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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. WikiLeaks

Die US-Dokumente aus dem Außenministerium, die von der Enthüllungswebsite WikiLeaks veröffentlicht worden sind, haben auch in Israel ein großes Medienecho hervorgerufen.

So wurde etwa thematisiert, dass Israel Anfang 2009 versucht hatte, den Gaza.-Krieg mit Ägypten und der Palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde zu koordinieren. Auf größeres Interesse stießen jedoch die Botschaftsdepeschen aus den arabischen Ländern. Darin wird deutlich, welche zentrale Rolle die Angst vor dem Iran in der Region spielt. Hinter verschlossenen Türen hatten mehrere arabische Führer, darunter der saudische König Abdullah, die USA gedrängt, den Iran anzugreifen, um seine nukleare Aufrüstung zu verhindern.

Der israelische Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu begrüßte diese Enthüllung. Er sah sich in seiner Ansicht bestärkt, dass das Hauptproblem im Nahen Osten der Iran und nicht der israelisch-palästinensische Konflikt ist.

The art of doublespeak

"The thousands of documents [...] expose the doublespeak utilized by world leaders to promote their states' interests. [...] Yet the phenomenon of doublespeak [...] is so well known that it needs no evidence. [...] This is the custom: In Israel, the prime minister looks to his voters, makes plenty of noise, and flexes his muscles like a Doberman. Yet when this PM visits the president, be it Obama or his predecessors, he speaks and acts like a Poodle. [...] All the self-righteous hypocrites who cannot bear this truth should be told that this is the only way to manage policy, especially vis-à-vis the Americans. [...]"

Those who see wrong in this international approach, and there are some people like this, are hereby invited to propose another method for diplomatic

and security work. In my view, the chance of winning the lottery is greater than finding such way."

Eitan Haber, JED 01.12.10

The world thinks like us

"The massive leak of US diplomatic documents produces a clear, unequivocal picture: The whole world, and not only Israel, is terrified by the Iranian nuclear threat.

Iran's nuclearization is not Israeli paranoia, as certain camps try to argue. It makes all world leaders, from Riyadh to Moscow, lose sleep. [...]"

The leak reinforces the main message of two US administrations - which turned out to be incredibly similar to the main message conveyed by Israeli governments: Iran constitutes the clear, immediate and greatest threat to the world's stability, and the world needs to act towards uprooting this malignant tumor. All the rest is dwarfed by it."

Sever Plocker, JED 29.11.10

What the leaks really reveal

"We didn't need WikiLeaks [...] to tell us that its Arab neighbors are terrified of Iran [...], but they expect the US or Israel to do the job because they lack the courage to do it themselves. [...]"

The document dump gives new credence to Israeli warnings and exposes the Arabs as duplicitous on the most critical issue facing their region. [...] Netanyahu welcomed to exposure of what Arab leaders are saying in private as proof they agree with him about the Iranian threat, and he expressed hope they'd now say it publicly. Don't hold your breath, Bibi. [...]"

The Obama administration has said Arab leaders have told it that progress toward Israeli-Palestinian peace would make regional cooperation against the Iranian threat easier, yet when the president personally pleaded with the Saudi king to act on that he was rebuffed. It also shows that for all their talk

about wanting the Israelis to make peace, their real concern is Iran. And the talk about peace may be just that – talk."

D. Bloomfield, JPO 02.12.10

Exposed by WikiLeaks

"The Obama administration, it is now clear for all to see, was not pressing a reluctant Netanyahu to make settlement-freeze and other concessions to the Palestinians in part because it truly believed this would be helpful in generating wider support for tackling Iran.

Not at all. The United States, we now know courtesy of WikiLeaks, was being repeatedly urged by a succession of Arab leaders to smash an Iranian nuclear program they feared would destabilize the entire region and put their regimes at risk. Their priority was, and is, battering Ahmadinejad, not bolstering Abbas. [...] But Obama chose to pressure Israel just the same, as a tactic, because he felt Israel was not being sufficiently forthcoming on the Palestinian front."

