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1. Nobelpreis für Obama

In Israel traf die Entscheidung des norwegischen Nobelpreiskomitees, den diesjährigen Friedensnobelpreis an US-Präsident Barack Obama zu verleihen, in weiten Kreisen auf Erstaunen. Obama selbst hatte die Ehrung „überrascht und zutiefst demütig“ entgegengenommen. In einer Erklärung des Preiskomitees hieß es, Obama sei aufgrund seiner „außergewöhnlichen Bemühungen, die internationale Diplomatie und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Völkern zu stärken“ ausgezeichnet worden. In den israelischen Medien überwogen indes die skeptischen Stimmen. Gerade weil der Friedensprozess im Nahen Osten im Moment besonders festgefahren scheint, wirkte die Entscheidung auf viele Kommentatoren verfrüht.

Think again: Booby price

“The Nobel Peace Prize jury had two audiences in mind last week in awarding the prize to US President Barack Obama. The first was the American public. [...] The second was President Obama himself. In the manner of good parents, the jury offered positive reinforcement to Obama for the course upon which he has embarked. [...]

With respect to the American public, the Nobel Peace Prize will likely prove more of an embarrassment than a boost to Obama. [...] Even worse from the president's point of view, the award can only serve to emphasize the paucity of his achievements and provide further grist for late-night comedians. [...]

The Nobel Peace Prize jury will likely prove more successful with its second intended audience: Barack Obama. No American president has more assiduously courted worldwide adulation. In his frequent travels, he has often seemed to be running for President of the World. [...] Those who court favor are particularly vulnerable to flattery. Obama

knows why he was awarded the prize and will be loath to disappoint his admirers in Oslo.

That should be of particular concern to Israelis. Norway has been a world leader in anti-Israel boycotts, and the Norwegians who awarded the prize to Obama clearly signaled their approval for his distancing of the United States from Israel in the quest for Middle East peace.”

Jonathan Rosenblum, JPO 15.10.09

The Obama Nobel mystery

“Awarding Obama the Nobel Peace Prize [...] constitutes a transparent attempt by European politicians to bolster Obama's determination in the global arena and improve his standing in the domestic arena. [...]

Awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to President Obama does not reflect respect by the Nobel Prize Committee toward the American President. It does not intend to express appreciation of the American legacy and American human and mega-billion monetary sacrifice, which spared Europe defeat during World War I and World War II, produced victory over Communism and minimized Islamic terrorism in Europe. [...] The Nobel Peace Prize Committee aimed to improve Obama's image among Americans and leverage his presidency in order to Europeanize US policy.”

Yoram Ettinger, JED 12.10.09

“Die Romanze Europas mit Obama begann schon während seiner Kandidatur. [...] Schon bevor er überhaupt gewählt wurde, hatte sich Europa eine Meinung über Obama gebildet, genau wie das Preiskomitee in Oslo ihm den Friedensnobelpreis für einen Frieden verliehen hat, den er noch gar nicht erzielt hat. [...] Obwohl wir noch nicht gesehen haben, wie sich Obama mit den israelischen und palästinensischen Verhandlungsteams auseinandersetzen wird, wissen die Europäer schon jetzt, dass er mit den Israelis weitaus strenger umgehen wird,

als mit den Palästinensern, und allein das bereitet ihnen große Genußtuung.“
Yiftach Ofeck, HZO 13.10.09

In praise of Obama's dream

“Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize mostly because of who he is: An inspiring leader who managed to give hope to millions in America and across the world. A man of mixed decent who managed to become the leader of the world's most powerful nation against all odds; a leader who is among the few who possess both a worldview and an amazing ability to present it.

Obama had a dream: To turn the world into a better place. [...] The moment most Americans chose him to be their president, Obama's dreams turned into his action plan and into the agenda of the administration he heads.

Obama presented his dream of a world devoid of nuclear weapons; a world where Israel is at peace with all its enemies. [...] He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in honorable recognition of his action plan, which he is closer to realizing today than ever before.”

Orly Azoulay, JED 11.10.09

A premature, misplaced act

“[W]hen has a Nobel Peace Prize been awarded to a statesman for oratory alone? [...] Surely the Norwegian committee grasped that a premature award might well end up exploding in their faces, as did the previous awards to North Vietnam's Le Duc Tho and the Palestinians' Yasser Arafat. [...]

