

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update August 8, 2019 ***(7th Av, 5779)***

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The image shows two items: on the left, the cover of a book titled 'THE HEEL OF HIS GARMENT' by Yehoshua Feiwel, with the subtitle 'TOUCHING THE POWER IN GOD'S WORD'; on the right, a white prayer shawl (tallit) with blue and gold stripes and a gold tassel (tzitzit).

For the Yachad Report Newsletter For August 2019

41 HOUSE DEMOCRATS VISIT ISRAEL AMID WIDENING PARTISAN DIVIDE: On Mon. 5 August 2019, 41 House Democrats led by House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (Maryland) arrived in Israel, kicking off a week-long tour of the Jewish state and the Palestinian Authority. The delegation is headed by the House Minority Leader, Kevin McCarthy (California). According to a statement by Hoyer's office, the Democratic delegation, made up primarily of freshman lawmakers, will "learn about issues critical to the USA-Israel relationship and international security." Members will visit Israel's borders with Lebanon and Syria and see an Iron Dome battery. The delegation will also visit important historical and cultural sites, including the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. The delegation will be meeting with both PM Binyamin Netanyahu and his primary election rival, Blue and White party chairman Benny Gantz. The Democratic House members will also meet with Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas, as well as young entrepreneurs in the Palestinian Authority and Israeli activists.

The trip comes as following a series of high-profile controversies involving Democratic lawmakers and the Jewish state, including a string of comments by Minnesota congresswoman, Ilhan Omar, from a 2012 tweet accusing Israel of "hypnotizing" the world, to more recent claims that Jewish lobby groups had corrupted Congress. Omar drew criticism last month when she introduced a bill supporting the anti-Israel Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement. Another Democratic lawmaker, Michigan Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, also sparked controversy both with her open support of the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, as well as with a number of recent comments, including accusations of racism directed at the Israeli government, and a claim that Palestinian Arabs gave Jews a "safe haven" after the Holocaust. While moderate Democrats have criticized the freshman lawmakers, the broader partisan divide over Israel has been a long-standing issue for Democrats even before Tlaib and Omar's election last November. Last January, a Pew Research Center poll found that the partisan divide on Israel had reached its widest point in four decades.

IRANIAN FM: WE MAY LEAVE NUCLEAR DEAL: Iranian FM Mohammad Javad Zarif mocked the USA sanctions regime against Iran, including the recent decision to impose sanctions against him personally. Speaking at a news conference on Mon. 5 August 2019, Zarif said the USA bid to form a coalition of Arab Gulf states against Iran to increase the pressure of oil sanctions on the Islamic republic had failed, leaving the USA alone. The Iranian foreign minister also accused the USA of trying to deprive Iran of its rights. Zarif warned that Tehran is prepared to withdraw completely from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

ISRAEL SENDS CONDOLENCES AFTER MASS SHOOTING IN USA: PM Benjamin Netanyahu told the Israeli Cabinet on Sunday 4 August 2019: "In the past 24 hours, we have witnessed two murderous attacks in Texas and Ohio. On behalf of all government ministers and all citizens of Israel, I send condolences to the bereaved families, best wishes for recovery to the injured, and solidarity with the mourning of the American people." Twenty people were killed and at least two dozen injured in a shooting attack on Saturday afternoon 3 August 2019 at a Walmart shopping center in El Paso Texas. In Dayton, Ohio, 9 people and the shooter were killed and 26 injured in a mass shooting attack shortly after 1 a.m. Sunday 4 August 2019. The shooting took place on the outskirts of downtown Dayton's Oregon District, a popular entertainment area.

DUTCH SUSPEND GRANT AFTER UNRWA ETHICS PROBE: The Netherlands suspended its contribution last week to the UN agency for Palestinian Arab refugees pending the outcome of a probe into alleged mismanagement and abuses of authority by the agency's top management. The Dutch decision came a day after a similar move by Switzerland, which said it would suspend additional contributions. UN investigators have opened an inquiry after an internal report alleged "serious ethical abuses" at the highest level at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). As one of the agency's main European donors the Netherlands "expressed its great concern and asked for clarification," the Dutch foreign ministry said in a statement. Sigrid Kaag, foreign trade, and development cooperation minister, "would like to hear what steps the UN plans to take based on the outcome of the investigation," it added. The Netherlands is the UNRWA's fourth-largest EU donor country and planned to contribute 13 million euros (\$14.4 million) this year. The Dutch government "is also in consultation with other donors," the ministry said, without giving further details.

'I WANT TO BE THE BEHEADING PERSON': TWO SOMALI REFUGEES IN USA ARRESTED FOR TRYING TO JOIN ISIS: Ahmed Mahan Mohamed, 21, and Abadi Yemeni Hussein, 20, both residents of Tucson, Arizona, and refugees from Somalia, were arrested days ago on suspicion of trying to join ISIS. They revealed in communications with an undercover FBI agent that they wanted to travel overseas to fight on behalf of ISIS or conduct an attack within the USA. The men purchased tickets to travel from Tucson to Egypt, with the intent to travel on to the Sinai Peninsula. In preparation for their journey, Mohamed and Hussein had been exercising so they could be strong enough to behead people. "I want to be the new jihadi John beheading the chuffer (disbelievers) like animals," Mohamed said. He also called for "another 911 and promised that he "will make attacks anywhere so that he can kill many".

