

Wednesday's "News in Review" Round-Up
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We welcome your comments to this and any other *CIJR* publication. Please address your response to: *Rob Coles, Publications Chairman, Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, PO Box 175, Station H, Montreal QC H3G 2K7 - Tel: (514) 486-5544 - Fax:(514) 486-8284; E-mail: rob@isranet.org*



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WEEKLY QUOTES

"Our goal is to prevent Iran from having the capacity to manufacture or put together nuclear weapons."—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "They don't need enrichment for peaceful nuclear energy. They don't [need] a heavy water reactor for that. They don't need ICBMs, long range inter-continental ballistic missiles...they don't need a weaponization program that Iran of course

refuses to open to inspection. They don't need any of these things, but these are precisely the things that Iran insists on. And they're precisely the elements that they have to be denied." ([Israel Hayom](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

"The Islamic Republic of Iran's defensive issues are neither negotiable nor subject to compromise. They are definitely among our red lines in any talks." —Iran's deputy foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, on Iranian state television on Sunday. "We won't discuss any issue other than the nuclear dossier in the negotiations." Talks on a permanent Iran nuclear accord opened Tuesday with the U.S. pressing Tehran to agree the deal should encompass caps on its expanding ballistic missile capabilities. But Iran says the missiles are part of its defense establishment and beyond the limits of nuclear talks. Last week, Iran's elite military unit, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, successfully test-fired what state media described as two domestically made ballistic missiles. The missiles are estimated to have ranges of at least 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) and could be capable of striking Israel and American military targets in the Middle East, though military experts question their accuracy. ([Wall Street Journal](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

"I have said before ... I am not optimistic about the negotiations. It will not lead anywhere, but I am not opposed either." —Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday. Khamenei told a large crowd during a visit to the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz he was not optimistic about upcoming nuclear talks with world powers: "What our foreign ministry and officials have started will continue and Iran will not violate its (pledge) ...but I say again that this is of no use and will not lead anywhere." ([Israel Hayom](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

"Everyone must know that America's enmity is with the core of the Islamic Revolution and with Islam. This enmity will not end with the negotiations." —Khamenei added on Monday. ([New York Times](#), Feb. 17, 2014)

"...American action in World War II came too late to save countless millions of innocent lives...Hitler's rise and conquest of Europe did not come as a surprise. We must not repeat the same mistake by reducing our preparedness, accepting the notion that we are one of many or ceding global leadership to others." —Rep. Eric Cantor, the House majority leader, in a speech Monday to the Virginia Military Institute citing the lateness of American actions against the Nazis in critiquing President Obama's foreign policy. Cantor said that "evil and hateful ideologies still

exist in the world," citing as perhaps the most evident Iran's "determined march" to produce nuclear weapons. "I can imagine few more destabilizing moments in world history than Iran on the threshold of being a nuclear power," he said. "An America that leads is an America that must work to restore the badly eroded international pressure on Tehran," Cantor said, adding that "we should lay the groundwork now for additional sanctions in the event Iran violates the terms of the interim agreement." ([Jewish Press](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

"Israel is saving the lives of those who have been wounded in the daily slaughter that is being perpetrated in Syria." —Benjamin Netanyahu. "This is the true face of Israel," he added. "The bad part is that Iran is arming those who are carrying out the slaughter. This is the true face of Iran. All of the children who have been injured, to say nothing of those who have been killed, were injured as a result of Iran's arming, financing and training the Assad regime in the massacres that it is perpetrating." Israel's prime minister met with wounded Syrians treated at an Israeli hospital Tuesday and blamed Iran for bloodshed in neighboring Syria as world powers meet in Vienna for talks over Tehran's nuclear program. Netanyahu visited a hospital in the Golan Heights where Israeli doctors treat Syrians wounded in the civil war raging across the border. Although Israel and Syria are enemies having fought several wars, Israel provides medical treatment and humanitarian aid for wounded Syrians that reach its border. ([Montreal Gazette](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

"Right now, Bashar al-Assad has not engaged in the discussions along the promised and required standard that both Russia spoke up for and the regime spoke up for." —U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, during a press conference in Jakarta. Kerry said Assad's team "refused to open up one moment of discussion" of a transitional government to replace Assad's regime. "It is very clear that Bashar Assad is trying to win this on the battlefield instead of coming to the negotiating table in good faith," Kerry said. Peace talks last week in Geneva ended with no progress toward breaking the impasse in the nearly 3-year-old conflict in Syria. Kerry also had harsh words for Assad's allies in Moscow: "Russia needs to be a part of the solution and not be contributing so many more weapons and so much more aid that they are in fact enabling Assad to double down." The U.N.'s human rights office said in January it has stopped updating the death toll from the war, confirming that it can no longer verify the sources of information that led to its last count of at least 100,000 in late July. Millions have been driven out of their homes, seeking shelter in neighboring countries and in safer parts of their homeland. "The talks themselves are taking a recess for the moment," Kerry said Monday, "but all of us need to remember that there is no recess for the people of

