



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 10/11

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

16. – 30. Mai 2011

#### 1. Obamas Nahost-Rede

*Am 19. Mai hielt US-Präsident Barack Obama im State Department eine Grundsatzrede zum Nahen Osten und dem "arabischen Frühling." Darin sprach er sich für die Volksaufstände der letzten Monate aus und versprach "potentiellen Demokratien" wie Ägypten und Tunesien seine Unterstützung.*

*Obama widmete nur einen kleinen Teil seiner Rede dem palästinensisch-israelischen Konflikt. Verständlicherweise erhielt dieser Teil jedoch die größte Medienaufmerksamkeit in Israel. Für Kontroverse sorgte insbesondere sein Aufruf, einen palästinensischen Staat auf Basis der Waffenstillstandslinien von 1967 zu gründen – bisher hatten die USA immer betont, bei der Grenzziehung müsse Israels Sicherheit im Vordergrund stehen.*

*Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu bezeichnete die Grenzen von 1967 in einer öffentlichen Reaktion auf die Rede dementsprechend umgehend als "nicht zu verteidigen".*

*In einer zweiten Rede vor der pro-israelischen Lobbygruppe AIPAC wiederholte Obama drei Tage später seine Ausführungen zu den 1967er Grenzen, betonte jedoch, dass jede Grenzziehung mit "Gebietsaustausch" und Verhandlungen einhergehen müsse.*

#### Presenting the Obama Doctrine

"The Obama Doctrine for the Middle East prioritizes the engagement of the public, rather than engagement with the states in the region. [...]"

The doctrine's primary tool for supporting reform appears to be grand political rhetoric, although Obama has also pledged to support economic and political reform by rallying the international community to provide financial support and technical expertise. All this adds up to a foreign-policy doctrine of 'defensive liberalism.' [...]"

The problem lies in Obama's grossly over-optimistic assessment of regional realities, which could have

dangerous unintended consequences. [...] For Obama, the 'Arab Spring' recalls [...] the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the Eastern European transition to democracy.

Unfortunately, [...] in the Middle East of 2011, although many demonstrators are driven by the demand for reform, they lack the deep ideological and civil society institutional foundations that undergirded success in 1989. [...] Islamism represents the most popular alternative ideology to the status quo, and the Islamists are inestimably better organized than the democratic reformers."

Jonathan Rynhold, JPO 25.05.11

#### Che Obama

"Obama [...] believes in the strength and ability of the masses to impose change on leaders. [...] The role of the United States is to serve as a model to them, to encourage them and to support democratic movements replacing despotic tyranny, but the responsibility for change lies with the nations. If they take to the streets and demand what is theirs, they will defeat tyranny. [...]"

Therefore, his speech should be interpreted as a call to the Palestinians to take to the streets and bring down the occupation, which Obama considers immoral no less than the tyranny in Arab states. [...] They must behave like Tunisians and Egyptians - embark on a mass, non-violent struggle, a popular revolution. They must trust that America will back them and will prevent Israelis from shooting them in the streets.

This is the practical translation of Obama's doctrine." Aluf Benn, HAA 25.05.11

#### The hitchhiker's guide to the Mideast

"Obama's speech is [...] a very important text in a region that has been conditioned to rely on every utterance by a U.S. president to determine reality. But it's not too late to note that the United States is perhaps still unwilling to determine reality. [...]"

Is it really possible [...] that peace, as Obama said, can't be imposed on the sides, just as democracy can't be imposed? This is the hitchhiker's approach, which a superpower that is capable of going to full-blown war for lofty ideals can't allow itself to adopt.

A superpower that considers 'nation building' in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia as essential for stability and security can't turn its back on things when it comes to the Palestinians. [...]

On the other hand, hitchhikers, like guests, don't rearrange the furniture in their host's house. At most, they can show dissatisfaction or suggest, very gently, that changes should be made. Obama is turning out to be the ultimate hitchhiker."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 22.05.11

### **Obama the Zionist**

"In the last third of his speech, he addressed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Netanyahu and anyone else who slammed the president's words the other night should closely review his words. Obama, an Afro-American president considered a 'leftist,' unequivocally adopted the essence of the Israeli-Zionist narrative in his speech. I doubt whether we will find even one serving Palestinian politician who would be willing to accept the wording offered by Obama. [...]