The premature award of the peace prize to a fledgling administration struggling to gain its footing in the international arena poses other risks. [...] To be sure, being a recipient of the prize does not diminish the powers of the presidency, but there is little doubt that the decision to resort to more coercive measures will be that much more difficult for a peace prize laureate. [...]

For those of us in the Middle East and Israel, the decision of the Norwegian committee bodes especially ill. For if the aim of the committee was to encourage Obama to stay his course, it means continuing with a policy that exaggerates the centrality of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the stability of the Middle East and links US opposition to Iranian nuclearization to the freezing and dismantling of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria. [...] True, Obama cannot be blamed for the decision of the committee, but it was a mistake to accept it. Had

he done the right thing, it would have been seen as a truly gracious and noble act.”

L. Marc Zell, JPO 11.10.09

A deferred Nobel

“Oslo decided to change its ways and begin giving out deferred Nobel Prizes: Win now, pay tomorrow. There's no other way to explain the bewildering, not to say bizarre, decision to grant the Nobel Prize for Peace to Barack Obama. [...]

For the information of the esteemed committee members: Obama is not a complete package. So far he has betrayed his mission in the one region most threatening to world peace.

There has been no 'change' and no 'yes we can.' There has only been profoundly depressing treading in his predecessor's footsteps.”

Gideon Levy, HAA 11.10.09

2. Krise zwischen Israel und Türkei

Eine Reihe von Ereignissen hat in den letzten Monaten zu einer tiefen diplomatischen Krise zwischen Israel und der Türkei geführt. Hatte die Türkei noch im letzten Jahr eine wichtige Rolle als Vermittlerin zwischen Syrien und Israel gespielt, so haben sich die Beziehungen nach dem Gaza-Krieg dramatisch verschlechtert. Premierminister Erdogan hatte sich mit scharfen Worten gegen das militärische Vorgehen gewandt, fühlte sich aber auch „betrogen“, da Premierminister Olmert ihm noch kurz vorher versichert hatte, es werde keinen Militärschlag geben. Nun kam es zu einer erneuten Krise, als Ankara kurzfristig Israels Teilnahme an einem Militärmanöver absagte. Für Entrüstung sorgte außerdem eine Serie im türkischen Fernsehen, in der israelische Soldaten palästinensische Kinder ermorden. Die brutalen Szenen, die aus israelischer Sicht, in keiner Weise die Realität widerspiegeln und ein gänzlich undifferenziertes und verfälschtes Bild des Konfliktes präsentieren, schockierte die israelische Öffentlichkeit. Premierminister Netanjahu sagte in diesem Zusammenhang, er könne sich eine weitere Vermittlung durch die Türkei in Gesprächen mit Syrien nicht vorstellen. Die Medien beschäftigten sich intensiv mit den Beweggründen der türkischen Regierung für diesen Sinneswandel.

How Turkey was lost

“Once the apotheosis of a pro-Western, dependable Muslim democracy, this week Turkey officially left the Western alliance and became a full member of the Iranian axis.

It isn't that Ankara's behavior changed fundamentally in recent days. There is nothing new in its massive hostility toward Israel and its effusive solicitousness toward the likes of Syria and Hamas. Since the Islamist AKP party first won control over the Turkish government in the 2002 elections,[...] the Turks have incrementally and inexorably moved the formerly pro-Western Muslim democracy into the radical Islamist camp. [...] Turkey's break with the West; its decisive rupture with Israel and its opposition to the US in Iraq and Iran was predictable. Militant Islam of the AKP variety has been enjoying growing popularity and support throughout Turkey for many years.”
Caroline Glick, JPO 15.10.09

An open letter to my Israeli friends

“Turkey's ‘zero-problem-with-neighbors’ policy has so far paid off by creating new diplomatic and economic venues, strengthening its regional and global standing considerably, and helping it to attain a more active role in world affairs through its memberships in the UN Security Council and the G-20. Even though this process has caused the Turkish-Israeli ‘strategic partnership’ to lose some steam, it was shaped not by Islamic impulses, but by purely rational diplomatic and strategic choices. [...] Analyzing current Turkish domestic politics within the framework of Islamism is deeply wrongheaded. Islamism is an outdated phenomenon for Turkey, as it is for the world. [...] It was not the fervor of Islamism but an emphasis on conservative democracy and liberal economy that brought the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) to power in 2002.”
Ufuk Ulutas, JPO 19.10.09