Syria who are suffering." ([Washington Times](#), Feb. 17, 2014)

"If you want to prevent this region from falling into chaos that will not end for decades, stop the war on Syria." —Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, addressing all political forces in the Arab world. "Get the fighters out of Syria, let the Syrians reconcile," the leader of the Iranian-backed movement said. "Of course if that happened, we would not remain in Syria either." Hezbollah fighters helped turn the tide for Syrian President Bashar Assad in the military struggle against rebels last year. Assad now has a firm hold on much of central Syrian territory around the capital and the Syrian-Lebanese border. The Syria conflict has had a destabilizing effect in Lebanon, which is still recovering from its own 1975-1990 civil war. Earlier on Saturday, security forces found an explosives-rigged car that was headed to Beirut, an army statement said. Nasrallah said his Lebanese opponents, including Hariri's Future movement, could also be targeted by Sunni militants. "If these groups won, would there be a future for the Future party in Lebanon?" he asked. "All of us will be treated the same and the proof is what has happened in Syria...in Afghanistan or Pakistan or Somalia," Nasrallah said, referring to countries where al-Qaida-linked Islamist groups have at times seized territory. Nasrallah said Hezbollah could not allow rebels to win in Syria, characterizing them all as Islamist radicals, and asked his followers for more sacrifice and patience. "The people who died in these bombs - women and children, young and old - are just like our men who have been martyred in Syria," he said. "Is this part of the battle worthwhile? Yes it is worth it." ([Jerusalem Post](#), Feb. 17, 2014)

"Pashtuns are the rulers and owners of Afghanistan; they are the real inhabitants of Afghanistan." —Gen. Abdul Wahid Taqat, a former intelligence official. Taqat added that "Afghanistan means 'where Pashtuns live.'" The words ignited protests in Kabul in December. To contain the uproar, President Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, had General Taqat arrested and chastised the news media for trying to whip up hatred, something he said many outlets were increasingly doing.

"Ethnic tension is limitless." —Sharifullah Safai, a police officer in East Kabul. "I don't see a future of stability...the Afghan Army and police will not be able to prevent the Taliban from taking over," Safai added. "The rise of the Taliban will be a precursor to an ethnic civil war." ([New York Times](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

"I think the most eerie thing, the most disgraceful thing, is to have people on the soil of Europe talking about the boycott of Jews. I think that's an outrage, but that is something that we're re-encountering." —Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "In the past, anti-Semites boycotted Jewish businesses, and today they call for the boycott of the Jewish state and, by the way, only the Jewish state," he continued. "Now, don't take my word for it. The founders of the BDS movement make their goals perfectly clear. They want to see the end of the Jewish state. They're quite explicit about it." Netanyahu said. "And I think it's important that the boycotters must be exposed for what they are...they're classical anti-Semites in modern garb. And I think we have to fight them. It's time to delegitimize the delegitimizers." The Palestinian-led movement of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) has been growing recently, mainly in Europe, where some businesses and pension funds have cut investments or trade with Israeli firms they say are connected to West Bank settlements. ([CBN News](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

SHORT TAKES

HAMAS BLOCKS TEXTBOOKS THAT PROMOTE RIGHTS (Gaza) Gaza's Hamas authorities have blocked a UN refugee agency from introducing textbooks promoting human rights into local schools, saying it ignores Palestinian cultural mores and focuses too heavily on "peaceful" means of conflict resolution. Motesem al-Minawi, spokesman for the Hamas-run Education Ministry, said Thursday that the government believes the curriculum does not match the "ideology and philosophy" of the local population. He said the textbooks, used in grades 7 through 9, did not sufficiently address Palestinian suffering and did not acknowledge the right to battle Israel. "There is a tremendous focus on the peaceful resistance as the only tool to achieve freedom and independence," he said. Hamas, which has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks, says that "armed resistance" is a key component of its struggle against Israel. ([National Post](#), Feb. 13, 2014)

RICHARD FALK'S FINAL REPORT ACCUSES ISRAEL OF "INHUMAN ACTS" & "APARTHEID" (Geneva) A controversial United Nations human rights investigator is accusing Israel of "inhuman acts," and calling on the body world to support a "legitimacy war" against the Jewish state. A new report by Richard Falk, which he will present next month to the UN Human Rights Council as its special rapporteur on the Palestinian territories, demands that the world court examine whether Israel is guilty of the international crimes of "apartheid" and "ethnic cleansing,"

and urges the UN to investigate corporations that profit from “unlawful Israeli activities.” Falk has been condemned by world leaders on multiple occasions for antisemitic acts such as his endorsement of a book that praises Adolph Hitler. As in years before, the upcoming March session is expected to enact half of all its condemnatory resolutions against Israel. Falk’s report is only one of four against Israel. By contrast, there will be no special reports or resolutions on systematic human rights violations committed by major abusers such as China, Cuba, Russia and Saudi Arabia. On the contrary, all four of these dictatorships were just elected as members. Likewise, fellow UNHRC members states Algeria, Pakistan, Venezuela and Vietnam will also enjoy immunity. ([UN Watch](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

