



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 08/10

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

18. April – 03. Mai 2010

1. Palästinensisch-israelischer Friedensprozess

Nachdem Friedensverhandlungen zwischen Israel und den Palästinensern lange ausgesetzt worden waren, ist Anfang Mai die Wiederaufnahme von indirekten Gesprächen unter amerikanischer Ägide angekündigt worden.

Während die Arabische Liga erneute Friedensgespräche begrüßte, warnte die palästinensische Führung, sie werde sich nicht auf direkte Verhandlungen einlassen, solange es keinen kompletten Baustopp in den jüdischen Siedlungen gebe. Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu hatte zuvor sein Einverständnis zu einem palästinensischen Staat mit vorläufigen Grenzen angedeutet, wenn gleichzeitig Verhandlungen über den endgültigen Status von Jerusalem aufgeschoben würden. Der palästinensische Präsident Mahmoud Abbas lehnte ein solches Vorgehen jedoch als Versuch, vorläufige Grenzen permanent zu machen, ab.

Premierminister Salam Fayyad hatte bereits vor Monaten die Ausrufung eines palästinensischen Staates für 2011 angekündigt, sollte es bis dahin keine Fortschritte in den Friedensgesprächen gegeben haben.

Time to initiate

“American envoy George Mitchell is in the region for his latest round of shuttle diplomacy between Jerusalem and Ramallah in an effort to renew diplomatic negotiations. [...] If the diplomatic process does not produce an agreement, the Palestinians are threatening to unilaterally declare independence next summer. [...]

The steps taken by the government thus far, all of them the result of American pressure, are apparently being used as pretexts aimed at perpetuating the status quo in the territories [...]. It appears that Netanyahu views the diplomatic process as an Israeli gesture toward the Americans,

and not as an attempt at compromise with the Palestinians. The time has come for the government to stop procrastinating. [...] It must present a diplomatic initiative that will advance a peace agreement with the Palestinians. [...]

Netanyahu needs to take the initiative, even if it necessitates dismantling his rightist coalition and bringing Kadima into the government.”

HAA Editorial 25.04.10

Obama gets it wrong

“Paradoxically, ever since US President Barak Obama entered the White House, the Palestinians are the ones refusing to renew negotiations with Israel while presenting pre-conditions. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu is the one seeking to resume the talks.

However, the image created in the world, among other things because of Obama’s flawed and failed policy, is that Israel alone is responsible for the impasse [...].

Yet isn’t there a split among the Palestinians? Isn’t Hamas maintaining a rule of terror in Gaza? There are no Iran and no Syria and no weak Palestinian government whose interest in negotiations and an agreement is doubtful? [...]

The Obama Administration is pressing Israel, and only Israel, and will continue to do so until negotiations get underway. Obama is not exerting the necessary parallel pressure on the Palestinians because he has no tools for doing so.

The Palestinians wholly disregard Obama and expect him to do all the work for them and elicit unilateral concessions out of Israel.”

Eytan Gilboa, JED 28.04.10

From bad to worse

“In Jerusalem [...] the [...] adamant conviction is that the [American] administration is mistaken in its approach to Palestinian peacemaking [...].

The Netanyahu leadership believes that the massive concession of freezing all building in east Jerusalem

[...] would be anything but helpful: That Israel would be undermining, by its own actions, its claims to its own capital. That every such concession seems only to produce greater Palestinian intransigence and demands for further capitulations. That Israel, in the view of at least some in the cabinet's key septet, would be playing into the hands of a Palestinian leadership that has never truly abandoned its phased plan for the destruction of Israel. [...]

The bitterness and the frustrations between Jerusalem and Washington have only intensified over the failure to so much as start indirect 'proximity talks' between Israel and the Palestinians. Even that lowest of low-expectation goals has yet to be met, with arguments and complaints raging back and forth among the Israelis, the Palestinians and the Americans about how this unsatisfactory channel is supposed to work."

David Horowitz, JPO 24.04.10

Seeking peace or just pretending?

"Finally, there's a Middle East peace process under way, and both sides appear anxious to make progress.

No, not the one between Israel and the Palestinians. I'm talking about making peace between the Obama administration and the Netanyahu government. [...] Both Netanyahu and Abbas say they want peace, but their actions tell a different story. Neither is looking for opportunities to narrow differences, but rather for excuses to avoid serious negotiations and blame the other for the failure. [...]