“Erdogan scheint vom Wahnsinn besessen zu sein. Wahrscheinlich hat er vor, das Ottomanische Reich neu zu gründen. Israel ist für ihn der Sündenbock. [...] Erdogan möchte, dass die Beziehungen zu Israel enden [...]. Er hofft, dass dadurch seine Position in Teheran und Damaskus gestärkt wird.”
Dan Margalit, IHY 15.10.09

Disengaging from Israel

“The historic reconciliation agreement signed Saturday between Turkey and Armenia constitutes further testament to the positive changes undergone by Turkey in recent year. [...] The regional emphasis in Turkey's foreign policy stems not only from tactical diplomatic and political considerations, but also from a broad strategic vision that wishes to

position Turkey as a central and influential force, thereby improving its status in the slow and ongoing talks on joining the European Union. [...]

It is difficult to ignore the fact that precisely at a time when Turkey reaches out to its past enemies, the Turkish administration is adopting an increasingly hostile policy vis-à-vis its former great ally – Israel. This is [...] a deliberate disengagement policy, which is also meant to undermine the status of the Turkish army – the greatest rival of the Erdogan administration. [...]

This will not be the first time where a Middle Eastern regime is exploiting Israel hatred in order to reinforce its domestic status and advance other issues. Such Turkey should not have a place in the European Union. If Israel's security and existence are indeed important to the Europeans, they need to make this position clear to their Turkish interlocutors.”

Eldad Beck, JED 13.10.09

Ankara must decide

“Analysts in Jerusalem suspect the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is using the unfortunate civilian deaths during Operation Cast Lead as a pretext for distancing Turkey from Israel - diplomatically, strategically and economically. [...] Political scientist Efraim Inbar is convinced that Erdogan's Islamic AKP party places greater value on Turkey's ties with the Muslim world than on its political and cultural links to the West. Or does Turkey expect to jettison its relationship with Israel, cozy up to Iran and Hamas, and yet maintain strong ties with Washington and Brussels? [...]

Turkey is an irreplaceable ally. Israelis want our two countries to enjoy cordial relations despite everything that's happened. The onus is now on Ankara to make plain that it, too, wants the relationship to continue. It would thereby also be signaling that Turkey wants to be a bridge between Islam and the West - instead of yet another barrier.”
JPO 12.10.09

Beruhigen

“Man muss sich an die Tatsache gewöhnen, dass die Türkei sich verändert. [...] Das ist nicht gut, aber man kann damit leben. [...] Die Beziehungen zur Türkei sind für uns von großer Bedeutung, und deshalb darf nicht auf sie verzichtet werden. [...] Die Veränderung ist gesellschaftlich, tief und echt. Die Religiösen werden stärker, und zwar auf Kosten der Theorien, auf denen die neue türkische Republik aufgebaut wurde. Übrigens – aus türkischer Sicht

passiert in Israel genau dasselbe: Radikale religiöse Elemente nehmen der Platz der Linken ein, [...] die Rechte übernimmt die Herrschaft.“
Ben Caspit, MAA 15.10.09

A Turkish love story

“It seems that in the two countries' relations, terms like ‘love’ and ‘betrayal’ have replaced the correct terminology of interests and strategic partnership. [...] Perhaps Turkey can't come to terms with Israel's lack of consideration for what it considers most important: allowing it to take part in regional diplomacy. The region's sole Muslim country with genuine ‘ties of love’ with Israel finds itself cast aside like a useless piece of equipment, at a time when she is offering to be a partner. Because in Israel's eyes, Turkey is seen as two states - one in the form of the military, twin sister of Israel, the other political, leaning toward Islam and making friends with Syria and Iran. Thus, insolent Israel decided in a typical manner not to take Turkey's politicians seriously and to adopt the Turkish army.”
Zvi Bar'el, HAA 18.10.09

3. Israelische Reaktionen auf die Annahme des Goldstone-Berichtes im Menschenrechtsrat der UN

Nach der Veröffentlichung des Goldstone-Berichts über Kriegsverbrechen von Israel und Hamas während des Gaza-Krieges wurde der Bericht nun vom UN Menschenrechtsrat angenommen.

Der Rat empfahl außerdem eine Diskussion des Berichts im UN-Sicherheitsrat. Die Entscheidung des Menschenrechtsrates war zunächst verschoben worden. Palästinenserpräsident Abbas hatte erst darauf verzichtet, eine Resolution zum Goldstone-Bericht zu fordern, dann unter starkem innenpolitischen Druck jedoch seine Meinung geändert.

