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WEDNESDAY'S "NEWS IN REVIEW" ROUND-UP

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WEEKLY QUOTES

“I think that [Ariel Sharon] represents the generation of Jewish warriors who arose with the resumption of our independence.” —Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, at the opening of Sunday’s weekly cabinet meeting. **“He was connected to the land, he knew it was necessary to defend the land, and he knew above all that our independence is our ability to defend ourselves by ourselves.”** At the cabinet meeting, which began with a moment of silence in Sharon’s honor, Netanyahu emphasized Sharon’s military, rather than diplomatic, legacy. **“Arik was first and foremost a warrior and a commander, among the Jewish people’s greatest military leaders in modern times and throughout its history.”** (*Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 12, 2014)

“Our relationship w/ the world is based on Iranian nation's interests. In #Geneva agreement world powers surrendered to Iranian nation's will.” —Iranian President Hassan Rouhani boasted on his Twitter account on Tuesday. The UN nuclear watchdog also said on Tuesday a planned meeting with Iran next week to discuss steps meant to ease concerns over its nuclear program has been pushed back to Feb. 8 at Tehran's request. (*Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 14, 2014)

“With or without a comprehensive solution we will continue to live together and continue to be neighbours. There are many problems on the ground, so this direct contact, this negotiation, these talks — it’s very important to keep alive and maintain” —Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman. Most strikingly, Lieberman, hitherto a peace process sceptic, has encouraged Israel to accept the deal currently being brokered by Washington as the best offer it will ever receive. **“It’s the best proposal we can get and we really appreciate the efforts of Secretary of State John Kerry. He has really put a lot of energy into the issue.”** Mr Lieberman’s opinion of Mahmoud Abbas has certainly not become favourable, but the chairman of the Palestinian Authority is no longer referred to as a “diplomatic terrorist”. Instead, Lieberman said, there is a question mark over whether or not Mr Abbas

“can deliver the goods” in the peace talks. **“You must be ready for compromise, but I am not sure he is able. But we must check [wait for] this possibility because we [Israelis] are ready to go far.”** Yet, taking an unfamiliarly conciliatory tone, Lieberman admitted that it was perhaps the **“mistake of leadership, of our governments - more than Arab mistakes”** that has created division. ([Daily Telegraph](#), Jan. 9, 2014).

“The American security plan presented to us is not worth the paper it's written on.” —Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon. Ya'alon continued: **“It contains no peace and no security. Only our continued presence in Judea and Samaria and the River Jordan will endure that Ben-Gurion Airport and Netanya don't become targets for rockets from every direction. American Secretary of State John Kerry, who turned up here determined and acting out of misplaced obsession and messianic fervor, cannot teach me anything about the conflict with the Palestinians.”** Yaalon later issued an apology in a written statement sent to media from the Defense Ministry. ([Ynet News](#), Jan. 14, 2014)

“We just can't let one set of comments undermine that effort, and I don't intend to.” —U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, responding to Ya'alon's comments, in Kuwait City where he was taking part in a Syria Donors' Conference. **“We're going to work with both sides,”** Kerry added. **“I will work with the willing participants who are committed to peace, and committed to this process.”** ([Jerusalem Post](#), Jan. 15, 2014)

“Parts of this policy statement appear to run counter to the Canadian expressions of support for Israel and its positions...as well as against specific statements repeatedly made by Prime Minister Harper and Foreign Minister Baird.” —Amb. Alan Baker, a former Israeli ambassador to Canada, who has joined six Toronto-area lawyers in decrying an apparent discrepancy between the federal Conservative government's public support for Israel and official policy statements on the Foreign Affairs website. Amb. Baker and the lawyers have written to Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird demanding the website be changed **“to align it with statements and policies publicly expressed by the Prime Minister, yourself and other government representatives.”** ([National Post](#), Jan. 14, 2014)

“As Conservatives, we can be proud that under the Prime Minister's leadership, Canada is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with countries that share our values — free and democratic countries like Israel.” —email from Jason Kenney, Canadian Minister for Multiculturalism, sent to Conservative Party supporters on Tuesday. Kenney added: **“This is going to be an historic trip, and we don't want you to miss out on the action.”** The email also directs supporters to a specific Conservative party webpage — [StephenHarper.ca/middleeast](#) — dedicated to Harper's first trip to the Middle East as prime minister. The [stephenharper.ca](#) website, while operated by the Conservative party, includes many of the same photos, links to government news releases and other materials included on the prime minister's taxpayer-funded website: [pm.gc.ca](#). ([Canada.com](#), Jan. 14, 2014)