There are elements and camps out there that for two years now have been trying to portray Obama as an Israel-hater who curries favor with the Arabs while disguising his communist tendencies. Yet none of the above is true, and the president's latest speech proved it yet again. It was a speech delivered by a wide-ranging thinker, a liberal Democrat, a leader with principles and an Israel fan."

Sever PLocker, JED 20.05.11

### **Obama's virtual reality**

"President Obama is determined to introduce democracy to Arab countries, in spite of their 1,400 year old systemic track record of tyranny, terror, political violence, uncertainty, volatility and treachery. He prefers the virtual reality of the 'Arab Spring,' rather than contending with the Middle Eastern reality of the 'Stormy Arab Winter.' [...] He downplays the absence of an appropriate infrastructure of values and education in the Arab Middle East, which is a prerequisite for democracy and a free market economy. [...]

Like a deer caught in a headlights-look, the American president is glued to the Palestinian 'screen saver.' He is convinced that the Arab-Israeli conflict

and the Palestinian issue are a root cause of Middle East turbulence, the crown jewel of Arab policy-making and a core cause of anti-US Islamic terrorism. [...]

Obama pressures the Jewish State to partition Jerusalem and to retreat to the 9-15 miles wide pre-1967 lines, in defiance of precedents which document that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has never been over the size – but over the existence – of the Jewish State. Thus, Obama radicalizes Palestinian expectations and demands, distances them from – and replacing them at – the negotiation table, and signals to the Palestinians that terrorism is rewarded. By doing so, he forfeits the role of an honest broker."

Yoram Ettinger, JED 21.05.11

### **When peace met partisanship**

"The criticism of President Obama's speech this week, in particular the reaction to the statement that 'the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps,' underscores the lamentable, polarized discourse in our nation. [...]

As Israeli military officials themselves have attested, Israel's security is not jeopardized by 'mutually agreed' land swaps based on the 1967 border. It is not threatened by a President who consistently reaffirms his 'unshakeable' commitment to Israel's security, or to enhancing U.S.-Israel security cooperation to historic levels. [...]

If articulating the mere date '1967' causes such a politicized backlash [...] the President may yet be driven to stand down from the pursuit of a two-state solution—and that, we're afraid, is exactly what the President's detractors have in mind."

D.A. Halperin, JPO 22.05.11

### **Just what was Obama asking of Israel?**

"Indeed, there were several items no doubt perceived by the White House as gestures that would make Israel happy.

First, his tough line opposing the Palestinian Authority's efforts to get unilateral recognition of a state from the UN General Assembly. [...] Third, his acknowledgment that the US isn't [...] going to try to impose a settlement or even propose a detailed plan. He's simply urging the two parties to act. [...] Fourth, he takes a tougher line on the Fatah-Hamas agreement. [...] Fifth, he says a Palestinian state must be 'non-militarized,' [...]

Why, then, did he so upset Israel and its supporters? [...]

There's Obama's patronizing attitude – that he knows what Israel needs better than Israelis or Israeli leaders do. [...]

It's not enough to keep repeating that the status quo is untenable. One must provide a convincing vision of a better status quo. And in that, Obama [...] fail[ed] totally."

Barry Rubin, JPO 22.05.11

### **US president must do more**

"On Thursday, he finally uttered the simple truth right to our face: There is no other way to secure a peace deal. Israel must return what it took in 1967, and the Palestinians must recognize Israel's existence. [...]

However, after hurling the truth in everyone's face, the president disappointed us: He spoke like a commentator, rather than as the leader of a superpower. He did not impose a timetable, he did not offer carrots, and he did not threaten with sticks. [...] In order to realize the two-state vision, Obama needs to hold up a whip, and make the price of rejectionism clear to both sides."

Orly Azoulay, JED 20.05.11

### **Obama at Canossa**

"On the face of it, there were almost no differences between Obama's first speech, in the State Department, and his second speech, before over 10,000 Jews. [...]

On the face of it, Obama's speech was full of vision and loyalty to the peace process and the establishment of a Palestinian state. But in practice, he is making these goals virtually unachievable, both by opposing a Palestinian initiative in the United Nations in September and by understanding that it will be difficult for Israel to negotiate with a Palestinian government that includes Hamas. [...]