EGYPT: MILITANT GROUP BEHIND DEADLY TOURIST BUS ATTACK (Cairo) An Egyptian Islamist militant group that has carried out months of deadly assaults on the police and the military has claimed responsibility for the bombing of a tourist bus that killed four people in the Sinai Peninsula on Sunday. The assertion by the group, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, signaled an ominous turn in a battle militants have waged against the government since the military ouster of President Mohamed Morsi in July. The bombing, in the Sinai town of Taba, was the first attack against tourists in years. Three South Korean citizens and an Egyptian bus driver were killed. In a statement posted on jihadist websites late Monday, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis said that the bombing was part of an “economic war against this regime of traitors.” ([New York Times](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

EGYPT PROSECUTOR CHARGES 4, INCLUDING 2 ISRAELIS, WITH SPYING (Cairo) Egyptian authorities on Tuesday charged two Israelis and two Egyptians with forming an espionage ring for Israel, the second such trial to be called for in a month. Prosecutor General Hisham Barakat alleged that the two Israelis are Mossad officers, and that two Egyptians, including a woman, helped provide them with information. Prosecutors alleged in a statement that the Egyptian man had offered his services to Israel in 2009, and the Israeli officers provided training on gathering information and the use of sophisticated technology to send information to Israel. Earlier this month, the trial of eight people including five Israelis and three Egyptians on similar charges began in a court in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia. The trials are taking place amid near-daily reports of plots in the media, with foreign parties regularly accused of conspiring with the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood group to destabilize Egypt. ([Montreal Gazette](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

IRAQI CLERIC, EXITING POLITICS, URGES OTHERS TO KEEP SERVING (Baghdad)

Moktada al-Sadr, the influential anti-American Shiite cleric, reaffirmed in a speech in Najaf on Tuesday that he was withdrawing from Iraqi politics, telling his followers in Parliament to continue to serve but not on his behalf. The speech disappointed supporters who hoped that his retirement, announced Saturday on his website, was a tactical move that he would soon reverse, as he had before. But it was welcomed by many political analysts, who said the country would benefit from greater separation between religion and politics. Sadr criticized the current Maliki government, saying it was behaving like a dictatorship and was using the army against the people. "Iraq is under a black cloud, bloodshed and wars, killing each other in the name of law and religion," Sadr said, adding that the country had "no life, no agriculture, no industry, no services, no security and no peace." Sadr's withdrawal "is the first modern, unique step from a religious leader to put religion away from politics," said Saad Saloom, a professor of political science at Al Mustansiriya University. ([New York Times](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

PAKISTAN: EXECUTIONS THREATEN GOVERNMENT'S TALKS WITH TALIBAN
(Peshawar) The Pakistani government's improbable bid to negotiate a truce with Islamist insurgents verged on collapse Monday after reports that militants had executed 23 paramilitary soldiers held captive since 2010. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif condemned the "heinous, criminal act" and government negotiators canceled scheduled talks with Islamist representatives. A militant group operating in the Mohmand tribal area, in northwest Pakistan near the Afghan border, issued a statement late Sunday claiming responsibility for the killings of the Frontier Corps paramilitary soldiers, believed to have been captured in an attack on a checkpoint in 2010. The militant group, which operates under the umbrella of the outlawed Pakistani Taliban, said the soldiers were executed in retaliation for the deaths of the group's supporters in military custody. ([Los Angeles Times](#), Feb. 17, 2014)

DENMARK BANS KOSHER SLAUGHTER (Copenhagen) Kosher slaughtering becomes illegal in Denmark starting Monday, and the move has stirred the ire of Jewish organizations in that country and worldwide. "Animal rights precede religious rights, I am for religious slaughter, but it must be done in a way that does not bring pain to the animal. This can be accomplished only by stunning," Danish Food and Agriculture Minister Dan Jorgensen told reporters, after approving the law. European Jewish Association Chairman Rabbi Menachem Margolin called on Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt to lift the ban. The Jewish population in Denmark stands at around 6,000, largely centered in Copenhagen. Speaking to EU officials, Margolin said the Danish government's decision contravened EU laws

protecting religious freedom to slaughter animals according to religious guidelines, and that he was calling on Denmark to provide an explanation. ([Israel Hayom](#), Feb. 14, 2014)

