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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Friedensgespräche

Nachdem der palästinensische Präsident Mahmoud Abbas die Zustimmung der PLO erhalten hat, sind Israel und die Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde nach monatelangem Verhandlungsstillstand nun bereit, indirekte Friedensgespräche unter Vermittlung der USA aufzunehmen. Die Gespräche, die mit Hilfe des US-Nahostgesandten George Mitchell geführt werden, sind zunächst auf vier Monate beschränkt. Doch schon vor Beginn der Gespräche zeigten sich israelische Regierung und palästinensische Führung wenig optimistisch. In Israel kritisierte Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak andere Kabinettsmitglieder, sie würden mit ihren Äußerungen den Friedensprozess gefährden. Dies galt unter anderem Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman, der zuvor verneint hatte, dass es einen Baustopp in Ostjerusalem gebe und behauptete, alle Gesten Israels seien von den Palästinensern „mit einem Schlag ins Gesicht“ beantwortet worden.

Not taking listener requests

“The proximity talks will break the ice that has been clogging up the Israeli-Palestinian track for over a year. Regrettably, the good news was received in Jerusalem with a demonstrative chill and a lowering of the already modest expectations that the talks will bring peace any closer. [...]

It's no wonder that [...] the Palestinians interested in negotiations do not believe that Netanyahu and his government intend to make progress toward a final-status agreement.

The sourness with which the government is anticipating the talks was expressed in the decision to present to the cabinet [...] a Palestinian ‘incitement index’ [...]. Now that acts of violence have almost entirely disappeared, the (justified) criticism of incitement has taken the lead in the diversionary war that some senior ministers are waging against the peace process.”

HAA 06.05.10 Editorial

Proximity talks are off... and crawling

“It is bad enough that each side has its own extremists who want to scuttle the talks, but when their own leaders look like they're not on board, it's time to bring out the worry beads. [...]

The Palestinians have imposed a four-month deadline on the talks, claiming that is the extent of their mandate from the Arab League. For all their talk of wanting peace, none of the parties seems to feel any sense of urgency. [...]

Peace is more important to the US than to Abbas and Netanyahu, neither of whom appears willing or ready to make the tough historic compromises essential to closing the wide gaps between them. The two are so far apart on the core issues that it is difficult to image they can make significant progress.”

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 12.05.10

Doomed to fail

“For the Americans, if Israeli-Palestinian talks have been going on for 17 years now, the negotiations obviously aim at securing a final-status agreement. On the other hand, Israel and the Palestinians have been engaged in talks for two wholly different goals. The first objective is maintaining a process for the sake of the process. For Israel, the ongoing process mitigates the international pressure exerted on us; for the Palestinian leadership, the process is the main justification for the continued rule of the veteran leadership. [...] The second objective of both Israelis and Palestinians is to ensure that when the current round of talks fails, the other side will be blamed for it.”

Giora Eiland, JED 05.04.10

Optimism is also an option

“Both Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas know what compromises they will be required to make.

They may not want to acknowledge that out loud or with their domestic political partners, but there is no doubt that when they think seriously about the agreement, they both know that Jerusalem will be the capital of both states and that the return of Palestinian refugees will be to the Palestinian state only. [...] Both leaders, with the best interests of their people at heart, must recognize that now is the time, and agreement is possible. [...]

I am convinced that it is possible to make real progress through proximity talks, and I even believe that, given the level of mutual mistrust, it is the preferred means.”

Gershon Baskin, JED 11.05.10

The road to nowhere

“On the eve of the anticipated start of so-called proximity talks between Israel and the Palestinians, there is a discernible lack of enthusiasm.

The fanfare that usually accompanies the relaunch of Middle East negotiations has been replaced by an atmosphere of apathy, as it seems clear to just about everyone – outside the White House, that is – that little will come of the impending round. [...]

This, of course, is entirely the fault of the Palestinians, who have repeatedly rejected the various gestures made by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu over the past 12 months. [...]

Washington would do better to reexamine its approach and acknowledge its mistakes. A good place to start would be to recognize once and for all that there is no serious partner on the Palestinian side with the courage, authority or conviction to negotiate terms with Israel. Like it or not, the chances of forging an agreement with the current cast of characters in Gaza City and Ramallah are close to nil.”