[F]ormer secretary of state James Baker [...] was right when he declared the US can't want peace more than the Israelis and Palestinians themselves. And right now [...] there are more important issues facing the US than trying to help forge agreements between Israelis and Palestinians whose leaders are not ready, willing or able to make difficult decisions and carry them out."

D. Bloomfield, JPO 28.04.10

Stuck in their narrative

"We must compare the climates for peace on each side. Israel, over the years, has gone through a sea change. [...]

Then, no major politician could endorse a Palestinian state; now no serious leader can abstain from endorsing one.

What has happened on the Palestinian side during this same period? [...] It is hard to compare the Israeli and Palestinian climates because it is so hard to find a real Palestinian peace movement. [...] The

problem is not just the glorification of terrorism, it is the denial of Jewish peoplehood, of Jewish history and of any Jewish connection to any part of Israel.

[...] The first sign of change will be when Palestinians start ending their denial of the facts of history. Palestinians do not have to become Zionists, but they *do* have to start openly convincing themselves that they are not capitulating to thievery but rather compromising with a legitimate competing claim to sovereignty."

Saul Singer, JPO 27.04.10

Let them declare a state

„Fayyad wants to use the political capital the PA has amassed in world opinion to transform it from an 'authority' to a state. [...]

The minefield that until now has compromised all negotiations - core issues like Jerusalem, borders, settlements and water - will remain, but will be negotiated by two states with equal status rather than between one state and an amorphous 'authority.' [...] A rare convergence of interests has now emerged in which the United States, Europe, the Palestinians, Arab states and all permanent Security Council members support the declaration of a Palestinian state, or at least will not object to it."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 02.05.10

Does Fayyad want a state?

"Had Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad possessed real plans for independence, he would already be starting to prepare an infrastructure for independent Palestinian currency. A state that wants to develop a private sector and the ability to reward exports cannot do it by a clinging to the shekel - the currency of a modern and highly developed economy like Israel's. [...]

This is clear proof that he does not intend to promote real independence. He wants to continue relying on us and remain in an undefined state of half-occupation and half 'independence' until demography plays its part. What Hamas is trying to do militarily, and what Arafat attempted to do diplomatically, Fayyad seeks to do economically."

Avi Trengo, JED 26.04.10

Pushing for a provisional state

„Leaders on both sides must prove they have not given up, that it was the other side that reneged. Both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Abbas see negotiations as a zero-sum game rather than a give-and-take in which both sides benefit from a redistribution of resources.

Abbas opposes an interim arrangement, and Netanyahu is unwilling to sign on to a final-status deal. Each has adopted a strategy of attrition, locking into his position and battering the other with accusations in an attempt to win over the American mediator. [...]

After a year of fruitless wrangling over a settlement evacuation, a provisional Palestinian state seems like the most practicable arrangement [...].

It is, of course, subject to political limitations, but Israel could settle for a limited evacuation of settlements and outposts, retain security control and not even negotiate over Jerusalem for now."

Aluf Benn, HAA 28.04.10

2. Iran

Während die USA sich bemühen, Sanktionen gegen den Iran vorzubereiten, zeigt die iranische Führung einmal mehr, dass sie nicht zu einem Einlenken bereit ist. So kündigten offizielle Stellen an, der Iran sei bereit, den Bau einer weiteren Urananreicherungsanlage zu beginnen. Wenige Tage später legten iranische Vertreter in einem Treffen mit dem Generaldirektor der IAEA Yukiya Amano einen neuen Gegenvorschlag für die Anreicherung iranischen Urans im Ausland vor, der jedoch als nicht weitreichend genug bezeichnet wurde. Präsident Mahmoud Ahmedinejad wird an der Überprüfungskonferenz des Atomwaffensperrvertrages teilnehmen, die am 03. Mai in New York beginnt. Die amerikanische Außenministerin Hillary Clinton bezweifelte jedoch den Sinn dieser Teilnahme, da die Vertragsverletzungen durch den Iran „unbestreitbar“ seien.

Onwards, Iran marches

"Please note what Iran's deterrent strategy means in practice. Iran's radical Islamist regime will be able to foment terrorism and revolution against Arab governments [...], and target American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other things.

[...] At the same time, it will use possession of nuclear weapons to foment appeasement among regional and Western states while simultaneously persuading millions of Muslims that revolutionary Islamism is invincible and they should join a movement headed for inevitable victory. [...]