HUNGARIAN NATIONALISTS HOLD RALLY IN FORMER SYNAGOGUE (Budapest)
Hungary's far-right Jobbik Party held a political rally in a former synagogue, despite protests. The rally by the party, whose ultra-nationalist platform is laced with antisemitism and anti-Roma policy, was held Saturday night in the former synagogue in the town of Esztergom, located 29 miles north of Budapest. The building currently is operated by the local government as a cultural and meeting center. Several hundred demonstrators protested the meeting. They stood outside the former synagogue during the Jobbik rally reading the names of the 500 Holocaust victims who were deported to Auschwitz from the town in 1944. Jobbik party leader Gabor Vona told the demonstrators that "there is an atmosphere of hysteria due to the Holocaust Memorial Year in Hungary, which wants to make Hungarians feel guilty." ([Kosher Press](#), Feb. 16, 2014)

HUNGARIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY DISCOVERS 100 HOLOCAUST-ERA TORAH SCROLLS CONFISCATED IN WWII (Budapest)
Budapest's Unified Hungarian Jewish Congregation (EMIH) on Monday said it will announce details regarding the discovery of more than 100 Holocaust-era Torah Scrolls that had been confiscated during World War II. In a statement, EMIH called a press conference for Tuesday at Budapest's Obuda Synagogue, where Executive Rabbi Shlomo Koves "will announce a historic discovery of the largest single collection of priceless confiscated sacred property of the Hungarian Jewish community in the Holocaust." ([Algemeiner](#), Feb. 17, 2014)

ISRAELI START-UP VIBER PURCHASED FOR 900M BY ELECTRONICS GIANT (Tel Aviv)
The Israeli-founded voice and video communications app Viber has been purchased for \$900 million by the Japanese electronics giant Rakuten. Hiroshi Mikitani, the Japanese billionaire who controls Rakuten, said Viber will help provide a distribution channel for his company's digital products. Viber has more than 300 million users of its instant messaging and free Internet phone services. The purchase of Viber is the third major takeover of an Israeli start-up company in the past year. In June 2013, Google acquired the social networking traffic app Waze for close to a billion dollars, while IBM acquired the cyber-security company Trusteer in August. ([Jewish Tribune](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

ISRAEL PRODUCES "LASER BEAM" DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY (Tel Aviv) Dubbed the "Iron Beam," the system uses fast-acting laser technology to shoot down incoming rockets at close range. "It's exactly like what you see in 'Star Wars,' " said Amit Zimmer, a spokesman for the Rafael Advanced Defense Systems company producing the beam, told the Associated Press. "You see the lasers go up so quickly, like a flash, and the target is finished." The Iron Beam is designed to take down short-range missiles too fast to be targeted by Israel's wildly successful Iron Dome system. Rafael Advanced Defense Systems is the same company working with the US to develop the David's Sling and Arrow 3 defense systems. ([Virtual Jerusalem](#), Feb. 16, 2014)

2,300-YEAR-OLD VILLAGE UNEARTHED ON ROAD TO JERUSALEM (Jerusalem) Israeli archaeologists have discovered the remnants of a 2,300-year-old rural settlement near the "Burma Road" that leads to Jerusalem. The Israel Antiquities Authorities recently completed excavations at the site ahead of the construction of a 25-kilometer-long natural gas pipeline, which will run from the coast to the outskirts of Jerusalem. The route of the pipeline will now bypass this archeological site. The excavation uncovered 750 square meters of a settlement with stone houses and a series of narrow alleyways that were occupied for an estimated two centuries during the Second Temple Period, from 530 BCE and 70 CE. ([Ha'aretz](#), Feb. 18, 2014)

[On Topic Links](#)

[The Salafi Menace in Sinai Goes After a Soft Target](#): Yaakov Lappin, *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 17, 2014—Salafi jihadist terrorists based in Sinai struck again on Sunday, but unlike most of their recent targets, this time it was foreign tourists who were at the receiving end of their fanatical violence.

[Syria Peace Plan](#): Kenneth Bandler, *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 3, 2014—Does Syria have a future or is this Arab country doomed? The answer is not any clearer following the Geneva II peace talks.

[The Shame of Princeton](#): Sohrab Ahmari, *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 14, 2014—No matter how deep into the political fever swamps some scholars wade, it seems, progressive academe won't shun them.

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[Oxfam's Middle East Blinders](#): Gerald M. Steinberg, *National Post*, Feb. 14, 2014—Global humanitarian aid and human rights groups, such as Oxfam, which have massive budgets and large staffs, wield a great deal of power.

Rob Coles, Publications Editor, *Canadian Institute for Jewish Research/L'institut Canadien de recherches sur le Judaïsme*, www.isranet.org Tel: (514) 486-5544 - Fax:(514) 486-8284. <mailto:ber@isranet.org>



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