Thus in spite of the glittering, hopeful rhetoric, Obama's speech is a recipe for stagnation. [...]

After years of tension, Netanyahu and Obama have finally reached an unusual agreement: Their battle for political survival is more important than the fate of the Middle East."

Aner Shalev, HAA 24.05.11

## **2. Netanyahu in Washington**

*Während eines viertägigen Aufenthaltes in Washington traf Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu mit Präsident Barack Obama zusammen und hielt An-*

*sprachen vor der Lobbygruppe AIPAC und dem amerikanischen Kongress.*

*Nachdem Netanyahu Obamas Nahost-Rede (siehe oben) kritisiert hatte, verlief das Treffen der beiden am Folgetag angespannt. Bei einer gemeinsamen Pressekonferenz wies Netanyahu nochmals daraufhin, dass eine Rückkehr zu den Grenzen von 1967 für Israel nicht annehmbar sei.*

*Vor dem Kongress ertete Netanyahu mit seinen Standpunkten Applaus. Er präsentierte jedoch keinen Friedensplan, sondern legte dar, was er von den Palästinensern erwarte, um Frieden möglich zu machen – darunter die Anerkennung Israels als jüdischen Staat mit Jerusalem als ungeteilter Hauptstadt.*

*In Israel führte Netanyahus Washington-Reise und seine Konfrontation mit Obama indes zu einem Popularitätsschub. Laut einer Umfrage der Zeitung Haaretz zeigten sich 51% der Israelis zufrieden mit ihrem Premier – vor der Reise waren es nur 38% gewesen.*

### **One more victory like that and we're done for**

"The speech in Congress was a declaration of intentions. But the issues raised are clearly unacceptable to the Palestinians; for example, that Jerusalem will never be divided and Israel must maintain a military presence along the Jordan River. [...]

What did Bibi actually want [...]? Some observers say he wanted to put pressure on Obama [...]. The public hazing of Obama in front of the media at the end of their meeting was embarrassing. [...] The political alliance [between the US and Israel] suffered an unnecessary blow last week, when in front of journalists Bibi distorted what Obama had told him in private. [...] A victory with the tricks and shticks of someone who finds it hard to drop the dream of a Greater Israel is leading us to destruction."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 27.05.11

### **Grandstanding won't stop history**

"Members of Congress got to hear [...] Netanyahu lay out his vision of what Israeli-Palestinian peace must look like - the details of which contradict the very notion of peace-making, but no matter. [...]

Members of Congress who truly care about Israel need to look past the self-righteous narratives [...] and recognize that far from helping Israel, support for such positions makes peace and security less likely for Israel.

Peace for Israel requires Palestinian national unity.

[...] Israel can't make peace with only half the Palestinians. [...] Likewise, the real threat facing Israel today is not the Palestinians' diplomacy campaign. The real threat is the void created by the absence of any credible peace effort [...].

Members of Congress would do well to keep in mind that [...] sustained, credible U.S. efforts to achieve Israeli-Arab peace are an essential element of U.S. support for Israel."

Lara Friedman, HAA 27.05.11

### **Saying "no" to the world**

"At the end of the day, Netanyahu left the world with nothing they could hold on to and with a big 'no' to Obama, to Europe and to everyone. He gave them nothing to cling to or to work with. [...]

Obama only expected Bibi to utter six words in Congress: 'I accept the president's model, but...' – yet Netanyahu didn't even get close. Instead, he presented his no's coherently, one after the other." Orly Azoulay, JED 26.05.11

### **History in the making**

"Netanyahu [...] must now bluntly tell Congress that talk of Palestinian statehood is simply off limits. The prime minister must use this historic opportunity to quash the international community's pipe dream of instantly establishing a Palestinian state, and instead replace it with an honest understanding that a deal at this point is out of the question.

[...] With the US presidential election only a year away, Obama cannot afford another high-profile spat with Israel, especially with Congress likely to lap up the Israeli prime minister's every word, reinforced by continued rock-solid US public support for the Jewish state."

Ari Harrow, JPO 21.05.11

### **Netanyahu rides high**

"For Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, this has been his most successful week since the election. He has not enjoyed such a level of public approval since February 2009. [...]

The dramatic turnaround in Netanyahu's status began when the public in Israel learned of the severe confrontation between him and President Obama at the White House. [...] The speech Netanyahu made in Congress strengthened support for him even more. [...]

