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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Ehud Barak und die Arbeitspartei

Laut den neuesten Umfragen würde die Arbeitspartei bei Neuwahlen nur 12 oder 13 Mandate gewinnen. Dieses schlechte Ergebnis steht auch in Zusammenhang mit der Unpopularität von Ehud Barak. Der Parteivorsitzende und Verteidigungsminister war kürzlich in die Schlagzeilen geraten, da seine Frau Nili Priel eine PR-Firma gegründet hatte, die möglicherweise von den Kontakten ihres Mannes zu hochrangigen Politikern profitieren würde. Obwohl Priel die Firma inzwischen aufgelöst hat, steht die Öffentlichkeit solchen Affären, die an die laufenden Untersuchungen gegen Premierminister Olmert erinnern, sehr skeptisch gegenüber. Auch Baraks Angriffe auf Außenministerin Tzippi Livni machen ihn nicht beliebt.

Darüber hinaus widersetzte sich Barak dem von Olmert vorgeschlagenen Staatshaushalt. Die Arbeitspartei sprach sich gegen Kürzungen des Verteidigungsetats und der Sozialprogramme aus. Sie stimmte gegen den Haushalt, der aber schließlich verabschiedet wurde, ohne dass auf Baraks Forderungen eingegangen wurde.

Keep an eye on the country (and Nili)

“It is recommended that [Ehud Barak’s wife Nili Priel] change her mind about the idea and not mix her business ambitions with matters of state: The past months provide living proof that public figures (and their spouses) who do not have the sense to overcome their greed meet their end. [...] In recent days, Barak has not been sounding convincing either in his struggle against the 2009 budget. The Finance Ministry has proposed a budget that is, as usual, controversial, but instead of discussing its substance, the defense minister aims to disrupt the timetable and delay the proceedings until after the Kadima leadership election. [...]”

There is no doubt that the national interest is to let the government continue to run the country without further shocks. [...] Running the country includes preparing the budget for the coming year. [...] Barak’s conduct invites a call to order regarding both substance and style: The country’s citizens are entitled to expect that their leaders will speak to them straightforwardly. They are realizing that the defense minister is preventing substantive discussions on his ministry’s budget, but is diverting his rhetorical fire at the prime minister and foreign minister. [...] It isn’t the good of the country he has in mind but his intricate calculations on how this attack might help him survive in his position and ascend from it to the prime minister’s post.”

Uzi Benziman, HAA 20.08.08

Wer geht zuerst

„Ehud Barak weiß genau, in welcher Lage er sich befindet. Er weiß, dass seine Tage in der Politik gezählt sind, wenn er so weitermacht. Eine Niederlage der Arbeitspartei ist so gut wie sicher. Seine einzige Chance ist im Moment, alles zu tun, damit Shaul Mofas die Primaries bei der Kadima gewinnt [...], damit Tzippi Livni und ihre Befürworter von Kadima zur Arbeitspartei desertieren. [...]”

In seiner Verzweiflung und in dem Wissen, dass er nicht mehr relevant ist, verursacht Barak möglichst viel Lärm, wühlt mit aller Kraft im politischen Schlamm herum, in der Hoffnung, dass irgendetwas Gutes dabei herauskommen wird. Das einzige, was bisher dabei herauskommt, ist – Schlamm.“

Ben Caspit, MAA 19.08.08

Poor man’s Mofaz

“Barak’s freefall in the polls has one true explanation: [...] The man who once came across as the boldest prime minister we have had, who pulled Israel out of Lebanon [...], who nearly signed peace treaties with Syria and the Palestinians [...] suddenly turned out to be a conservative defense minister, a

coward and a troublemaker, driven solely by his desire to survive politically and deprive his prime minister of any accomplishments.

Study Barak's actions again and again, and you will not find a single daring move [...].

In other words: Barak turned into the poor man's Shaul Mofaz - Benjamin Netanyahu with less-polished English. [...]

But here's a surprise: The constituency that voted for Labor is showing signs of changing. What works with the members of Kadima and Likud doesn't work with them. [...] They want something else. Barak is not delivering it, and they are turning their backs on him in the polls."