“Jurisdiction over the Palestinian refugees should be transferred from UNWRA, which, frankly, continues to engage patterns of incitement against Israel and in misrepresentation of the truth.” —Irwin Cotler, Canadian MP and former justice minister, speaking at an event in Jerusalem on Monday staged by the World Jewish Congress' Israel Council on Foreign Relations. **“There is no reason why there should be one separate body dealing with Palestinian refugees where all other refugees in the world are under the jurisdiction of the United Nations commissioner for refugees, which is where Palestinian refugees also belong,”** Cotler insisted. ([Jerusalem Post](#), Jan. 15, 2014)

“If I run, then it must be at the request of the people and with a mandate from my army.” — Egypt’s top military officer and decision maker, Abdul Fattah Al-Sisi, speaking at a military seminar. He added: **“I can’t turn my back on Egypt.”** General Sisi also urged voters to turn out to vote for the Constitution in frankly personal terms. **“Don’t embarrass me in front of the world,”** he said, **“not me personally but the military, because in the military we are as united as one man’s heart, and we adhere to democracy.”** He noted that the new charter authorizes the military to **“protect the will of the people”** and he vowed, **“we will protect it in any circumstances.”** In three recently leaked audio recordings that appear to be private comments to a sympathetic journalist, General Sisi suggested that as long as three decades ago, he dreamed that he was destined to be president of Egypt. In one dream, Mr. Sisi said, he was told by the late president Anwar al-Sadat that he would be president and replied, **“I know that I will be president, too.”** In another dream, Mr. Sisi said he had heard from a voice: **“We will grant you what no one has had before.”** ([New York Times](#), Jan. 11, 2014)

“The rule of law is by far the most notable casualty of the ongoing crisis [in Turkey]” —Wolfgang Piccoli, an analyst at Teneo Intelligence in London, said in e-mailed comments on Jan. 6. **“It is unclear whether the government is committed to this principle, and it is equally questionable whether the judiciary and the police can actually deliver justice.”** Turkey’s ruling party ordered purges of police chiefs and moved to tighten control of the judiciary, as a top official said there’s no chance of a truce in the struggle with prosecutors leading a corruption probe.

“My opinion is that they are criminals -- the police and the judges and prosecutors.” — Osman Can, a member of the central committee of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party, or Ak Party. Can said in a Jan. 6 interview in Istanbul that the government will keep firing those leading the investigation and then seek to prosecute them for attempting a coup. He added **“if you can destroy this organization, you can save democracy.”** ([Bloomberg](#), Jan. 8, 2014)

'Know that we have armies in Iraq and Syria... we warn you, we will crush them and kill the conspiracy in its cradle.' —The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), an Al Qaeda-linked faction, spokesman known as Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, in a statement issued late on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Horrifying images emerged from Syria last week which allegedly show the aftermath of the summary execution of more than 50 rival rebels by an extreme faction fighting to overthrow Bashar al Assad. ISIL had earlier vowed to crush opposition groups it has been confronting in the worst outbreak of infighting among rebels. ([Daily Mail](#), Jan. 8, 2014)

"When I opened my eyes, I saw it was a very black thing they wanted me to do...I began to cry and shout. People came out of their houses and asked what was wrong. I showed them I had something in my vest. Then they were scared too and called the police who took the bombs off me." —Thirteen year old Abdul Samat, an Afghan boy recruited to be a suicide bomber. Afghan security officials say that Abdul's story is not unusual. In the past year, Islamist insurgents have used a wave of child suicide bombers, some as young as 10, on the ruthless assumption that small boys can pass through checkpoints and security cordons more easily than men. A senior Afghan intelligence official estimated that more than 100 had been intercepted in the past 12 months. The insurgents seek to exploit the innocence of their recruits and turn it into a weapon.