Teheran is conducting a campaign to seize hegemony in the Middle East and destroy US influence there."

Barry Rubin, JPO 26.04.10

"Aus Obamas Verhalten und Maßnahmen seit seinem Amtsantritt lässt sich eindeutig entnehmen, dass er sich mit einem nuklearen Iran abgefunden hat. Seine gesamte politische Weltanschauung steht im krassen Widerspruch zu der Option einer Militäroperation gegen den Iran. [...] Aus der Sicht Obamas gibt es auch fast keinen Unterschied zwischen einer amerikanischen und einer israelischen Operation gegen den Iran. Die Resultate wären dieselben: Der Terror würde zunehmen, so auch die Ablehnung gegenüber den USA – dem amerikanischen Ansehen würde es sehr schaden. Deshalb schickt das Weiße Haus nun seine Vertreter nach Jerusalem, um die Regierung Netanyahu von einer direkten Operation gegen die Atomreaktoren im Iran abzuhalten."

Yossi Ben Aharon, IHY 28.04.10

Only inspect!

"The way forward does not preclude, of course, continued insistence on enrichment suspension. But even if Iran ever conceded, pressure cannot relent.

A successful strategy must include two more instruments. First, the international community must impose aggressive, stringent, sweeping and intrusive inspections on Iran by way of a Security Council resolution - one that, at a minimum, forces Iran to give IAEA inspectors access. And second, failure to comply with such a measure must be met by crippling sanctions.

Nothing else will work. And perhaps those currently, slowly laboring for a new, toothless UN resolutions have already resigned themselves to this conclusion."

Emanuele Ottolenghi, HAA 30.04.10

Time for Arab-Israeli partnership on Iran

"There is an important strategic reason to bring Arabs and Israelis back to the negotiating table now. Because both parties fear a nuclear Iran, the time is ripe for a trilateral partnership between Israel, the Gulf Co-Operation Council (GCC) states, and the US. [...]

Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Prince Saud al-Faisal have expressed concerns [...] that efforts to impose a fourth round of sanctions on Iran are not happening quickly enough. President Obama would be wise to respond to these concerns by initiating a trilateral partnership. [...] This trilateral partnership will have several benefits. The primary one will be regional collaboration of countries working to prevent the establishment of a nuclear Iran. [...] The mutual concern shared by Israel and

the GCC countries must now be taken advantage of to propel the stalled Arab-Israeli peace negotiations forward.”

Sara Reef, JED 29.04.10

Presidential threats

“What was the use, on Memorial Day, of President Shimon Peres mentioning Israel's capabilities, while warning Iran of the perils of ignoring those capabilities? [...]

When Israel threatens Iran with its ‘capabilities’ it reinforces what Israel has refrained from declaring openly: the nuclear potential that is attributed to Israel and the possibility that Israel will use it. Once again, such a threat makes Israel the spearhead in the battle against Iran, presenting the conflict as a bilateral confrontation. [...]

Even worse, when the countries of the West, especially the United States, are mobilizing to impose new sanctions on Iran, Israeli military threats [...] are liable to turn the tables. Instead of mobilizing support against Iran, they could stoke international pressure on Israel.”

HAA Editorial 21.04.10

Nuclear cynicism

“If Israel actually has the bomb, then it has had it for the past 50 years, almost as long as the original ‘Atomic Club’ members. In all that time, in line with Israel’s pledge not to be the first country to introduce the use of nuclear weaponry to the region, no wrongful use has been made. Iran is the diametrical opposite of Israel – a regime professing extreme Islamist doomsday theology whose bywords are volatility and unpredictability. There’s no equivalence between a self-defending democracy and an expansionist tyranny.”

JPO 28.04.10

3. Israels Unabhängigkeitstag

Am 19. April wurde in Israel zum 62. Mal seit der Staatsgründung 1948 der Unabhängigkeitstag gefeiert. Dieser Feiertag wird eine Woche nach dem Shoa-Gedenktag und einen Tag nach dem Gedenktag für gefallene Soldaten und Terroropfer mit Feuerwerk, Ansprachen und anderen Festlichkeiten begangen. Im Rahmen der offiziellen Zeremonie auf dem Herzlberg in Jerusalem, die in diesem Jahr auch den 150. Geburtstag des zionistischen Vordenkers Theodor Herzl gedachte, warnte Knessetsprecher Reuven Rivlin vor der zunehmenden Fragmentierung der israelischen

Gesellschaft und mahnte eine Rückkehr zu Herzls Vision an.