Michael Freud, JPO 05.05.10

Let's stop pretending

“The time has come to stop pretending. Whatever chance that may exist to conduct productive negotiations with Abbas is being hampered by the demands being made on Israel by Washington. They only provide excuses for Abbas to refuse to enter serious negotiations until these demands are met. He cannot be expected to be less of a Palestinian than U.S. President Barack Obama. [...] Peace cannot be imposed. There is little doubt that the administration in Washington will learn this lesson sooner or later.”

Moshe Arens, HAA 04.05.10

Building or destroying?

“According to past experience, and knowing the people involved and the circumstances, the chances of success are not high, but Israel should have an interest in making a sincere effort and a creating a positive, hopeful atmosphere. That will help restore faith in relations with the Palestinians and also to claim, if a crisis comes about, that it is not Israel's fault.

Right-wing ministers have barged headlong into this delicate situation, first and foremost Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, irritating the Palestinians and the world, particularly the Obama administration. [...] Foreign ministers are supposed to build bridges; he is burning them.”

HAA 14.05.10 Editorial

2. OECD-Aufnahme

Am 10. Mai wurde Israel durch einstimmigen Beschluss der 31 Mitgliedsstaaten in die OECD, die Organisation für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, aufgenommen. Die Aufnahme bildet den Höhepunkt eines mehrjährigen Prozesses, von dem Israel sich unter anderem eine bessere Krediteinstufung und mehr ausländische Investitionen erhofft.

Zuvor hatte sich die palästinensische Führung bemüht, eine Mitgliedschaft Israels mit Verweis auf Menschenrechtsverletzungen und anhaltenden Siedlungsbau im Westjordanland zu verhindern. Insbesondere die Schweiz, die Türkei und Norwegen hatten im Vorfeld der Abstimmung Bedenken geäußert, da Israel die Siedlungen in den besetzten Gebieten als Teil des eigenen Wirtschaftsraumes betrachtet.

OECD membership means greater transparency

“Israel's accession to the OECD became a reality today. Several years ago, when the accession process began, it was clear that Israel sought to improve its status in the global economic community. [...] The irony of the matter is that the date of accession coincides with the EU's announcement of a rescue plan for the fiscal crisis, which to many is reminiscent of Israel in the 1980s. [...] So what will change from today? [...] The Israeli citizen will know much more about their state and its behavior. [...] The OECD loves statistics and comparative reports about virtually every area of life. Israelis will find it easier to learn about foreign workers, inequalities, education gaps, technological

education, the health services, efforts to cope with air pollution, the strength of monopolies in the local market and many more topics. [...] The largest benefit is greater transparency of government activities. Of course there are also the economic benefits of accession itself but even without those, the greater transparency alone would have made all the effort worthwhile.”
Avi Temkin, GLO 10.05.10

Economic vindication

“It was undoubtedly a victory for the embattled Jewish state. Until the last moment, there was some concern that Switzerland, Turkey, Norway, Britain and/or Ireland could torpedo the move. [...] The very fact that the well-connected [Palestinian Prime Minister] Fayyad, a former International Monetary Fund economist, failed to sabotage the move is a success for Israel and for hardheaded reason. Israel's impressive accomplishments are best appreciated when scrutinized by a forum of highly developed countries committed to democracy, liberalism, equal opportunity and the market economy using objective socioeconomic criteria. [...] Israel [...] has faced profound challenges during its short lifetime. [...] And yet it has become one of the world's most vibrant economies. The big, prestigious OECD may even have a thing or two to learn from its latest member.”
JPO 11.05.10 Editorial