USA: BIN LADEN'S SON IS DEAD: The United States believes Hama bin Laden, son of assassinated al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, is dead, says Reuters, citing an anonymous USA official. The White House declined to comment on whether an announcement was imminent. The NY Times reported that Washington had a role in the operation that led to Hama's death, which supposedly took place sometime in the past two years. USA Special Forces killed his father at his compound in Pakistan in 2011. The State Department designated Hamza a global terrorist in 2017.

INDIA, ISRAEL CELEBRATE FRIENDSHIP DAY TOGETHER: In honor of Friendship Day, Israel wished India a happy holiday and received the same in return. "Happy Friendship Day 2019 India!" the Israeli embassy in India wrote on Twitter. "May our ever-strengthening friendship & growing partnership touch

greater heights." Modi replied to the message, "Thank you. I wish a happy Friendship Day to the wonderful citizens of Israel and to my friend Benjamin Netanyahu. Our relationship is strong and everlasting. I wish that our countries' friendship will grow and bloom even more in the future." "Thank you, my friend, Netanyahu responded." I could not agree with you more. The deep connection between Israel and India is rooted in the strong friendships between Israelis and Indians," he continued. "We cooperate in so many areas. I know our ties will only strengthen in the future!" India-Israel relations have improved in recent years. Netanyahu has initiated a visit to India in coming months, most probably in Sept. 2019.

RUSSIA AND TURKEY ARE BECOMING ALLIES, OVERSHADOWING ISRAEL: An emerging Russia-Turkey alliance in defense and energy will have long-term effects on the Middle East and Israel. This comes in the wake of Turkey acquiring Russia's S-400 air defense system and the development of the TurkStream pipeline, which stretches across the Black Sea from Russia to Turkey. As Turkey and Russia grow closer, they inevitably also grow closer in their efforts to end the Syrian conflict, as well as other regional and international issues. This has led Turkey away from its traditional alliance with the USA, and focused on a new alliance structure with Russia and other allies, for instance, a Turkey-Qatar and Russia-Iran alliance, in which they share certain interests. In the long term, a closer block of Russia-Syria-Iran-Turkey-Qatar may emerge, alongside other powerful states such as China, India, and central Asian actors, some of which seek to challenge the USA. This has long-term implications for Israel because Israel is a close USA ally that opposes the rising power of Iran in the Middle East. Israel enjoyed close relations with Turkey up until the mid-2000s when things soured under Turkey's current administration. Russia and Israel enjoy good relations today, but what happens if their interests begin to not coincide in places like Syria, where tensions already exist? Russia and Turkey are discussing joint production of civilian aircraft and helicopters. Tass News says that they may also begin joint exploration for energy in the Mediterranean. It is clear that a defense and energy alliance is growing. Israel has its own energy interests in the Mediterranean and its own defense relationships. The long-term effect of the Russia-Turkey alliance is in its infancy, but joint defense work and energy exploration should be taken more seriously by neighbors in the Middle East.

TURKEY'S ERDOGAN: 'WHOEVER IS ON ISRAEL'S SIDE, WE ARE AGAINST THEM': "Whoever is on the side of Israel, let everyone know that we are against them," Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said last week. Erdogan made the comments as he addressed senior provincial officials from the ruling AKP party in Ankara. "We do not approve of silence on the [so called] state terror that Israel blatantly carries out in Palestine," Erdogan said. Erdogan has a history of slamming the Jewish state and its leader, PM Benjamin Netanyahu. The Turkish president made waves last year when he said that the spirit of Adolf Hitler had re-emerged among some Israeli policymakers. In March 2019 a spokesperson for Erdogan slammed Netanyahu for comments he had made regarding the Nation-State Law, inspiring Netanyahu to say that "Turkey's dictator Erdogan attacks Israel's democracy while Turkish journalists and judges fill his prisons. What a joke!" Erdogan's party took a beating in mayoral elections in June 2019, breaking his aura of invincibility in his country and delivering a message from voters unhappy over his policies. The United States said last week it was removing NATO ally Turkey from the F-35 program after Ankara purchased and received delivery of Russian S-400 missile defenses.

USA-ISRAEL SUCCESSFULLY TEST MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM IN ALASKA: The United States and Israel successfully carried out "a high altitude hit-to-kill engagement" with a co-developed anti-ballistic missile interceptor system in Alaska, officials announced Sunday 28 July 2019. The Arrow-3 Interceptor missile achieved a "major milestone" in its development during a successful flight test where the system effectively intercepted a missile target outside the atmosphere, according to the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). "This unique success in Alaska provides confidence in future Israeli capabilities to defeat the developing threats in the region," said MDA Director Jon Hill. Israeli PM Netanyahu said this week that the Arrow 3 gives his country the "ability to act against ballistic missiles fired against us from Iran and from any other location." Arrow 3, along with the Iron Dome, David's Sling and the Arrow 2 systems is part of the

multi-layered shield Israel is developing to defend against rockets fired from Gaza and Lebanon, as well as Iran's long-range missiles. The announcement of the Arrow-3's success comes just days after Iran successfully test-fired its Shahab-3, a medium-range ballistic missile, which flew more than 600 miles. The missile tests come amid heightened tensions between Tehran and the West.

