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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Netanjahus Bar-Ilan Rede

Am 14. Juni hielt Benjamin Netanjahu seine mit Spannung erwartete Grundsatzrede an der Bar-Ilan Universität. In ihr bekannte sich der Premierminister erstmals zu einem palästinensischen Staat, verknüpfte dieses Zugeständnis jedoch mit einer Reihe von Bedingungen. Dazu zählen die Demilitarisierung dieses Staates, sowie die Anerkennung Israels als jüdischem Staat. Während die Reaktionen in Israel überwiegend positiv ausfielen, wies die palästinensische Führung diese Forderungen umgehend zurück.

Die Rede muss auch als Antwort auf Barak Obamas Ansprache in Kairo verstanden werden. Der US-Präsident hatte sich darin deutlich für eine Zwei-Staaten-Lösung ausgesprochen und damit Druck auf die israelische Regierung ausgeübt. Diesen Druck hoffte Netanjahu mit seiner Ansprache wenigstens kurzfristig gemindert zu haben - Obama wertete die Rede als ersten Schritt in die richtige Richtung.

A light earthquake

"Time and mostly the deeds of Benjamin Netanyahu will tell, yet the impression is that something happened here. It is hard to ignore the importance of the prime minister's speech, and the shift in his positions reflected in the speech and mostly in his rhetoric. The man who wrote books about terror and who made most of his public service career out of warning of and scaring us with the prospect of a Palestinian state has ultimately declared the necessity of establishing it. [...]"

However, one has difficulty in seeing how purposeful diplomatic negotiations can be stimulated in the face of the endless series of reservations presented by Netanyahu, and with the model he proposed, whereby the Palestinians establish a state without a state.

If we add to that his endorsement of continuing the settlement enterprise, Netanyahu practically neutralized his main statement: Two states for two peoples. However, diplomatic life has dynamics of its own, and as we are dealing with Netanyahu here, this is nonetheless an encouraging start."

Dror Nissan, JED 15.06.09

The same old babble

"Thirty minutes of focused observation and attentive listening to a prime minister presenting his nation, through deep conviction, with a blend of tired clichés the likes of which we've been hearing for decades now. [...] First of all, we are small and surrounded by enemies, and therefore the Iranian threat is more important [...]. Secondly, we are awfully right, and as proof of this see the pogroms and the Holocaust [...]."

However, there is hope – for [...] tourism [...] and cooperation [...], as well as Arab entrepreneurs who will come here and invest; and all of this was uttered [without] too much logical order or wise dramatic structure, just in order to finally reach the formula which marks Bibi at his best [...]."

That is, sometimes in the future we will engage in negotiations with the Palestinians without pre-conditions, as long as they agree to our pre-conditions. Later we'll see what comes out of it."

Ariana Melamed, JED 15.06.09

Ein Palästinenserstaat, aber...

"Dreißig Minuten rechter Rhetorik umwickelten und verdeckten eine klitzekleine linke Botschaft. Ein einziger, isolierter, bloßgelegter, aber bedeutender Satz. Schlussendlich sagte er die eine Sache, die er bis heute nur mit Augenzwinkern und Hochziehen der Schultern angedeutet hatte. Er sagte 'palästinensischer Staat' und ist am Leben geblieben."

Ben Caspit, MAA 15.06.09

The Right's knuckleheaded response

"Even for a leadership well-versed in rejecting Israel's outstretched hand of peace, the Palestinians wasted little time Sunday night in denouncing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's bold diplomatic address. [...]

Given the haste and harshness of the reaction, one would assume that Israel's Right would have looked on this turn of events with glee. After all, if Ramallah reacted with such wrath, then certainly the people in Ofra and Otniel should be overjoyed, don't you think? Yet that is clearly not the case, as a number of right-wing figures have come out solidly against the speech, invoking terms such as 'betrayal.' [...]

The fact is that Netanyahu's speech was masterfully crafted, not only in terms of style and structure, but especially in terms of content. It was the perfect rejoinder to the pressure from Washington, essentially turning the tables on the Palestinians and immediately transforming them into the rejectionists."

Michael Freud, JPO 16.06.09

Speaking the truth

"The 'taboo' has finally been broken and now every major Israeli political party officially endorses the 'two-state solution.' Moreover, the prime minister's stated conditions for the establishment of such a state – Arab recognition of Israel as Jewish state and an eventual demilitarized Palestinian state – will quickly be sidestepped or forgotten. Unless something miraculous happens we will be staring at a new Arab state in our midst within the coming years."