Gideon Levy, HAA 24.08.08

Public doesn't want Barak

"Senior Labor officials, who see the polls predicting the party's collapse, are seeking a way to get out of the crisis, yet they don't know how. A little more than a year ago, Ehud Barak was elected to lead the party, but it appears that for the time being he is simply not taking off. Yet more than that, the public simply doesn't want to see him rise. The Israeli public is punishing Barak for past mistakes, present declarations, and perhaps also for the putsch attempt against Ehud Olmert and the blatant interference in the Kadima primaries. [...]

Barak at the Defense Ministry is ok, the Israelis say, but no more than that. Even silent rookies Livni and Mofaz are better than him, the public says; Benjamin Netanyahu is certainly better. [...] At this time it appears that he will be pulverized in any case, regardless of what he does. Yet maybe, maybe, he's paying the price for Labor's longtime obsequiousness vis-à-vis Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert, and anyone else would was willing to leave a few crumbs for it around the government table."

Attila Somfalvi, JED 23.08.08

2. Die Siedlerbewegung

In den Medien wurde der dritte Jahrestages des Rückzuges aus Gaza zum Anlass genommen, diesen zu bewerten und die Zukunft der Siedler im Westjordanland zu thematisieren.

Außerdem fokussierte sich die Debatte auf den Streit um die illegale Siedlung Migron, der sich seit Monaten hinzieht. Im Januar hatte der Oberste Gerichtshof entschieden, Migron müsse spätestens im August geräumt werden, sollten die Siedler sich nicht zu einer freiwilligen Evakuierung bereit

erklären. Kurz vor Ablauf dieser Frist kam es zu einer Einigung zwischen der Vertretung der Siedler und der Regierung. Diese sieht vor, dass Migron bestehen bleibt, bis für die Bewohner neue Häuser an anderer Stelle gebaut worden sind. Dieser Prozess könnte sich jedoch über Jahre hinziehen und wird wohl auf die Erweiterung einer anderen Siedlung hinauslaufen.

Die Diskussionen um die Siedlerbewegung intensivierten sich auch angesichts einer Reihe von gewalttätigen Übergriffen von Siedlern auf Palästinenser oder deren Eigentum in den letzten Monaten, sowie eines Berichtes der Organisation Peace Now, demzufolge sich die Anzahl der neu gebauten Wohneinheiten in den Siedlungen in diesem Jahr gegenüber 2007 fast verdoppelt hat.

Ofra first

"For two years now, a raging debate has centered on the question of when, if ever, the government will evacuate the illegal outpost of Migron. [...] Defense Minister Ehud Barak cooks up a deal to relocate Migron a few hundred meters away in exchange for 'legalizing' the outpost and turning it into a settlement.

Shifting the discussion on the future of the settlements from the political arena into the realm of law, [...] does not bring us closer to a diplomatic solution. Rather, it moves us further away. [...] Sending paperwork that proves property ownership from one lawyer to the next and distinguishing between a legal settlement and an illegal outpost are all means designed to preserve the status quo. [...] Migron is no more legal or illegal than Ofra, located beside it. [...]

The High Court ruled that Migron was built on private lands and thus needs to relocate sooner or later. Yet, one Migron less or one Migron more will not alter the overall picture. Circumstances in the West Bank are conspiring to create one state with greater rights for Jews. Partition is becoming impossible to implement. This is the future toward which the Israeli public - both right and left - is marching while it obsesses over a caravan in Migron."

HAA, 17.08.08

For an agreement, against confrontation

"The agreement reached between the Yesha Council and the government on evacuating the unauthorized outpost at Migron is a good one, and

both sides - the government and the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District - should be commended for their responsibility and courage in choosing compromise and agreement over confrontation and the danger of bloodshed. [...]

It should be hoped that this is a true turning point, and that after a long period of following in the wake of the extremists the Yesha Council has decided to stop giving in, and instead to faithfully reflect the feeling and belief of the overwhelming majority of the residents of Judea and Samaria and of the State of Israel.”

Yehuda Ben Meir, HAA 18.08.08

This land isn't Israel

“Last week, we marked three years to the disengagement. [...]

In the land of the settlers, disengagement is a bleeding wound. It changed not only their relationship with the State, but also the relationship amongst themselves. The central leadership has crumbled, and the settlement movement today is led by wild groups of young people who are openly fed up with Israel and its institutions.