It turns out that the word 'No' and the number '1967' were all that Netanyahu had to say to hit the target with an overwhelming majority of public opinion. Asked whether they agree that in a peace agree-

ment with the Palestinians the borders should be based on the 1967 lines with agreed exchanges of territory, which reflects Obama's stance, 66% of Israelis responded that they did not agree."

Lilach Weissmann, GLO 26.05.11

### **A speech isn't enough**

"Such speeches cannot be a substitute for a peace policy; the kind Israel lacks today. In any case, such policy was not expressed by Netanyahu in America or in Israel. [...]

Courage, determination, decision-making ability and mostly the willingness to confront one's party members and domestic supporters are the true leadership test. [...]

This will not be achieved with Congress or Knesset speeches, but rather, with the courage to take decisions that will change a reality which is increasingly creating a substantive threat on the State of Israel's stature, on the international support it receives, and on its future as a Jewish democratic state."

Ehud Olmert, JED 27.05.11

### **A declaration of no peace**

"I don't know which is more occupied by Israel, the West Bank [...] or the US Congress which consists mostly of American politicians who are more pro-Israel than most Israelis. [...]

Any American watching Netanyahu's rock concert-like performance at the Joint Session of Congress recognized right away that his priority was to politically slap Obama in the face, rather than outline, as his aides had promised, a peace plan with the Palestinians.

There was no peace plan. The only plan Netanyahu offered was a plan for continued conflict. [...] It was the most stunning example of a Middle East leader intentionally missing an opportunity to bring about a peace accord."

Ray Hanania, JPO 24.05.11

### **Obama's challenge**

"If Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to adhere to the territory, Obama's speech from yesterday does not bode well for him. Netanyahu understands this -- there is no greater expert in American politics -- and therefore he changed his tone and welcomed Obama's AIPAC version of the speech, which is not significantly different from the speech that aroused Netanyahu's ire. Netanyahu simply capitulated."

Ron Dagoni, GLO 21.05.11

### **Lessons of Netanyahu's triumph**

"Obama adopted the Palestinian negotiating position by calling for Israel to accept that future negotiations will be based on the indefensible – indeed suicidal – 1949 armistice lines.

So [...] Netanyahu realized that his mission in the US capital had changed. [...] His job was to stop Obama from driving Israel's relations with the US off a cliff. [...] He did his job brilliantly. [...] The fact that leading Democrats [...] felt it necessary to distance themselves from Obama's statements about Israel's final borders makes clear that Netanyahu successfully rallied the American public to Israel's side."

Caroline Glick, JPO 27.05.11

### **Between Congress and the Knesset**

"Only in Israel, only in a community lacking all self-respect, are such reactions possible: Members of both the American Houses of Congress applaud the prime minister [...] and the hearts of most Israeli commentators turn sour. [...] If Congress so sweepingly adopts the Jewish right to the land, where are all those Israelis coming from, who for years have been explaining to the world that this is occupied territory? [...]"

If we had a responsible opposition here, all parts of the nation, certainly those who do not want total surrender to Obama, would have to congratulate themselves on the prime minister's success in Washington. Most regrettably, this is not the case when it comes to the opposition in Israel."

Israel Harel, HAA 26.05.11

## **3. 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 **Öffnung des Grenzübergangs** zwischen Ägypten und dem Gazastreifen:*

### **Rafah opening good for us**

"Paradoxically, security officials in Israel are satisfied with the opening of the Rafah Crossing. Nobody will say it out loud, yet in internal discussions at the

highest levels we see a sense of relief [...]. Officials are saying that we may finally be moving towards full disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Israel's wet dream is taking shape: Egypt is assuming responsibility for Gaza residents. [...]"

Opening the crossing officially will not essentially change the reality that already exists on the ground: People passing through without any supervision by Israel, the Quartet or the PA. The Egyptians merely institutionalized an existing situation. [...]"

And so, the violation of the agreement has no security implications for Israel."

Alex Fishman, JED 30.05.11

### **Terrified of Rafah**

"Egypt's decision to open the Rafah crossing to people raised great apprehension in Israel, as expected. [...]"