The national kitsch

“The weeks marked by nationalist sentiment, namely the days that begin with Holocaust Remembrance Day and extend all the way until after Independence Day, were once again filled with kitsch. It seems that the nationalist kitsch becomes more prevalent as the words spoken on these days lose even more of their genuine content. [...] Sixty-two years have passed since the state was founded. If its existence is still in danger, it is not because its achievements have been so impressive. In fact, the most prominent failure of the state of Israel after 62 years is the lack of courage within the mechanism known as the state to let up a little on the national pressure. It does not have the courage to allow individuals to celebrate their nationalism or to express their reservations regarding their nationalism if that is their choice.”

Yitzhak Laor, HAA 26.04.10

Zionists must join forces

“Jewish-Israeli nationalism is denounced by a strange and powerful ad hoc coalition.

First among its members are the proponents of normalization, who will not be content unless we weed out all distinctive Jewish characteristics from our existence. [...] Second are ultra-Orthodox Jews, who view nationalism as a dangerous replacement for religion. [...] Third are Arab Israelis, who are threatened by Israeli nationalism since it is emphatically Jewish. [...]

Unfortunately, those who lash out against Israeli nationalism also include certain segments of the national-religious community. Although this radical approach has not spread to most of this community, it has afflicted a significant minority – extremist settlers, soldiers who refuse orders based on their religious beliefs, ideologues who reject democracy on religious grounds. [...]

The national Zionist enterprise has not been completed. [...] Our generation must fill it with content – content that is national, not nationalist.

The Zionist public in Israel must join forces, in order to create a state that is not content with being a regular country, yet aspires to be part of the family of nations; a state that is not willing to give up its unique identity, but also wants to make room for the ‘Other’ in its midst; a state that wants to be both Jewish and democratic.”

Yedidia Z. Stern, JED 18.04.10

The mo(u)ning after

“Once we told a consummate story of the worthiness of a Jewish homeland and pride in our achievements. With our reverence for the memory of those who gave themselves wholly for the dream of resettling our ancestral home fresh, we also ache with awareness that the purity of arms and self-sacrifice has been deflowered. [...] Today, many bear guilt and harbor anger that the story was incomplete from the beginning - the land was not empty, but a complex and challenging composition of life forces, earthly and human. Many feel remorse that the dream has soured; that people have lost the spirit; that peace will not come. Pain and ongoing fear weigh on our hearts; the corruption of our leaders fuels our disillusionment. [...]

Is it not time for us to [...] gather up hope and conviction, and to brood a new collective engagement in this precious project of Israeli independence and state-building?”

Bonna Devora Habermann, JED 22.04.10

We are still in the Diaspora

“Are we really celebrating our independence, or merely the fact we live in Israel?”

There is a great difference between living here, without letting go of our wandering Jew mentality, and independence. [...] However, to my regret, we are still captive to these Jewish, Shylock-style, cowardly patterns. We are still merchants who are led by money, instead of the values imparted by the real Zionists, who moved to Israel in order to build it and hold on to it.

These people attempted to create a different kind of Israeli. [...] An Israeli who wants what's best for the country, based on the realization that without our state there is no existence. An Israeli that understands the importance of a moral society. [...]

The people who gave us this country held a dagger in one hand and a book in the other. They did not grant gifts in exchange for votes. They also did not hand out presents to the enemies from within, who are taking over shamelessly and with no regard to the laws, duties, and rights of the state they live in.”

Miki Goldwasser, JED 19.04.10

The beauty of inertia

“It was an Israel Defense Forces officer, who uttered a kind of ultimate wish to a television reporter. ‘I hope,’ he said against the backdrop of tanks and armored vehicles, ‘that in the next 62 years we will continue to do what we did in the past 62 years.’ [...]

He meant well [...], he wanted to utter words of encouragement. It's not his fault that his words revealed a pathetic truth: In the absence of any positive vision, with the total loss of hope for peace [...] without any desire for change, with a built-in and profound fear of the future, whatever it may be, only one wish and slight hope remains: inertia, just surviving.”