And this anger makes them lose it. Almost not a day goes by without an incident vis-à-vis the security forces. [...] They are mad at the IDF, show contempt to the law, and refuse to accept the State's authority. [...] And as always, they do the job for their rivals – because more than any spineless Yossi Beilin speech, they define the place they live in as 'not Israel.'

This is a lawless land, lacking respect, where people who are different than us live and conduct themselves in line with codes we don't understand. It is a land that has rejected all the basic values that hold us together: The respect to IDF soldiers, the sense of solidarity, the realization that the police do an exhausting job under impossible conditions.

These people create a situation whereby, when the day comes, and the agreements are signed on the lawn in Washington, it will be easier to give up this land, which isn't really ours; this land where not only the laws and landscape are different, but also the people.”

Yair Lapid, JED 19.08.08

Deceit and double standards

“[The author of the article above, Yair] Lapid[...] launched into a toxic tirade against the Jewish population living across the 1967 lines. [...] An entire

population, the overwhelming majority of which are demonstrably law-abiding [...] citizens, residing in government approved towns and villages - that due to the alleged actions of an unspecified number of youthful hot-heads have been excluded from being part of Israel and part of the Israeli people. [...]

For Lapid, his self-perceived distortion of reality serves only as a facilitating factor – an excuse – for the implementation of political agenda, Israeli withdrawal and concessions to the Palestinians. [...] Moreover, Lapid's characterization of the 'lawless land' in which settlers reside could perhaps be better applied to the Negev where the Bedouin reside and where there is almost a total collapse of the rule of law, or to the Arab villages in the north where flouting of the building code and illegal construction is arguably the rule rather exception.”

Martin Sherman, JED 24.08.08

My people love to have it so

“Instead of encouraging moderation, disengagement emboldened fanatic extremists and they arm themselves to the teeth. Not only is Sderot intimidated by Kassams, but Ashkelon has been attacked by Grads and urban centers like Ashdod grow chillingly vulnerable. With this kind of peace, who needs war? [...]

The Knesset State Control Committee voted to set up a state commission of inquiry into the scandalous fact that most of the 10,000 expellees are still in a very sorry state. But their plight is certainly not the result of shortcomings in the welfare and social work sphere. They are the direct victims of a much deeper malaise which affects not only them. It imperils each and every Israeli.

Instead focusing on the failure to resettle the evicted settlers, there should be a state inquiry into the process that allowed the disastrous disengagement to ever be marketed and foisted on the gullible citizenry. If the malfeasance isn't exposed, we're liable for more of the awful same. Disengagement's central deception cost the entire Israeli collective the strategic deterrent indispensable to its survival, and it chipped away at the state's Zionist ideological underpinnings. It substantially and indisputably weakened the country.”

Sarah Honig, JPO 21.08.08

3. Iran

Nachdem der Iran im Juli seine Langstreckenrakete Shihab-3, die Israel erreichen kann, testete und

Mitte August versuchte eine Rakete ins All zu schießen, wurde in den israelischen Medien erneut die Bedrohung durch den persischen Staat diskutiert. Berichten der Tageszeitung Ma'ariv zufolge hat die israelische Regierung beschlossen, genaue Pläne für einen möglichen Angriff auf die iranischen Nuklearanlagen vorzubereiten. In den USA mehren sich indes die Stimmen, die sich gegen einen solchen Angriff aussprechen. Washington hat Israel nicht autorisiert, den von Amerika kontrollierten irakischen Luftraum zu nutzen und dürfte auch nicht dem Verkauf moderner Kampfflzeuge an Israel zustimmen. Stattdessen soll in der Negev-Wüste ein leistungsstarkes, von US-Militär bemanntes Radarsystem gebaut werden, das früher als bisher möglich vor Raketenangriffen aus dem Iran warnen soll.

Iran strike not an option

"It's not the new Iranian toy satellite that worries Israel's security experts. What bothers them much more is the fact that Iran's 'space show' Sunday revealed yet another piece of this giant puzzle, which makes up the strategic threat being built before our eyes. [...]"

We're facing a giant infrastructure with many arms, starting from the uranium mines and culminating with a nuclear warhead. Those who believe this infrastructure can be destroyed in some kind of aerial strike or another are hallucinating. The regime in Tehran is the only one able to stop this project. [...] If international pressures prompt a temporary break in one area - for example, developing nuclear warheads (as the Americans claim) - they boost the pace of progress in other areas, such as satellites, which is a completely legitimate track, or in less legitimate areas, such as uranium enrichment. [...]"