Yoel Meltzer, JED 18.06.09

Even if he did say 'Palestinian state'

"Netanyahu's speech of regression has aligned him with the positions of Shas and Yisrael Beiteinu. They accept the idea of two states but try to torpedo it with conditions that render it ridiculous. [...]

Even if Netanyahu did say 'a Palestinian state', he was not able to pass the rejectionist crown to the Palestinian and Arab side."

Shaul Arieli, HAA 16.06.09

Der Ball geht wieder an Obama

"Es war Bibi Netanjahu in seiner Glanzrolle. [...]

Sein Schlüsselsatz [...] betraf nicht die palästinensischen Angelegenheiten, sondern den Holocaust. 'Wäre der Staat Israel rechtzeitig entstanden, hätte der Holocaust nicht stattgefunden', antwortete Netanjahu auf Obamas

angedeuteten Vergleich zwischen dem historischen Leid der Juden und den relativen Mühen der Palästinenser. [...]

Der wichtigste Höhepunkt der Rede war die historische und ideologische Grundlage, die Netanjahu dem Recht des jüdischen Volkes und dem Staat Israel verlieh. [...]

Die wahre Größe der Rede lag darin, dass sie die Herzen in Israel zum Schmelzen brachte."

Amnon Lord, HZO 15.06.09

The PM at Bar Ilan: A damage assessment

"In his speech at Bar-Ilan University, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu acquiesced to precisely what he was elected to repudiate. [...]

Instead of seizing on these indisputable failures of the land-for-peace/two-states-for two-peoples approach to repudiate it, Netanyahu embraced it - however reluctantly. Instead of enlisting the events of last 15 years to delegitimize the Palestinian narrative, he endorsed it - however unenthusiastically. [...]

In the final analysis Netanyahu chose surrender over resistance, and in so doing he put in grave danger not only his country and his people but the very rationale of Zionism itself."

Martin Sherman, JPO 16.06.09

The forgotten audience

"Netanyahu's vision ignores and obscures the more complex Israeli reality, namely, that one of every five citizens of Israel is an Arab. [...]

In his failure to mention Israel's Arab citizens [...] Netanyahu missed a historic opportunity, one that would have yielded immediate win-win rewards. [...]

[H]e failed to acknowledge a most basic truth: that without the successful integration of these citizens into Israeli society, Israel can never become the safe, secure, successful and truly just national homeland for the Jewish people about which he eloquently spoke. [...]

So while it is probably too early to assess the impact of Netanyahu's address on the prospects for regional reconciliation, it is already clear that it produced nothing of promise for those of us who are deeply concerned about Israel's internal cohesion and sustainability."

Mike Prashker, HAA 19.06.09

2. Proteste gegen Wahlbetrug im Iran

Auch in den israelischen Medien stießen die Präsidentschaftswahlen im Iran und die darauffolgenden Proteste auf großes Interesse. Nachdem Präsident Ahmadinejad zum Sieger der Wahlen gekürt worden war, waren zehntausende Anhänger des reformorientierten Kandidaten Mussawi auf die Straße gegangen, um gegen Wahlbetrug zu demonstrieren.

In Israel wurde vor allem darüber spekuliert, welche Auswirkungen ein möglicher Regimewechsel auf die iranische Rolle im Nahen Osten sowie sein Nuklearprogramm haben würde. Der Chef des israelischen Geheimdienstes, Meir Dagan, trat indes mit seiner Einschätzung an die Öffentlichkeit, dass eine Revolution im Iran nicht absehbar sei und dass auch ein moderater Präsident keinen Unterschied für das Verhältnis zu Israel machen würde.

Mousavi bad for Israel

"Many people will breathe a sigh of relief should Mir-Hossein Mousavi be elected as Iran's president. The question is whether a Mousavi victory and Ahmadinejad defeat will indeed serve Israel's strategic interests, and the answer is probably 'no.' [...]

Only after the radical Ahmadinejad's victory in 2005, and particularly in wake of his venomous statements against the State of Israel and his prominent Holocaust denial, the Western world starting seeing Iran in the light Israeli leaders hoped for. [...]

We can assume that a victory by the reformist Mousavi and his moderate statements would prompt the Obama Administration and European leaders to be much more open and attentive and much less critical towards Iran. [...]