Timing is everything

“For Israel, joining the OECD is a major diplomatic achievement. Nothing better answers the calls for boycotting Israel than acceptance into the club of developed economies. The timing says it all: This is what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is getting from the international community in return for starting proximity talks with the Palestinians. [...] Acceptance to the OECD is part of a fixed formula that was inaugurated during the early days of the peace process. Israel makes concessions to the Palestinians and receives something in kind from the West. [...] From Israel's point of view, the political process is a means to be accepted in Europe, America and Asia, not to create a 'new Middle East.' [...] Now we're in the club and the Palestinians, Egyptians and even the Saudis aren't. They're not even on the waiting list. In the OECD they can't

bother Israel with decisions condemning the occupation.”
Aluf Benn, HAA 11.05.10

“Die OECD übermittelte die Botschaft, dass Israel nicht der Iran ist. Allen Zynikern sei gesagt, dass Israel nicht von sich behaupten kann, Mitglied vieler internationaler Organisationen zu sein. Unsere Aufnahme ist auch eine Antwort an all die Israelis, darunter auch Politiker, die behaupten, wir seien in der Welt zu Aussätzigen geworden. Gestern hat sich gezeigt, dass das nicht stimmt.“
Boas Bismuth, IHY 11.05.10

Rejection and acceptance

„Apart from the feel-good factor, joining the OECD comes with some very real benefits, including the likelihood of greater foreign investment, preferential treatment in international tenders and probable improved credit rating. One less obvious side benefit is the potential for lessening social gaps. The OECD requires frequent reports on issues relating to socioeconomic equality and can be used as a tool to improve the situation in such fields as education, poverty levels and participation in the workforce. [...] A few months ago, MK Ahmed Tibi [...] called on the OECD to block Israeli membership until Israeli Arabs enjoy full equality. [...] He [...] failed to internalize that the OECD could help improve the situation.”
Liat Collins, JPO 15.05.10

There is no prosperity without peace

“Israel received some news this week for which it had worked for a decade and a half: inclusion in the world's elite economic club, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. This development reflects confidence in the ability of Israel's economy to achieve growth and stability. [...] So Israel can be satisfied by passing from the list of developing countries to the roster of the developed. [...] But this status is fragile, as is evident by the condition of European countries like Greece [...]. So even though it is not mentioned explicitly, Israel's economic status is conditional. And in the absence of peace, the threat of a damaging war constantly hovers over our economy, driving away investors and pushing us behind the West.”
HAA 12.05.10 Editorial

3. Palästinensischer Boykott

Im Rahmen von Bemühungen, die palästinensische Wirtschaft und einen zukünftigen Staat zu stärken, hat die palästinensische Regierung einen Boykott von Produkten, die in den israelischen Siedlungen im Westjordanland hergestellt werden, ausgerufen. Der palästinensische Wirtschaftsminister Abu-Lideh kündigte zudem ein Gesetz an, das den Kauf solcher Güter verbieten würde. Palästinenser werden außerdem dazu angehalten, nicht mehr in den Siedlungen zu arbeiten. Es wird geschätzt, dass Palästinenser jährlich in den Siedlungen produzierte Waren im Wert von \$200 Millionen kaufen. 30,000 Palästinenser sind in der Siedlerwirtschaft beschäftigt. Israel kritisierte insbesondere öffentliche Veranstaltungen, bei denen in den Siedlungen produzierte Waren verbrannt wurden, und bezeichnete diese Aktionen als „Aufwiegelung“.

Boykott and spillover

“Does a newly imposed boycott – of the sort never declared previously pre-negotiations – not qualify as a provocation, at the very least?”

PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad [...] recently participated in a public burning of Israeli ‘settlements-made’ products. [...] Besides the incitement inherent in the ‘ceremony,’ it was disturbingly evocative of the book-burnings of very dark past eras.

Is this the way a respectable peace-partner behaves? Does this encourage coexistence and win hearts and minds to the cause of compromise? [...]

Fayyad should be reminded by our government that his new pet project directly violates the economic annex of the original Oslo Accord. [...]

If the PA brazenly contravenes its undertakings – especially as negotiations get under way – for how long does it expect Israel to turn the other cheek?”

JPO 08.05.10 Editorial

Buy Palestinian products

“It takes no small amount of audacity to threaten the Palestinians with harm to their economy if they refuse to continue building Israeli settlements on their own land. [...] How can the Palestinian leadership be expected to stand by idly while 25,000 Palestinian workers put a stamp of approval on the occupation through their own labor and the sweat of their own brows? [...]

The commotion over the PA's economic campaign against the settlements indicates, more than anything else, how the colonialist mindset has been branded into Israeli consciousness. [...] The

economic divorce of Palestinians from the Jewish settlements is an important step toward divorce from Israel's occupation policies. Buy Palestinian.”

