN Ambassador, Danny Danon, who was also in attendance at the meeting, said, "Iran is developing a terrorist incubator in Syria and Lebanon and is trying to ignite a fire in the entire region. The United Nations must act to uproot the roots of Iranian terrorism and UNIFIL must cleanse southern Lebanon of all of Hezbollah's terrorist activities." Danon called on the UN to take drastic measures to ensure peace and quiet along the northern border. "The State of Israel will not stand by while dangerous elements are building terrorist infrastructures in order to harm it," he stressed. Danon several months ago presented new information to the Security Council revealing that Hezbollah had established a series of outposts along the border with Israel under the guise of agricultural NGO "Green Without Borders". (Arutz-7)

HAMAS LEADER HAILS IRANIAN MILITARY SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: The Gaza head of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas said on 28 August 2017, it had increased its military capabilities thanks to newly improved relations with Iran. In a rare meeting with journalists, Yahya al-Sinwar said Iran was "the biggest supporter" of Hamas' military wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades. Hamas is "developing our military strength in order to liberate Palestine," Sinwar said in response to a media question. Hamas has run Gaza since 2007 and received Iranian financial and military support for years before it was reduced following a falling out over the Syrian civil war. Sinwar said relations with Tehran had improved in recent months, with a delegation visiting Tehran. "The Iranian military support to Hamas and al-Qassam is strategic," he added, saying the relationship had "become fantastic and returned to its former era. Every day we build missiles and continue military training," he added, saying that thousands of people are working "day and night" to prepare for the next conflict. The Islamist movement, which is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, has fought three wars with Israel since 2008, most recently in 2014. (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs)

NORTH KOREA FIRES MISSILE OVER JAPAN IN ‘UNPRECEDENTED THREAT’ North Korea has fired a missile over Japan in a move Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called an "unprecedented" threat to his country and USA President Donald Trump said was an act of "contempt". The missile, launched early on 29 August 2017, flew over Hokkaido Island before crashing into the sea. The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting later in response. North Korea has conducted a flurry of missile tests recently amid growing international unease. This is the first time it has fired a ballistic weapon over Japan. This latest launch appears to be the first of a missile powerful enough to potentially carry a nuclear warhead. Residents were told to seek shelter. (CNN)

NETANYAHU SAYS ISRAEL WON'T RETREAT ON JEWISH SETTLEMENTS: WE ARE HERE TO STAY FOREVER: Days after meeting a White House delegation to discuss restarting peace negotiations with the Palestinians, Israeli PM Netanyahu forcefully spoke out against a principal tenet of any likely agreement: the scaling back of Jewish settlements. At an event celebrating 50 years of Israeli settlements in Judea & Samaria, Netanyahu pledged this week that his government will never evacuate a single settlement. Addressing a large crowd, Netanyahu declared: "We are here to stay forever. There will be no more uprooting of settlements in the land of Israel. This is the inheritance of our ancestors. This is our land." Successive USA presidents have considered the settlements an obstacle to peace and have called for, at the least, a stop to their expansion. Although President Trump has been less critical than his predecessors, even he has said that further construction would be unhelpful. His remarks, Netanyahu underscored the risk Israel would face if it withdrew from Judea & Samaria - a central demand of the Palestinians, for whom the area represents a future independent state. "Samaria is a strategic asset for the state of Israel," the prime minister said. "It is the key to our future, because from these high hills, the heights of Mt. Hatzor, we can see the entire country, from one side to the other." (L.A.Times)

ISRAEL TESTS HIGH-SPEED TRAIN CONNECTING JERUSALEM TEL-AVIV: Israel's transportation ministry tested the high-speed Jerusalem-Tel Aviv express train on Sunday 27 August 2017, some six months before the line's expected opening to passengers in April 2018. The train was loaded with 1,200 tons of weight in order to test the newly constructed bridges and rails, and to strengthen and stabilize the concrete and tracks. The testing will continue over the next few weeks. "The high-speed train will ensure the status of Jerusalem and the ability for people to live there and to open businesses," said Transport Minister Yisrael Katz. "It will completely change the relationship between Jerusalem and the rest of the country." The high-speed train will reach speeds of up to 100 miles per hour, departing every 15 to 20 minutes in each direction during peak hours, and will cut the expected travel time down to 28 minutes. The train will accommodate up to 1,000 passengers. (Kehila news)

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