Doron Rosenblum, HAA 23.04.10

Continuing Herzl's dream

“We can look around our nation and take enormous pride in what we have achieved in the few decades since Jewish sovereignty returned to the land of our fathers. [...] Today, most of us have not known a time without the State of Israel. Few alive remember the battles, the struggles and sacrifices that the early Zionists and even early Israelis had to endure to ensure that Herzl's vision would not remain a dream. Too many take the presence of Israel for granted, and this has allowed us to become complacent about its role and its future. We must never forget that we are a reborn nation surrounded by many enemies intent on our destruction.”

Danny Ayalon, JPO 19.04.10

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel natürlich nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen Leser/innen dennoch einen Einblick in das große Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir außerdem eine kleine Auswahl weiterer Themen, die in den letzten zwei Wochen die israelische Öffentlichkeit bewegten.

Über Baumaßnahmen in Ostjerusalem:

Putting Jerusalem on hold

“The Israeli government responded with relative harshness to President Obama's demand to halt Jewish construction in Jerusalem. [...] The PM declared [...] that the demand for a freeze in Jerusalem is impossible. [...] However, talking is one thing and acting is quite another. Jerusalem is entering summer in a state of deep freeze. Almost everything there is stuck since the Olmert era. [...] Netanyahu is scared to build. [...]

The construction market in east Jerusalem is under full Arab ownership. [...] On occasion, private Jewish individuals purchase a building or two, and

immediately provoke great leftist outrage. The government neither buys nor builds.

Tragically, the Ramat Shlomo storm stemmed from an optical illusion. The permits granted by the regional committee during VP Biden's visit were no more than a non-binding signature.

Officially, Israel strongly objects to a construction freeze in the capital, yet in practice only the Arabs are allowed to build there."

Hagai Segal, JED 24.04.10

Stolen Jerusalem Day

"If not for the 'unfortunate timing' of the U.S. vice-presidential visit, who would have cared about 1,600 housing units at Ramat Shlomo? Did anyone investigate why, over the opposition of the Israel Lands Administration representative, the District Planning and Building Committee rezoned the land from open space to land for construction? [...] Since 1967, Israel has expropriated 35 percent of the area of East Jerusalem [...]. New Jewish neighborhoods were built on those lands, with 50,000 housing units. [...] How many neighborhoods were built during that time for Arab-Israeli residents? Zero. [...] And after all that, people on the right dare to complain that Arabs are building without permits."

Akiva Eldar, HAA 03.05.10

*Über die Gesetzesinitiative zur **Begrenzung von Managergehältern:***

Caps for the fat cats

"Topping the Ministerial Committee on Legislation's agenda today will be proposed caps on whopping executive paychecks. [...] Deepening income discrepancies in Israel are no longer a marginal concern for doctrinaire ideologues. A sense of how immensely the gap has widened can be gleaned from the legislative proposal itself. In essence, it seeks to insure that any given firm's highest earner won't be paid more than 50 times what the lowest earner gets. By no stretch of the imagination can a 50-fold ratio be described as overly constricting. [...] Ultimately greed harms the very market forces which are supposed to self-regulate. Fat cats who consume more than their appropriate share destabilize their entire ecological niche. Hence some form of outside regulation should be given serious consideration."

JPO 25.04.10

Much ado

"The proposal [...] to cap executive pay [...] seeks to address one of the economy's most painful problems, but the question is whether the idea would in fact restrain salaries in public companies. [...]

Under the bill, salary includes all pay and benefits except options. In recent years, options have become a very substantial part of executive compensation packages, and have been the main cause of those packages becoming so swollen. [...] The bill relates to about 5% of all managers, making it less significant than it seems. Even if it were to become law, managers would find creative ways of obtaining higher pay."

Tali Tsipori, GLO 25.04.10

Another kind of capital

"The battle over salary caps [...] is directly linked to the corruption affairs currently being investigated [...]. They reflect the current state of things in Israel. The only thing that matters here is money. [...]

In the process, money is concentrated in the hands of the wealthy, giving them more power to do what they want and serving their interests in every field of endeavor. [...]

The monumental support for salary caps for top executives, which is coming from some totally unexpected sources, is evidence of a backlash against greed, arrogance, ostentation and exploitation."

Merav Michaeli, HAA 28.04.10

HAA = Haaretz

HZO= Ha Tzofe

IHY = Israeli HaYom

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

GLO = Globes

Die Artikel aus GLO und IHY wurden dem Medienspiegel der Deutschen Botschaft Israel entnommen.

Veröffentlicht im: Mai 2010

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