"The worst part is that these children don't think that they are killing themselves." senior Afghan intelligence official. **"They are often given an amulet containing Koranic verses. Mullahs tell them, 'When this explodes you will survive and God will help you survive the fire. Only the infidels will be killed, you will be saved and your parents will go to paradise!'"** ([Telegraph](#), Jan. 13, 2014)

“...Islam’s [fanatics] do not deserve to be excused from the requirement of conforming to reasonable norms of coexistence with secular authorities and with other faiths. And [they] certainly do not deserve a full pass from that large segment of our self-loathing Western media that devotes itself constantly to the destruction of Judeo-Christian values, while largely ignoring the antics of teeming masses of Muslims who scream death to the West while pressing their foreheads against the floor of their mosques, and who treat women as property and intellectual curiosity as blasphemy.” —Conrad Black ([National Review](#), Jan. 9, 2014)

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SHORT TAKES

NEGOTIATORS MOVE CLOSER ON IRAN NUCLEAR PACT (Washington) —Iran and a group of six world powers moved closer on Friday to carrying out the nuclear agreement reached in November, with the Iranian side saying all outstanding issues have been resolved. The agreement, which still requires final approval by all the governments, would temporarily halt some of Iran’s nuclear activities in exchange for billions of dollars in sanctions relief. Sanctions advocates, including a growing number of congressional lawmakers, say Iran already has exploited the diplomacy to advance what they call its military nuclear ambitions and to circumvent the sanctions. Their criticism deepened with a report by *Reuters* on Friday, quoting anonymous sources in Iran and Russia, that both countries were close to completing an oil-for-goods swap worth \$1.5 billion a month to Iran that would substantially raise its oil exports, which have been severely constrained by the sanctions. Particularly upsetting to advocates of sanctions was that Russia is a member of the P5-plus-1 group. ([New York Times](#), Jan. 10, 2014)

LIBYAN GROUPS BEHIND BENGHAZI ATTACK: U.S. (Washington) —The Obama administration for the first time on Friday identified two militant groups in Libya, including one led by a former Guantanamo Bay detainee, as being allegedly involved in the attack in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans. The department designated the two branches of the Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, those in the cities of Derna and Benghazi, and a third branch in Tunisia as foreign terrorist organizations. It also named Sufian bin Qumu, the leader of the Derna branch, and Ahmed Abu Khattala, a senior leader of the Benghazi branch, as specially designated global terrorists. Qumu, who was released from Guantanamo Bay in 2007 and later freed in Libya, was described as a "probable member of al-Qaida" in an assessment written by officials at the military prison in Cuba in 2005. ([Associated Press](#), Jan. 10, 2014)

TUNISIA ISLAMIST PM STEPS DOWN AMID MOUNTING UNREST (Tunis) —Tunisia's Islamist Prime Minister Ali Larayedh resigned on Thursday as part of a plan to end months of political deadlock which has fuelled mounting social unrest. His resignation sees the departure of Tunisia's first democratically elected government, which came to power after veteran strongman Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was overthrown in the first of the Arab Spring uprisings almost three years ago. His stepping down comes as part of a blueprint, drawn up by mediators, to put the democratic transition back on track after the assassination of opposition MP Mohamed Brahmi by suspected Islamist militants last year. ([Yahoo](#), Jan. 9, 2014)

EGYPT REFERENDUM: TIGHT SECURITY BUT CLASHES CLAIM LIVES (Cairo) —A first day of voting took place on Tuesday in Egypt on a new constitution that could pave the way for fresh

elections. But clashes involving supporters of ousted Islamist President Mohammed Morsi led to several deaths. The new charter is to replace the constitution passed under Mr Morsi before he was forced out by the army. The military wants a strong Yes vote in the two-day referendum to endorse his removal. Mr Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, now designated a terrorist group, is boycotting the vote. ([BBC](#), Jan. 14, 2014)

EGYPT'S SISI IS SET TO TAKE CRACKDOWN ON M.B. TO HAMAS IN GAZA (Cairo) — Egyptian Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is set to take the ruthless crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas, its branch next door in the Gaza Strip. “Gaza is next,” said one senior security official quoted by *Reuters*. Sisi, who is likely to run for president, feels that to lead effectively and improve his country’s economy, he needs to stamp out all forms of opposition and terrorism so that people feel secure. Following in the Arab tradition of strong rulers, Sisi is working to seize complete control of the state apparatus and to eliminate any possible threats, especially from the Muslim Brotherhood and other radical Islamic groups. ([Jerusalem Post](#), Jan. 15, 2014)