IRAN RESTARTING ACTIVITIES AT ARAK HEAVY WATER NUCLEAR REACTOR: Iran will restart activities at the Arak heavy-water nuclear reactor, according to the head of the country's Atomic Energy. Ali Akbar Salehi made the announcement to lawmakers earlier this week. Heavy water can be used to produce plutonium, which is used in nuclear warheads. Renovations recently were completed on the Arak heavy-water plant, which allows it to increase its capacity. At the beginning of July 2019, Iran announced that its stockpiles of enriched uranium had breached the limit set out in the nuclear deal it signed with the world powers. Since the Trump administration pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal one year ago and reimposed economic sanctions, Iran has begun to abrogate parts of the deal.

UNRWA FACES ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION, 'SEXUAL MISCONDUCT': An internal ethics report has alleged mismanagement and abuses of authority at the highest levels of the UN agency for Palestinian Arab refugees and their descendants even as the organization faced an unprecedented crisis after USA funding cuts. The allegations included in the report by the agency's ethics department are now being scrutinized by UN investigators. It describes "credible and corroborated" allegations of serious ethical abuses, including involving UNRWA's top official, Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl. It says the allegations include senior management engaging in "sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation, discrimination and other abuses of authority, for personal gain, to suppress legitimate dissent, and to otherwise achieve their personal objectives." One senior official named in the report has left the organization due to "inappropriate behavior" linked to the investigation while another has resigned for what the agency called "personal reasons." The report was sent to the UN secretary-general in Dec. 2018 and UN investigators have since visited UNRWA's offices in Jerusalem and Amman, collecting information related to the allegations.

SANDERS: OUR POLICY CANNOT JUST BE PRO-ISRAEL: Senator Bernie Sanders, who is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination in the 2020 elections, criticized PM Netanyahu and said the USA cannot prioritize the wants and needs of Israel if it wants to help bring peace to the Middle East. "I think what has happened is in recent years under Netanyahu, you have an extreme right-wing government with many racist tendencies," charged Sanders. "Palestinian Arabs deserve to be treated with dignity and respect". Sanders said he would "absolutely" consider using the billions of dollars in military aid that the USA sends to Israel each year as leverage to force the Israeli government to act differently. He criticized the Trump administration over its overtures to Israel, asserting that they could put at risk the peace negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs. Despite being Jewish and having spent time in Israel, Sanders has a history of problematic statements on the Jewish state.

ISRAELI JUDO TEAM SCORES GOLD MEDAL WIN: The Grand Prix competition in Zagreb, Croatia ended Sunday evening 28 July 2019 with another medal for members of the Israeli judo delegation. After young judoka Tohar Butbul won the gold medal at the prestigious competition the previous evening, his fellow Israel delegation member, Peter Paltchik, won the bronze medal in the under 100 kg weight category. This month, the Israeli delegation will leave for the World Championship in Tokyo, where the Olympic Games will be held in a year.

ISRAELI RECYCLING TECHNOLOGY AIMS TO REVOLUTIONIZE GLOBAL WASTE: Despite increasing efforts to recycle some unwanted household goods, the destination for the vast majority solid waste is some form of landfill, releasing methane and other damaging greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. As the world throws more away, global plastic production and consumption is also rising sharply – expected to soar from 350 million tons to 1.35 billion tons annually by 2050. While increased waste and plastic demand both

provide significant cause for concern, one Israeli company's innovative technology promises a solution to both worrying trends at the same time. "We are taking a polluting material, turning it into a new natural resource and replacing a scarce material – that's a blessing to the industry," said UBQ co-founder Jack Bigio. Unlike the climate-negative plastics that dominate the market, producing one kilogram of UBQ material saves 11.7 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions and a total industrial offset value of 14.5 kilograms. In other terms, producing one ton of UBQ is equivalent to stopping the melting of 35 square meters of Arctic ice, or the sequestration of 540 trees over 10 years old. One industrial-level operational UBQ facility, with a capacity of producing 80,000 tons per year is equivalent to taking over 565,000 cars off the road for a single year. Produced from unsorted household waste, the worldwide-patented bio-based product is a homogeneous composite material that can be mixed with plastics in the end-product plastic industry. A glance at the company's international and scientific advisory board is likely to instill confidence in customers. It includes Nobel Prize winner Prof. Roger Kornberg, celebrated nanotech specialist Prof. Oded Shoseyov, leading patent practitioner Dr. Ilan Cohen, and sustainability pioneer John Elkington and former EU commissioner for climate action Connie Hedegaard.



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