Along with security concerns, Israel's fury seems to stem from the fact that the opening of the crossing scuttles its vengeful and cruel closure policy. [...] It has turned Gaza into the world's biggest prison, led to terrible human tragedies and sowed deep desperation among the people. [...]"

The opening of the Rafah crossing is above all an important humanitarian gesture. As such, Israel should follow suit and open the crossings from the West Bank to Israel. The return of normal life to Gaza might encourage its citizens to put the brakes on terror. More importantly, the opening of the crossing will clearly show that Israel has decided to disengage from Gaza and abandon its all-but-direct occupation."

HAA 29.05.11 Editorial

*Über den mutmaßlichen **Verkauf eines Öltankers an Iran** durch die israelische Firmengruppe Ofer Brothers:*

### **More vigilance on Iran**

"Since international sanctions target Iranian nuclear ambitions – which foremost constitute an existential danger to Israel – it's naturally unexpected and entirely more incongruous to find Israelis dealing with Iran than to find nationals of other countries. [...]"

At this point in time, we cannot pass judgment. The Ofers' line is that it's all a misunderstanding, that they couldn't have known with whom their subsidiary did business. [...]"

Wheeler-dealers who do mega-business aren't naïve. They cannot sell their wares and then claim not to have known who their buyers were. The life-and-death stakes are too terrifyingly high. The pri-

mary onus must be on the traders because these aren't normal times, given the horrific and undiminished threats from Tehran's ayatollahs. [...]

Some responsibility does ultimately also rest with the government. Yet, incredibly, our Treasury is yet to publish a list of firms doing business with Iran, in order to prevent involvement with them."

JPO 28.05.11 Editorial

### **Iran sanctions on Israeli firm are an embarrassment**

"Over the years the Ofer Brothers, reinforced by the family's next generation, became an influential force in the Israeli economy. [...] But its alleged sale of a ship to Iran evokes bewilderment and embarrassment. [...] Israel was making a mockery of its own demands that the world fight Iran's military nuclearization. [...] While Netanyahu likens Tehran's current rulers to Berlin's on the eve of World War II, his own shortcomings have enabled a major Israeli corporation to circumvent the sanctions and trade with a satanic foe.

When it wants to make money, as in selling weapons to Iran during its war with Iraq, Israel knows how to close its eyes."

HAA 27.05.11 Editorial

*Über die **Affäre Dominique Strauss-Kahn** und Parallelen zu der Verurteilung von Ex-Präsident Moshe Katsav:*

### **Israel's choice: France or US?**

"Former President Moshe Katsav, convicted of two counts of rape and other sexual offenses in December, will not be going to prison for at least another year, legal sources involved in the case said Thursday.

Sexual offenses have always gone hand in hand with power [...]

The difference lies in the kind of justice that awaits each man. Strauss-Kahn, who is being held in New York, [...] could go to jail for 70 years. But Katsav, who was convicted of [...] charges far direr than the ones faced by his counterpart – has received a jail sentence of seven years. [...]

Israel's rape laws are infamous for their leniency, with most rapists escaping with barely a scrape. [...]

Seven years in prison is simply not enough for destroying the lives of two women beyond all reconstruction, and it is insufficient in proving to Israeli women that they are being protected against similar recurrences. [...]

Now, Israel's Supreme Court would do well to follow the lead of a justice system that is truly egalitarian, treating high-powered officials with the same 'brutal' integrity as it does any ordinary civilian - that of the United States."

Adi Dvir, JED 20.05.11

### **A French perversion**

"French society [...] worships power and money [...], believes that all is permitted to certain people and is still outrageously chauvinistic. [...]

The perverted French attitude veers between a smiling forgiveness of those who 'like women' or 'chase skirts' [...] and an extreme and misplaced deference to power brokers. [...]

Does any of this ring a bell? Yes and no. Israeli society is depicted as more confused and less unequivocal about these kinds of cases. To our credit it should be noted that we did not wait for the New York Police Department to get involved in matters concerning those who wield authority in this country; we did the work ourselves.

But we still have a long way to go before we treat those public figures with the same dry, egalitarian, uncompromising severity that led New York's finest to the first-class section of an Air France plane to remove the alleged sexual assailant."

Avirama Golan, HAA 18.05.11

HAA = Haaretz

JED = Jediath Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

AS = Arutz Sheva

Veröffentlicht: 01. Juni 2011

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