David Horowitz, JED 01.12.10

Anatomy of a decline

"Netanyahu was the first world leader to leverage the WikiLeaks revelations for his own purposes. [...] The cables prove, he said, that there's no truth in the narrative that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the greatest threat to the region and its future. [...] The Arab leaders didn't ignore the Palestinians. [...]. But [they] share their Israeli counterparts' view of the conflict as a nuisance that must be managed, not a problem that can be solved. [...] All they wanted was to get this annoying nuisance off their backs, and they didn't care how. They viewed Obama as a pest and his envoys as bothers, not as spokesmen for the global superpower. Or perhaps that's no longer what America is."

Aluf Benn, HAA 01.12.10

The WikiLeaks challenge

"Make no mistake about it, the ongoing WikiLeaks operation against the US is an act of war. It is not merely a criminal offense to publish hundreds of thousands of classified US government documents with malice aforethought. It is an act of sabotage.

[...] WikiLeaks' information warfare against the US aims to weaken the US. By exposing US government secrets, it seeks to embarrass and discredit America in a manner that makes it well nigh impossible for the US to carry out either

routine diplomacy or build battlefield coalitions to defeat its enemies."

Caroline Glick, JPO 03.12.10

Neither shocking nor terrible

"Real, significant secrets are rarely included in these cables, and diplomats are rarely privy to them. What remains is occasionally juicy, such as the character traits of politicians and officials, but rarely earth-shattering or mold-breaking. In the case of U.S.-Israel relations, it seems each side is predisposed to be suspicious that the other side - or even their own - might leak the content of sensitive talks in a bid to either sabotage or constrain them.

Still, the latest developments are welcome: Every leader and official who is supposed to tell his constituents and his nation the truth will now know that the day or hour will come when his secrets will be known."

HAA 30.11.10 Editorial

Assange's smoking gun

"While Assange claims to act in the name of freedom and transparency, his very methods prove that he is far from practicing what he preaches.

Take, for example, the synchronized release via various newspapers: The New York Times, Der Spiegel, El Pais, The Guardian and Le Monde. Why them? Could it be because they are more likely to select the material that Assange wants revealed than, say, The Wall Street Journal, The Times and The Jerusalem Post [...]?

Assange seems to be waging his own private war. [...] Who elected Assange to be the world's arbiter of ethics and diplomacy? [...]

If you read the WikiLeaks scoops, by the way, you can see that the Saudis financed al-Qaida. What you can't find is who is financing WikiLeaks. Or why. This obviously falls into Assange's special secrets category."

Liat Collins, JPO 04.12.10

2. Das Referendumsgesetz

Am 22. November wurde in der Knesset ein Gesetz verabschiedet, das ein Referendum vorsieht, bevor israelisches Territorium abgegeben werden kann. Hierbei handelt es sich um die Golan Höhen und Ostjerusalem, deren Annektion durch Israel international nicht anerkannt wird.

Es ist davon auszugehen, das Israel diese Gebiete im Falle eines Friedensabkommens mit Syrien bzw. den Palästinensern zurückgeben müsste.

Nach dem neuen Gesetz ist eine Volksabstimmung dann notwendig, wenn es in der Knesset keine Zweidrittelmehrheit für einen Rückzug gibt. Allerdings könnte das Gesetz selbst mit einer absoluten Mehrheit rückgängig gemacht werden.

Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu und seine Partei unterstützten das Gesetz. In einer Presseerklärung erläuterte der Regierungschef, dass ein Referendum unverantwortliche Abkommen verhindern würde.

A law that spits in the face

"The law's supporters claim that a referendum is a legitimate democratic instrument utilized by many enlightened countries in order to involve the citizenry in important decisions. In actual fact, the vast majority of referenda relate to domestic issues. In our case, the public is being given veto power over crucial decisions on foreign policy and security issues. [...] Any reasonable person knows that reappportioning sovereignty in Jerusalem is a necessary condition for a peace arrangement with the Palestinians. [...]"

Up to the present day, no country has recognized unilateral Israeli decisions to impose its law and administrative authority on lands annexed to West Jerusalem, as well as the territories of the Golan Heights. It remains only to hope that the new law will face the test of public and legal scrutiny, and be erased from the country's legal corpus."