Um eine Resolution des Sicherheitsrates und eine mögliche Weiterleitung an den Internationalen Gerichtshof in Den Haag zu verhindern, sind in Israel inzwischen Stimmen laut geworden, die eine eigene Untersuchung des Gaza-Krieges fordern. Während Premierminister Netanjahu eine Untersuchungskommission bisher nicht ausgeschlossen hat, lehnt Verteidigungsminister Barak eine solche Kommission vehement ab – er hält die interne Untersuchung der Armee für ausreichend.

The puzzling deferral of the UNHRC decision

“Despite the controversy it has aroused, the decision by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to defer a recommendation on the Goldstone Report to the next session was rational and even extremely wise. [...] On the face of it, nothing could be more reasonable than allowing time to consider the 575-page report, rather than blindly supporting it on purely emotional grounds [...]. If applied without any double standards, most of the recommendations in the report would seriously hamper operations by all states engaged in anti-terror and anti-guerilla operations, including NATO, the US and Britain. [...]

But there remain many puzzling aspects to this deferral decision [...]. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is almost universally blamed, even though the PA is not a member of the UNHRC and attended the session only as an observer. [...] There is much speculation about why the PA made this unpopular decision. Some suggest that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton persuaded Abbas that ratification of the report would undermine American efforts to restart the stalled peace process. Others suggest that the Obama administration threatened to freeze financial aid to the PA government. [...] Whatever the real reasons for the deferral, the entire episode highlights serious shortcomings in the UNHRC that require urgent attention. [...] In the first full year since the current council came into existence, every one of its country-specific resolutions was directed against Israel [...] while, during the same period, serious human rights crises elsewhere were ignored.
Maurice Ostroff, JPO 11.10.09

The Goldstone Mission vs. the Peace Process

“Sadly, what was clear to Israel from the outset, has only now become clear to Goldstone. He is now trying to distance himself from the results of his own handiwork.

Last Friday he discussed his disappointment with the action taken by the HRC, telling the Swiss daily *Le Temps*: ‘This draft resolution saddens me as it includes only allegations against Israel, there is not a single phrase condemning Hamas.’ We must now deal with the consequences. The council's adoption of the Goldstone report constitutes nothing less than a prize for terrorism in more ways than one.

First, the resolution adopted Friday perverts the reality of Hamas criminality, blaming the victim, rather than the true perpetrator of war crimes in Gaza. [...]

The only relevant consideration for the HRC was the fact that an opportunity had presented itself to demonize Israel in the international arena.

Second, the resolution undermines moderate Palestinians who are interested in peace with Israel. [...] When an international body upholds Hamas's atrocious behavior and exploits it once more to bash Israel, Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority loses face, moderate Arab states lose ground and the Hizbullah-Syria-Iran axis gains strength."

Danny Ayalon, JPO 19.10.09

'Goldstone – Schmoldestone' is a bad approach

"None of this would have happened had Israel done the right - and moral - thing at the outset. An independent national commission of inquiry into the conduct of the war in Gaza and the Negev should have been established.

Because we did not initiate an impartial investigation of the IDF actions, we are partially responsible for inviting much of the international condemnation that has been directed against us. [...] The report cannot be ignored or dismissed. There were serious violations during the war on the part of Israel despite its claim that it did its utmost to protect innocents. [...] But let's examine the public relations as well as the practical advantages the country would have garnered by conducting its own independent inquiry into the war. A national commission of inquiry, headed by former Supreme Court president Aharon Barak, whose international reputation is impeccable, would have silenced many critics. By comparison, can anyone imagine Hamas examining its behavior?"

David Forman, JPO 22.10.09

Spitting in the face of the IDF

"It is important to remember this: A commission of inquiry is not an entity whose purpose is to get to the truth. A commission of inquiry is an entity whose very existence affirms the fact that there was an oversight and a crime was perpetrated. The commission's very being gives rise to an oversight. There has yet to be one commission of inquiry that was formed and failed to find any flaws. [...]

Whoever thinks that such an inquiry does not have an impact on the willingness of quality, upstanding people to pursue a military career and the readiness of senior officers to make proper decisions in the field is burying their head deep in a jug of military camouflage face paint."