This immense Iranian project cannot be stopped by bombing one facility or another. [...] We are dealing with a monster being built before our eyes and the eyes of the world. Only intense international persuasion could, perhaps, take this project off track."

Alex Fishman, JED 18.08.08

Iran's American Protector

"[US Defense Secretary Robert] Gates's push to abandon the US's alliance with Israel in favor of embracing Iraq's Iranian and Arab neighbors is nowhere more apparent than in his actions regarding Iran's nuclear weapons program. [...] The policy involves downplaying the urgency of the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons,

understating the progress Iran has made toward nuclear capabilities and openly working to appease Iran through US support and involvement with EU negotiations with Teheran. [...]"

The first US assault on what had until then been a more or less united public front with Israel on the issue of Iran's nuclear program came with the publication of the US's National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear weapons program last November. In the face of Iran's open calls to destroy Israel and the US, its rapid progress in its uranium enrichment activities, its command of the insurgency in Iraq, of Hizbullah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Palestinian Authority, and its ballistic missile buildup, the NIE claimed that Iran had ended its nuclear weapons program in 2003. [...]"

In recent months [...] Gates has made defending Iran's nuclear installations against the prospect of any Israeli or US attack his primary concern. [...] [H]e has stated repeatedly that attacking Iran would be a disaster for the US. [...] As a consequence the US will deny the IDF the right to fly over Iraqi airspace. [...]"

Gates's position presents a daunting challenge to Israel and indeed to the US. If Iran is to be prevented from carrying out genocide, and if Bush hopes to leave office with even a shred of international credibility, Gates must be shunted firmly to the side."

Caroline Glick, JPO 18.08.08

Attack isn't the answer

"A military attack on Iran - whether carried out by the U.S. or by Israel - would augment, not diminish, the threat posed by Tehran. For one, it would only enhance Iran's reputation as the Muslim world's lone, brave, anti-imperialist nation, which defies both the Great Satan and its little brother. Ahmadinejad's popularity would soar to even greater heights on the Arab street, increasing the likelihood that such groups as Hamas and Hezbollah would grow more powerful.

What's more, an attack would likely aid Iran's moribund economy. When Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz vowed last June to attack Iran, oil prices skyrocketed \$11 in one day. [...] At the political level, a military attack would rehabilitate and entrench Tehran's most radical elements - such as Ahmadinejad - for years to come. Using the pretext of a national security emergency, debate and dissent would be crushed. [...]"

An Israeli attack would create a popular enmity toward the Jewish state that 29 years of Iranian government propaganda have failed to achieve. [...] Ultimately, Israel's underlying problem with Iran is not its nuclear ambitions, but the nature of the Iranian regime. As long as the political status quo remains in Tehran, Israel will never be able to trust Iranian intentions, even if there is a nuclear agreement.“

Karim Sadjadpour, HAA 22.08.08

Germany's special relationship – with Iran

“For the last three weeks the German government has been inundated with criticism for doing business with the world champion of anti-Semitism, approving as ‘no cause for concern’ the delivery to Iran of three gas liquefaction units. [...]

What cannot be overlooked, however, is this blatant contradiction of Merkel's deeming Israel part of Germany's national security interests during her Knesset speech last March. Although Merkel stated then that Israel's security is ‘non-negotiable,’ her government is facilitating a deal that strengthens Israel's number one enemy. [...]

Commitment and a sense of responsibility are lacking in regards to Germany's declared national objective of preserving the existence of the Jewish state. Existing sanctions and export restrictions have proved completely insufficient. [...]

The one remaining alternative to military scenarios has not been genuinely attempted: targeting the regime with the most painful economic and political sanctions possible. [...] Germany is Iran's most important trade partner in the West and an irreplaceable supplier of its technology. [...]

If Germany does not have the legal grounds to stop these exports, such measures must be passed as quickly as possible. [...] But if Germany continues its irresponsible business as usual, it is clear who will pay the price: the Iranian people, who suffer under a brutal regime, and, of course, Israel.”

Jonathan Weckerle, JPO 19.08.08

HAA = Haaretz
HZO = Ha Tzofe
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth
JPO = Jerusalem Post
MAA = Maariv
IHY = Israeli HaYom

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