HAA 24.11.10 Editorial

Yes to a referendum

"[The decision] to insist on a referendum before implementing any future peace agreement involving withdrawal from territory has been attacked by the Left as a move aimed at preventing such an agreement from ever taking place. [...]"

But at the end of the day it may not be such a bad thing to have a referendum. It may indeed be a risk for those who wish to move ahead with a peace agreement, but the issue is so critical that it requires a majority of the country's population to ensure that anti-peace groups are unable to use the argument of democracy against those who would implement it.

Had a referendum taken place immediately prior to the Gaza disengagement, which would have almost certainly resulted in a convincing majority, it would have knocked the stuffing out of much of the anti-government demonstrations. [...]"

If the majority were to vote against an agreement, we would no longer have any moral right or justification to argue that we are a peace-loving society and that the blame for the ongoing conflict is all on the Palestinians. It would indeed be a grave responsibility for the country's citizens, as it would be in their hands to prove, once and for all, whether the abstract concept of peace could be translated into reality. [...] There are moments in a country's history when the issues at stake are so critical that it requires the assent of the people at large. A final peace agreement with our Palestinian neighbors which would involve major concessions (on both sides) is surely such a moment."

David Newman, JPO 29.11.10

Referendum: Decision by guillotine

"In contrast to Netanyahu's position - supporting referenda as a way of strengthening the 'unity of the people' - many of the best minds in the field of political science warn against the danger inherent in them: the sharpening of controversy in a torn society. [...]"

Indeed, if such popular voting becomes common following the legal precedent that has been created, it will not be hard to imagine the sharply rendered resolution of issues that will increase tensions between right and left, secular and religious, Jews and Arabs. Israel is based on a parliamentary regime which seeks political compromise and consensus among various sectors. The compromises that are reached are sometimes unacceptable, but these are usually preferable to a 'guillotine decision.' Indeed, that's an appropriate image to use when considering that results of referenda can be swayed by just a few voices either way."

Ze'ev Segal, HAA 29.11.10

3. Carmel-Waldbrand

Nach vier Tagen unermüdlicher Löscharbeiten gelang es israelischen Feuerwehrleuten am 5. Dezember endlich, den schwerwiegendsten Waldbrand in Israels Geschichte unter Kontrolle zu bringen.

Die Feuersbrunst war in den Carmelbergen bei Haifa ausgebrochen und hat mehr als 5000 Hektar Waldland und 74 Gebäude vernichtet. Außerdem sind dem Feuer 42 Menschen zum Opfer gefallen, der Großteil Polizeikadetten, die Gefangene aus einem Gefängnis in der Nähe evakuieren sollten.

Bei den Löscharbeiten erhielt Israel die Unterstützung mehrerer Länder, unter anderem aus der

Türkei, Griechenland und Zypern. Auch die Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde schickte Löschfahrzeuge.

In wenigen Tagen soll nun ein staatlicher Bericht über den Zustand der israelischen Feuerwehr, dessen Veröffentlichung schon vor dem Brand festgelegt worden war, publik gemacht werden. Es wird erwartet, dass der Bericht, der schon in Vorjahren äußerst kritisch war, auch in diesem Jahr auf eine Vielzahl von Mängeln hinweisen wird – die nun während der Bekämpfung des Waldbrandes allzu deutlich wurden.

The guilty party

"On Thursday, Israel's firefighting force collapsed in the face of a fire storm. [...] What would have we done in the face of dozens and hundreds of missiles producing fire storms in various regions nationwide, including urban areas with high-rises? Who in Israel is prepared to cope with such scenario? [...]"

Yet this failure has an address. This person disappeared from the public eye Thursday, and this was no coincidence. He is intimately familiar with the firefighting force's grim state. His name is Eli Yishai and he is the interior minister, who holds the ministerial responsibility for the failure."

Alex Fishman, JED 03.12.10

Someone is responsible

"Yishai's paperwork documents demands and warnings across multiple years and terms in office. For that reason, he is the appropriate address for claims and accusations: After you made your reports, what did you do?"

Yishai accuses Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz and treasury officials of turning down his requests to increase the firefighting budget. But he himself did not show the same persistence that he demonstrated in his battles [...] in favor of allowances for the [Ultraorthodox] and the expansion of settlements in East Jerusalem. [...]"