In a state where the president in fact implements the policy outlined by supreme leader Khamenei, a Mousavi win will enable Iran to break the isolation, grant an insurance policy to the Ayatollah regime, and bring it closer to the bomb."

Soli Shahvar, JED 12.06.09

Israelis for Ahmadinejad

"The prize for this week's most stupid remark has to go to the officials, officers and experts who described Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the candidate Israel prefers to win the election in Iran, and were even happy he did. It is hard to think of a more blatant manifestation of the narrow horizons of Israeli strategic thinking. [...]

The presentation of Ahmadinejad as Hitler and Iran as a police state a la '1984' ignores the internal pressure in Iran for greater democracy and openness. Those who see Iran only through its centrifuges will also find it hard to understand and accept the Obama approach, which seeks dialogue with Tehran [...].

The world may also come to terms with an Iranian bomb. Israel will have difficulty bombing Iran with Obama against it, and may even be too late. Under such circumstances, it would be best for Israel if there were people in the Iranian leadership who could calm things down in the region, not stir up strife."

Aluf Benn, HAA 12.06.09

Israel's rare opportunity

"As far as Israel is concerned, this is a win-win situation. If the protesters successfully overthrow the regime, they will have neutralized the greatest security threat facing the Jewish state. And if they fail, Israel will still probably be better off than it is today. For if the mullahs violently repress the pro-democracy dissidents, the Obama administration will be hard-pressed to legitimize their blood bath by embracing them as negotiating partners."

Caroline Glick, JPO 19.06.09

A taste of freedom

"If he did have the election rigged, [Supreme Leader Ayatollah] Khamenei may have decided that the regime did not need a less malevolent persona. After all, he's done pretty well with Ahmadinejad as his number one: Iran's program to build an atom bomb is on track. Trade with the EU, Russia and China is brisk. [...] The Obama administration seems pleasantly quiescent. Bellicosity has produced dividends. Why change a winning strategy?"

JPO 15.06.09

Turning point for Iran?

"Whatever his original intentions, Mir Hossein Mousavi now represents something bigger than a 'soft' alternative to Ahmadinejad. His ascendancy would most likely be a good thing for Iran and the world, even if no one really understands the intentions of the powerful counter-elite behind him. [...] No one knows if there is any turning back after Mousavi put out the word that his followers should hold a general strike in case of his arrest. Plainly,

the regime hopes that tear gas and bullets will dampen down the protesters' fervor. We shall see."
JPO 21.06.09

The revolution fizzles

"When comparing the events of the past week and a half in Tehran to the Islamic revolution in 1978-79, it becomes apparent why this time around the regime had the upper hand. [...]

The Iranian regime is showing great determination and has resorted to brutal violence that deters many Iranians from joining the protests. [...] The engine that led the Islamic revolution was Khomeini's charismatic leadership. One of the main weaknesses of the opposition today is lack of leadership. [...]

However, there is still hope. Despite signs that the protests are fading, the uprising may resume in days or weeks [...]

The blatant election fraud and the brutal suppression that followed it eroded the regime's legitimacy and forced it to rely on military force instead of religious ideology. Iran's history shows that such victories sowed the seeds of the greater revolutions, even if they came later."

Meir Litvak, JED 24.06.09

Jealous of the Iranians

It makes one green with envy: The scenes from Iran prove that some nations are trying to take their fate into their own hands. [...]

This is not only about rising up against a tyrannical regime; sometimes it's about a struggle for justice in democracies, too. That struggle is not conducted only in polls and elections; such struggles must spill out onto the streets. Here, too. [...]

It's true, there is liberty in Israel, but only for us, the Jews. We have a regime that is no less tyrannical than the ayatollahs' regime: the regime of the officers and the settlers in the territories [...]

Missing the opportunity here will be just as decisive as four more years of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in power. But look what is happening in totalitarian Iran and what is happening here, the sole democracy in the Middle East, blah, blah, blah."

Gideon Levy, HAA 18.06.09

Good we didn't bomb Iran

"The collapse of the Ayatollah regime is, of course, everything Israel could ever hope for. We are not only talking about the nuclear issue, but also about much more immediate gains: Hizbullah will dry up,

Hamas will lose its main source of strength, and Syria's backdoor will slam shut.

However, everything happening at Tehran's Azadi Square – the amazing coming together of young people, Internet culture, social ferment, and woman power – would not have happened had we listened to the regular bunch of hysterical screamers around here and attempted to bomb Iran's nuclear sites.