DOZENS KILLED IN IRAQ BOMB ATTACKS (Baghdad) —At least 46 people have been killed in a series of bombings in central Iraq, police and medical officials say. Eighteen died in an attack on a funeral for a pro-government Sunni militiaman in a village south of Baquba, the capital of Diyala province. Seven car bombs meanwhile exploded across Baghdad, killing at least 28 people and wounding dozens more. By 2 p.m., the death toll in Baghdad appeared to be the highest for the city so far this year, and brought the total deaths over the last three days to more than 80, after a rash of bombings targeting mostly Shiite neighborhoods. There has been a surge in sectarian violence across Iraq in the past year, reaching levels not seen since 2007. The United Nations says 7,818 civilians and 1,050 members of the security forces died in 2013. December alone saw at least 759 killed. ([BBC](#), Jan. 15, 2014)

TURKEY RAIDS OFFICES OF GROUP BEHIND 2010 GAZA FLOTILLA (Istanbul) —Turkish media say police have carried out raids in six Turkish cities, detaining several people allegedly linked to al-Qaeda, including an employee of a prominent Islamic charity behind a flotilla that tried to bust the Gaza blockade in 2010. The aid organization, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation, confirmed Tuesday that its storage facility near the Syrian border was searched and an employee was detained. It, however, denied any ties to al-Qaeda and denounced the police raid as an attempt to discredit the organization. The IHH was the main backer of a 2010 flotilla that tried to break Israel’s blockade on Gaza. An Israeli commando raid on the ship, intercepting it after it refused to change course, prompted a melee in which nine Turks were killed and several Israeli soldiers injured. ([Times of Israel](#), Jan. 14, 2014)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC'S NEW LEADER ORDERS SECURITY CRACKDOWN (Bangui) —Central African Republic's new interim leader ordered the deployment of hundreds more troops in the capital on Monday with instructions to shoot troublemakers "at point blank range" in a bid to end months of religious violence. Fighting, attacks on mosques and the looting of Muslim-owned shops have persisted in Bangui since the resignation of Muslim rebel leader-turned-president Michel Djotodia last Friday under intense international pressure. Djotodia seized power last March at the head of the Muslim Seleka rebel coalition, unleashing a wave of killings and looting targeting the majority Christian population which in turn sparked revenge attacks by "anti-balaka" Christian militia. ([Reuters](#), Jan. 13, 2014)

MLA: NO BOYCOTT, BUT CENSURE OF ISRAEL (Chicago) —After exhaustive debate, MLA delegates made it clear that while they were not prepared to boycott Israel, as some smaller academic groups have recently advocated, Israel’s conduct towards American scholars seeking to work in the

occupied West Bank merited censure in their view. Israel, said the resolution the delegates passed on January 11, has “denied academics of Palestinian ethnicity entry into the West Bank” in violation of international law and thereby “restricted the academic freedom of scholars and teachers who are U.S. citizens.” This has also disrupted “instruction, research, and planning at Palestinian universities,” the resolution said. The vote by the delegates — a small subgroup of the 7,500 MLA members who attended the conference — was close: 60-53, with those supporting the resolution getting 53%. But this appeared to reflect a deep divide within the broader membership of one of the country’s major academic associations. ([Forward](#), Jan. 14, 2014)

HITLER’S *MEIN KAMPF* SALES SOAR ONLINE (Toronto) —There is an unlikely new bestselling author in the world of ebooks, and his name is Adolf Hitler. On Wednesday, Jan. 8, a 99-cent version of *Mein Kampf*, the Nazi leader’s manifesto, was the top-selling book on iTunes Canada’s politics and current events list. Another edition, selling for \$3.99, was in the No. 6 spot. In Amazon.ca’s Kindle store, it was the top book in the fascism category, with another version at No. 16. And on Kobo, it’s in the top 50 for reference biographies. There is no clear way to determine why readers are snapping up Hitler’s writing for their tablets. But it likely has more to do with the medium than the message: ebooks let readers study *Mein Kampf* without the worry that someone will catch them with a copy. ([Toronto Star](#), Jan. 8, 2014)

[On Topic Links](#)

[An Open Letter to Secretary of State John Kerry](#): Isi Leibler, *Israel Hayom*, Jan. 9, 2014 Dear Mr. Secretary, Over the next week or so, you will be unveiling a U.S. proposal for a "framework agreement" between Israel and the Palestinian Authority as a prelude to a final status arrangement.

[Defend Christendom](#): Conrad Black, *National Review*, Jan. 9, 2014 Christians, Jews, and the adherents of the principal Eastern religions, the Hindus and Buddhists, acknowledge spiritual forces, a deity of some definition, and a fundamentally benevolent context for human life.

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