Akiva Eldar, HAA 10.05.10

Is this what peace looks like?

“The Palestinian call to ban settlement products brings a sense of déjà vu for me: This is how my father's business was boycotted in my hometown in Germany. [...]

Should the boycott succeed, the Palestinian workers who produce settlement goods will lose their jobs. [...]

Should Palestinian leaders wander through the ‘land of the settlers,’ they will discover that many Palestinian villages make a living through their settler neighbors in various areas. [...] Does the PA demand that they shut down their businesses? [...]

The PA is attempting to drive a wedge between the settlers and the Palestinians. However, should only half the Jewish population adopt a counter-boycott, how many Palestinians will be thrown out of hotels, restaurants, and factories on both side of the Green Line? Is this what peace will look like?

Elyakim Haetzni, JED 13.05.10

Peace products

“Israel's policy of building settlements on occupied Palestinian land undermines prospects for peace, and continues at the expense of all Palestinians.

That is why the Palestinian government, private sector, civil society groups and organizations are taking practical action to oppose illegal settlements. [...]

The campaign also aims at helping Palestinian consumers know their rights, and distinguish between illegal settlement products and legal Israeli products imported under the existing Paris Economic Protocols. [...]

Israeli settlements produce a wide range of products that reach a large number of countries. Their first stop is the captive Palestinian market under occupation. Israel literally floods this market with its goods, including settlement products, while maintaining policies that hinder Palestine's productive capacity and economic growth.”

Hassan Abu-Libdeh, JPO 03.05.10

Break the Palestinian boycott

“In the wake of the accursed Oslo Accords, the 1994 Paris Protocol was signed, establishing interim economic ties between Israel and the PA. The boycott against settlement merchandise is a clear violation of this agreement, by which both sides pledged not to undermine the other's economy. [...]

Reason dictates that in the case of such a flagrant violation [...], we should collect the money lost by Israeli companies due to the boycott by recouping it from customs money we transferred to the Palestinians.”

Karni Eldad, HAA 05.05.10

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 breite 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 Einheit Jerusalems und den Jerusalem Tag, der jedes Jahr anlässlich der israelischen Eroberung der Stadt im Jahr 1967 gefeiert wird:

Rejoice on Jerusalem Day

“Jerusalem [...] has represented the cornerstone of our Jewish identity for more than three millennia. [...] Since the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, the government of Israel [...] ensured that all faiths could freely worship and maintain their religious institutions. [...] Yet to this day many Palestinians deny that there ever was a Jewish presence in the city. [...]

A division of Jerusalem would virtually guarantee that a corrupt or impotent Palestinian Authority or a rabid Hamas would be tempted to launch terror actions against neighboring Jewish areas.

Jerusalem Day should therefore not merely be a day of celebration. It should also be a day in which we pledge that, irrespective of the creative solutions devised to provide greater autonomy for Arabs in Jerusalem, the city must never be divided and Israel must remain the custodian to guarantee freedom of worship to Jews, Muslims and Christians.”

Isi Leibler, JPO 11.05.10

Jerusalem of equality

“Is this the Jerusalem to which Diaspora Jews dreamed of returning? The united Jerusalem that stretches from Shoafat to Beit Sahur? [...] Is it possible to celebrate the ‘unification of Jerusalem’ when Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah are expelled from their homes under the aegis of the court to let Jews live there in their stead? [...]

Jerusalem Day invites us to go outside, to performances, rallies and a parade through the streets of the city. [...] [But] the victory parades on Jerusalem Day celebrate a unification that never took place in a city whose unity was invented. [...] The Jewish people's connection to Jerusalem has no need of parades with thousands of armed policemen and civilians. What Jerusalem needs is fresh thinking that learns from the past and offers hope to all the city's residents.”

Daphna Golan, HAA 12.05.10

The Jerusalem dispute

“How is it that the Palestinians have presented the partition of Jerusalem as a condition for a deal with them in recent years? [...] Why were they silent up until a few years ago? [...]