What would have happened then? Exactly what happens around here during times of war: The Iranian public would have rallied around the leadership, a wave of patriotic fury would have swept through the whole of Iran, and Ahmadinejad would not have needed to resort to any fraud in order to defeat the reformists."

Yair Lapid, JED 27.06.09

3. Korruption in der Politik

Mit der zeitgleichen Verurteilung zweier Ex-Minister rückte das Thema Korruption in den Mittelpunkt der Medienaufmerksamkeit. Während der ehemalige Finanzminister Abraham Hirschson wegen Veruntreuung für fünf Jahre ins Gefängnis muss, wurde der ehemalige Gesundheitsminister Shlomo Benizri wegen der Annahme von Bestechungsgeldern zu einer Gefängnisstrafe von vier Jahren verurteilt.. Die Urteile, die zufälligerweise am selben Tag gefällt wurden, bilden den vorläufigen Höhepunkt einer Reihe von Untersuchungen und Anklagen, die seit einigen Jahren die israelische Politik erschüttern. So hatten sowohl Präsident Katsav, als auch Premier Olmert ihr Amt niederlegen müssen, nachdem Anklage gegen sie erhoben worden war. Zurzeit wird zudem gegen den amtierenden Außenminister Lieberman ermittelt. Auf dem Korruptionsindex der Organisation Transparency International fiel Israel 2008 in einer Liste von 180 Ländern von Platz 30 auf 33.

A day of honor for the rule of law

"The government of Israel has known serious and embarrassing affairs before, some of which ended in indictments, convictions and even prison sentences. [...]

Corruption may not have gotten worse since those days, but rather only exposed more frequently and treated with greater determination by police investigators, their commanders and the attorney general. [...]

Recent years are turning out to be the most significant in the struggle against corruption in high

places. President Moshe Katsav stepped down following a plea bargain [...] on charges of sexual offenses. Olmert resigned as prime minister [...].

The message of the judges is that high position does not grant ministers immunity from imprisonment. [...] But for justice to truly be done another clear message is needed: No harm will come to complainants and witnesses who testify against those in high office."

HAA 25.06.09

The tip of the iceberg

"Israel's citizens are fed up with the plethora of corruption throughout the establishment [...]. It must be made clear not only to elected officials expected to maintain their integrity, but mostly to all those around them at their offices or in the corridors of power who seek to secure personal gains via their association with decision-makers. [...]

This is in fact the true malady around here, [...] the deep corruption, which is defined by criminal law as an act of fraud or breach of trust that hurts the public.

Shlomo Benizri and Abraham Hirschson stole, and that's bad. Yet there are many other lower ranked public officials, at local authorities and government offices, who commit offences that are much more disturbing: They breach the trust granted to them by the public, thereby hurting the public to a much greater extent."

Haim Misgav, JED 25.06.09

Corruption in perspective

"The fact that two separate Israeli courts sent two ex-ministers to do long stretches behind bars last Wednesday confers no great honor on our society. [...] [Q]uestion marks are raised by the pronounced sluggishness of the prosecution to move ahead expeditiously with the trials of former premier Ehud Olmert [...] and former president Moshe Katsav. [...] The confluence of so many episodes (and even more charges which didn't mature into indictments) inevitably creates the impression of a society riddled with corruption. [...]

But we mustn't be too hard on ourselves.

If anything, the unforgiving sentences meted to two top political players show a judicial system more prone than elsewhere to prosecute headliner offenders. [...]

The national embarrassment of having two ex-ministers sent to prison needs to be put in perspective. Israel does not have more corruption than in past years, and, comparatively speaking, we

are not a particularly corrupt country. We are, moreover, blessed with an indefatigable investigative press, and with police, prosecutors and judges more determined than ever to uphold the rule of law."

JPO 27.06.09

Throw the book at them

"Not everyone is corrupt' – true, but not sufficient. Must all the apples be rotten to spoil the whole barrel? And do not believe for a minute that there are isolated, immune islands. [...] When a state stinks from the head, everything will reek sooner or later. Powerful empires have been vanquished only after they rotted from within. [...]

Compassion and consideration will be replaced by severe judgment. That is what is urgently called for now. Throw the book at every possible offending minister and punish him as severely as possible."

Yossi Sarid, HAA 25.06.09

HAA = Haaretz

HZO= Ha Tzofe

IHY = Israeli HaYom

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

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