Shahar Ilan, HAA 26.10.09

Counterattack is the order of the day

"The calls to bolster Israel's public-relations efforts concerning the Goldstone report are not enough. Indeed, the report is just part of the emerging trend toward isolating Israel as the world's leper, even though the 'war crimes' of which it is accused do not even come close to those committed by its loudest critics. [...]

We need a planned counterattack, one that will exact a price from the aggressors and compel them to consider whether such actions coincide with their interests. [...] We need a broad coalition of forces in the West who share our concern about the tendency to capitulate to the aims of the global jihad, or Iran. One step we can take by ourselves: We should make it clear that Israel would be happy to establish a commission of inquiry into Operation Cast Lead. But since it is inconceivable that Israel would be tried for actions from which other countries are granted immunity, the commission would be formed on the day the Americans and British establish their own inquiries into possible war crimes in Afghanistan. The same goes for the Russians in Chechnya, the Turks against the Kurds, and elsewhere."

Yair Sheleg, HAA 25.10.09

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel natürlich nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen LeserInnen dennoch einen Einblick in das große Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir in dieser Schlaglichtausgabe wieder eine kleine Auswahl an weiteren Themen, die in den letzten Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.

Über die Ausgaben der Entourage von Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak, die bei einem mehrtägigen Besuch in Paris 96,000 Euro ausgegeben hatte:

Give the money back

"The cost of Barak's stay was 2,500 Euros a night. [...] The public norms of Israeli politicians have thereby reached a new nadir. As detached as the kings of France were from the masses, our ministers have become used to staying in fine hotels and sending the bill to the taxpayer. [...] Minister Ehud Barak must send a personal check to the Finance Ministry's accountants this morning that will cover the difference between the reasonable cost of a

business trip to Paris and the scandalous cost with which the public purse was in fact burdened.”
HAA 15.10.09

Great darkness in Paris

„A year ago exactly, in a speech he delivered on the eve of the last elections, Barak declared: ‘We stand out from other parties based on our understanding that the time has come to replace the piggish capitalism of the Right with an approach that promises support through solidarity, sensitivity, and social responsibility.’ Upon the publication of the state comptroller’s report, he rushed to order the establishment of a commission of inquiry. It sounds like a joke.

In addition, Barak was quick to adopt his favorable tactic from previous entanglements. Just like in past affairs, he heard nothing, saw nothing, and knew nothing. Everything happened below or above his radar, in a parallel universe. [...]

The glorious fighter [...] could not find the public courage required to look Israelis in the eye and seek their forgiveness. This abomination took place in Paris, the City of Light, yet it represents great darkness.”

Uri Misgav, JED 19.10.09

Über J Street, die neue linksgerichtete jüdische Lobby in den USA und die Weigerung des israelischen Botschafters, an ihrer ersten Konferenz teilzunehmen:

J Street’s spiritual conceit

“J Street is peddling the nutty notion that spirituality has anything to do with Mideast peace. [...] If only American Jews and Israelis were more religiously dovish and in touch with the forgiving and compassionate side of their Jewish souls - we would do the ‘left’ thing and concede more generously to the Palestinians. Then, lo and behold, peace would come to the Mideast.

The second conceit is that such J Street-peddled nonsense - along with J Street support for talks with Hamas, opposition to military action against the Hamas, and opposition to sanctions or military action against nuclear Iran - represents the majority of American Jewry. Hogwash. Patently false. [...]

J Street is a new form of Jewish apostasy. Its adherents hasten to embrace their Jewishness (even if they don’t really know much about authentic Jewish tradition and morality) in order to besmirch Israel and the mainstream Jewish community. They earnestly declare how ‘profoundly’ Jewish they are,

in order to engender a distancing in US-Israel relations.”

David Weinberg, JPO 23.10.09

Dovish Jews? Excommunicate them

“Israel’s official response to J Street, which though less than two years old has been described as a counterweight to AIPAC, this week went from chill to cold-shoulder. [...] In rebuffing the invitation, the ambassador has erred gravely. Instead, he should have shown up, spoken forthrightly on the ways Israel’s government views the future differently from J Street and the other dovish groups co-sponsoring the gathering. Together, they represent a growing segment of the future of U.S. Jewry, a community with which Israel cannot afford to lose touch. To slight the conference is to dismiss the deep love of Israel felt by many of its critics abroad.”

Bradley Burston, HAA 23.10.09

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

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