Yishai is not a victim of the disaster, but rather one of its main culprits. This culpability is meaningless if he does not resign and if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is afraid to sack him."

HAA 06.12.10 Editorial

Minister Yishai not at fault

"Even before the first bodies were identified [...] people were blaming the interior minister for the ongoing failure, with some going as far as urging him to resign. [...] This isn't right and isn't fair. Ministers are granted responsibility but not authority.

[...] An overwhelming majority of government ministry budgets is predetermined. Treasury officials are the ones who determine where each shekel will be earmarked. [...] The problem has to do with the structure. Someone here bears the responsibility while someone else dictates policy.

This combination is destructive. It does not allow ministers and elected officials to work, while the bureaucrats, especially in the Treasury, are not required to pay the price of failures. [...]"

The conclusions of a commission of inquiry or a probe won't help here. [...] We need to grant the executive the authority and add substance to its responsibility, beyond a minister's ability to choose his state-issued car."

Menachem Gscheid, JED 06.12.10

The usual suspects

"They immediately said that the Ministry of Finance was to blame. How could they not? It always sounds good and logical, and it always sticks. [...]"

A little reminder: all the committees that reviewed the matter recommended that the Fire and Rescue Services should be a nationwide system, with government employees. All that the Ministry of Finance asked was to make the firefighters' status equal to that of Israel Police officers, [...] none of whom have the right to strike. [...]"

The Ministry of Finance cannot allow itself to turn firefighters into state employees while allowing them to keep their right to strike, while police and correctional officers have lower pay and no such right.

That is precisely the job of the Ministry of Finance: to look at the big picture and ensure the proper functioning of the organization in detail and of the public sector as a whole. Otherwise, bigger budgets will be worthless."

Adrian Filut, GLO 05.12.10

There's no excuse for the lack of preparedness

"Once again, we were reminded that there is something terribly wrong with our long-term planning for man-made and natural disasters. [...] Whether we are talking about earthquakes, water or fire, all the facts and potential scenarios are known, as are the measures that must be taken. Unlike many Third World countries, we can afford [...] to have properly trained and equipped fire-prevention and fire-fighting services.

The greatest problem is decision making: Until a catastrophe actually occurs, clear-cut decisions are rarely taken at government level, and even if

decisions are taken, the Finance Ministry is constantly blocking or slowing their implementation. [...]

What is needed is a change in approach. Are Netanyahu and his government capable of making such a switch?"

S.H. Rolef, JPO 06.12.10

Expressing gratitude

"While the Jewish state has become synonymous with providing rapid humanitarian aid to international disaster areas, it is now Israel that requires help. [...] Now, in our hour of need, we see nations across the world offering and providing support, in an unequivocal show of gratitude for Israel's past deeds. [...]

We were immediately sent ten airplanes and three helicopters; four planes from Greece, one from Cyprus, two from Turkey, two from Russia and one from France, one helicopter from Cyprus and two from Britain. [...]

It is an incredible and much needed response and is proof that Israel can count on its friends during a time of national tragedy. To these, and the many other nations that offered assistance and aid, we send our most heartfelt appreciation. [...] We express our humblest and utmost gratitude to the governments and their people who surely teach us that Israel is a welcome and appreciated member in the family of nations."

Danny Ayalon, JPO 04.12.10

From earthquake diplomacy to fire diplomacy

"The question now is whether the Carmel fire, to which Turkey has sent two fire-prevention planes and which elicited condolences from Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, will revive relations between the two countries, which have floundered for 18 months. 'Disaster diplomacy' is a concept [...] familiar in international affairs. [...] But the response is unrelated to the two countries' tense diplomatic relations. Erdogan made a point that relations between Israel and Turkey will not be fully repaired until Israel apologizes and pays compensation to the victims of the Gaza-flotilla incident. [...]

No tragedy will occur should Israel express regret and apologize for the killing of Turkish civilians on the Mavi Marmara. [...] It is to be regretted that we needed a terrible catastrophe for a window of opportunity to open, but it would be a major diplomatic blunder if Israel squandered this opportunity."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 05.12.10

Putting out fires. Or not.