The expansion of Jerusalem's municipal borders and the inclusion of Palestinian neighborhoods and villages within these limits, coupled with the loud promotion of the Jerusalem issue in a way that is intolerable for Palestinian ears are among the reasons. [...] For dozens of years, Jerusalem expanded, doubled its territory, and built neighborhoods despite the displeasure of the Palestinians. [...] The need, mostly by rightists, to display ownership, present achievements, and show the world (and mostly the Americans and Palestinians) that we disregard them, prompted the portrayal of Jerusalem as a impenetrable bone of contention, mostly in recent times.”

Eitan Haber, JED 16.05.10

Über Spannungen an Israels Nordgrenze und die Aufrüstung der Hisbollah durch Syrien und Iran:

Getting ready for Hezbollah

“Nasrallah is apparently unconvinced that his group has reached the optimal point to embark on war. He possesses endless amounts of rockets, yet not many accurate and long-range missiles. We can assume that once he accumulates a sufficient arsenal, the countdown shall begin. The fire will only be a matter of time.

And this is precisely the place to ask what Israel's government is doing so that these balance-violating weapons won't continue to pour into Hezbollah's hands, and whether the convoys that cross the Syria-Lebanon border should continue to enjoy impunity under UN Resolution 1701.”

Alex Fishmann, JED 15.05.10

The Missiles are coming

“The fear rained down on us by Military Intelligence research chief Yossi Baidatz, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates (‘Hezbollah has more missiles than most governments’), Jordan's King Abdullah (‘A war could break out this summer’) and many military analysts leaves Israel with the all-too-familiar feeling that it has no choice but to launch a preemptive attack. [...] And the terrified country is already preparing public opinion and the army for the next confrontation. [...]

No doubt, Israel is threatened, but so are Syria, Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. It's enough to listen to Israel's threats to ‘take Syria back to the Stone Age,’ [...] to understand that the style of the Israeli threat approaches that of Iran. [...] Peace with Syria might neutralize the military threat from that country, stop Hezbollah from arming and put Iran in a confusing situation. [...]

In short, the military threat would lose a great deal of its punch. A rational country [...] would have [...] understood that by continuing to hold on to the Golan Heights, the chances of a confrontation would simply grow.”

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 09.05.10

Über die *Verhaftung von zwei prominenten israelischen Arabern* und nachfolgende Proteste:

Wild Jewish imagination?

“Police terror,’ ‘a silencing campaign,’ ‘a witch-hunt’ [...]– these was just some of the hue and cry raised by Arab Israelis over the arrest of Ameer Makhoul and Dr. Omar Said on espionage charges. [...]

Yet despite the above, a hint of doubt emerges that the suspicions against Makhoul and Said in respect to serious security offenses, including espionage and contacts with a Hezbollah agent, are not only the result of the police's and government's wild imaginations – just like it appears that the security charges against some [other] Israeli Arabs were not an unfounded product of the wild Shin Bet imagination. [...]

Moreover, even if only a handful of Arab Israelis crossed the lines and committed offences, the vast majority of the Arab-Israeli community time and again puts its trust in representatives who view the elimination of the Zionist enterprise as a supreme goal. [...]

Indeed, solidarity with Israel's enemies, slamming the State's character, supporting violent acts against the ‘occupation,’ and full understanding shown to the motivates of selected martyrs are largely required

pre-conditions for any Arab-Israeli politician who seeks his community's support.”

Shaul Rosenfeld, JED 11.05.10

The Shin Bet's learning curve

“The Shin Bet security service, at least, seems to have learned its lesson from the Anat Kamm affair. [...] In the latest affair, one rally and a brief Internet campaign by Israeli Arab organizations were enough to make the Shin Bet think again. [...] The partial lifting of the gag order keeps the arrests of Omar Sayid and Ameer Makhoul from turning into a secret ‘security case’ that is magnified for no reason other than the mystery surrounding it. The suspicions being investigated against the two are severe, but it must be said that at this stage they are only that. It is yet to be seen whether they will lead to indictments, or to convictions. [...]

About two years ago former MK Azmi Bishara (Balad) was suspected of passing information to Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War, in exchange for large sums of money. [...] In light of the Bishara affair, Balad Party founders Sayid and Makhoul [...] could have been expected to be more careful and to assume that party activists are under Shin Bet surveillance.”

Amos Harel, HAA 11.05.10

HAA = Haaretz

HZO= Ha Tzofe

IHY = Israeli HaYom

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

GLO = Globes

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