"It is true that there is no shame in asking for help from the world in order to contain a fire [...]. Big, wealthy countries have also needed external assistance in emergencies. But few are the countries who just a day earlier gave the world the finger and complained of being delegitimized. [...]

Just when things were becoming warm and cozy in our isolationist and self-righteous ghetto, the enemies of Israel insist on rescuing us from trouble. [...] Why did those two punks forget to put out the fire just when the public began to believe that Egypt and Jordan do not care that Hamas and Hezbollah are building up their power on the ruins of Oslo?"

Akiva Eldar, HAA 12.06.10

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel 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 vergangenen zwei Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.

*Über die steigende Zahl von **afrikanischen Flüchtlingen**, die Israel erreichen:*

Africa too much for us

"The government discussed Sunday the plan to set up an open camp for [refugees]. [...] According to reports, some 1,300 miserable souls are trying their luck every month. According to legal definitions, most of them are not refugees. [...] The rumor of a boarding house with warm meals, clothes, health services and even educational programs will merely stimulate and double the immigrant waves. [...]

So what should we do? Despite the difficulty, and despite our pangs of conscience, and the merciful Jewish heart, and the Holocaust's trauma – we must not set up an absorption center for infiltrators. [...] They want to run away and come here? We're very sorry, but we're not at home."

Samadar Peri, JED 28.11.10

No quick fix for migrants

"The government's plan [...] consists of four major elements: building a physical barrier along the southern border, enforcing the prohibition on

employment of migrants, building a holding facility to house illegal migrants and entering agreements with other countries to absorb those migrants who already reside in the country. [...] The government is also in danger of believing its own spin and assuming that all those arriving in Israel are economic migrants and not refugees or legitimate asylum seekers. [...]

Every country has the right to determine who enters its borders [...]. But as a signatory to the United Nations conventions on refugees and as a society made up of former refugees, which seeks to be a light unto the nations, Israel must think long and hard before committing to a course that could cause it to compromise its values."

02.12.10 JPO Editorial

Spreading racism and xenophobia

"In the state comprised of refugees and survivors, humanity has come to an end. The public discourse on the fate of the aliens focuses only on evil solutions, each one more monstrous than the next. One says let's build a fence, the other says let's construct a massive prison compound, a third says deport them immediately [...].

Listen to the leaders, not one of them has a single word of compassion for these people. Nothing. The fact that they are human beings, and ones in distress, has been forgotten. It is not even a consideration. [...] There is xenophobia in Europe today as well. But the leadership's silence, its collaboration in these developments and its proposals to solve the 'problem,' cannot be forgiven or overlooked."

Gideon Levy, HAA 02.12.10

*Über die Eskalation in **Korea** und die Bedeutung für den Konflikt mit dem **Iran**:*

From Korea to the Kotel

"Israelis actually know what it's like to have hundreds of lethal missiles landing literally out of the blue, indiscriminately hitting both soldiers and ordinary people going about their ordinary lives. We don't know yet what it's like when those missiles are sent from a rogue nuclear state. But it doesn't take much imagination to predict our situation once North Korea's ally, Iran, achieves atomic weapons. [...]

Iran is watching the response of the rest of the world to North Korea, and North Korea is waiting to see how the winds blow concerning Iran's nuclear plans.

There is, of course, one essential difference when it comes to Israel and the Korean situation. Israel both suffers the missiles, like the South, and is increasingly condemned as a pariah state, like the North."

Liat Collins, JPO 27.11.10

North Korea testing Obama

"Iran is closely monitoring North Korea's conduct on the nuclear and sanctions front, and there are quite a few indications that Pyongyang serves as a model for emulation. On top of it, there is the close cooperation between the two states on the missile and nuclear development front. [...] Meanwhile, the concern shown by America's traditional allies in Asia and in the Middle East is growing in the face of the weakness and helplessness displayed by Washington in respect to Pyongyang's provocations. [...]

If this is how the White House conducts itself vis-à-vis the small, poor North Korea, would it have the power and desire to protect the oil states against Iran should Tehran decide, for example, to disrupt oil tanker traffic in the Persian Gulf?"

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 23.11.10

HAA = Haaretz

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

GLO = Globes

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