



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 19/12

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

15. – 29. Oktober 2012

1. Wahlbündnis von Likud und Yisrael Beiteinu

Überraschend haben Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu und Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman ein Bündnis ihrer Parteien Likud und Yisrael Beiteinu für die vorgezogenen Parlamentswahlen am 22.01.2013 angekündigt. Obwohl dieser Schritt zunächst von einigen Likud-Anhängern kritisiert wurde, stimmten Parteimitglieder schließlich mit großer Mehrheit für das Wahlbündnis. Im Gegensatz zum national-liberalen Likud, der sowohl religiöse als auch säkulare Anhänger hat, gilt Yisrael Beiteinu als säkulare rechts-nationalistische Partei, die vor allem von russischen Immigranten gewählt wird. Laut Medienumfragen würde das Bündnis der beiden Parteien eindeutig die stärkste Fraktion in der Knesset stellen. Unklar blieb allerdings, ob Likud und Yisrael Beiteinu mit einer Liste mehr Stimmen erhalten würden als getrennt.

To powerfully lead

"On Thursday night something important happened in Israel: The right wing was not unified, nor was Lieberman made legitimate. Instead, the two bosses of Israeli politics said that all they wanted was more power. [...]

They want this power for themselves; to direct it against civil rights, against small parties representing ideas and niche sectors; against minorities and against governmental checks and balances. All these things obstruct Netanyahu and Lieberman, and now they want more power to move them aside."

Gideon Levy, HAA 28.10.12

Meridors unexpected moment

"It was easy to see what was in it for Liberman. At a stroke, he becomes Netanyahu's heir apparent. [...] It's been far harder to understand why Netanyahu thinks the new alliance is a good idea. For a start, in

strengthening the politically skilled Liberman, he weakens himself. Second, he infuriates his own Likud's most senior ministers — privately incandescent that Liberman has been catapulted above them in the leadership hierarchy. [...]

There are more negatives for Netanyahu too, but that's enough to make the point, I think. And set against that big downside is the supposed big benefit: The alliance will guarantee that "Likud Beytenu" [...] will form the next government. Actually, it does nothing of the kind. Indeed, it might conceivably do the opposite."

David Horovitz, TOI 28.10.12

Pressure overcame ego

"The merger between Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu [...] will make the joint party the strongest and most significant political force in Israel. [...]

The Right realized that only a dramatic move could unite the bloc and weaken the small parties. [...]

The merger between Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu has created an almost extreme-rightist party. Those who were distressed by the anti-democratic winds that blew in Netanyahu's coalition should shake with fear. [...]

And who will fight for the rule of law and democracy now that such a powerful force is running the political game? This fear may awaken the Center-Right and those who fear for Israel's democratic character."

Attila Somfalvi, JED 26.10.12

A good day for religious liberals

"Lieberman's constituents are different from the Likud's in that they're heavily Russian-speaking and tend to be more secular. Many are not halachically Jewish. For this reason, they tend to be very 'left-wing' on social and religious issues. [...] Issues like civil marriage, easing conversion standards, [...] etc., would enjoy significant sympathy and support

from the likes of Netanyahu, Liberman, Gideon Saar, and on and on. [...]

A stable Netanyahu-Lieberman coalition that is large enough not to be beholden to haredi influence might be able and willing to supply the goods.

Let us empower the next government to create real change for religious choice, competition and openness."

Haviv Gur, TOI 25.10.12

Strange bedfellows indeed

"Does Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu know something we don't? [...]

What would Netanyahu say in his defense – that Lieberman has changed? That Lieberman is not the head of a radical and backward-looking party? [...]

How will Netanyahu explain his alliance with this person, the perennial suspect and the police's person of interest, who is embroiled in one of the most severe public corruption cases?"

Mordechai Gilat, IHY 26.10.12

Good news for the Jews

"The merger [...] could help eliminate the type of coalition in which member parties try with all their might to advance the interests of their constituents at the expense of the public as a whole. [...]

Now that the Likud has merged with Yisrael Beytenu, there is a large, substantial party with a clear vision. A vision that centers on personal and existential security, rejects delusional and irresponsible peace efforts, promotes the settlement of the land and is committed to keeping Jerusalem whole as the eternal undivided capital of the Jewish people. [...] Now we must hope that the Left also consolidates its parties. It would be best if the Israeli public had to choose between Right and Left. A choice between two distinct blocs will ensure government stability and allow the government to face big challenges."

Haim Shine, IHY 26.10.12

The burning house

"Later this week all eyes will turn to the other political bloc. Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert [...] was leaning toward sitting out the January election, but apparently he is having second thoughts now. [...] Olmert's goal now is to unite, unite, unite. He believes the alliance between Netanyahu and Lieberman could bring center-left voters who would not otherwise bother to vote back to the polling stations."

Yossi Verter, HAA 28.10.12

Stability in unity

"The most obvious benefit is the creation of a single, large right-wing party with the potential to bring more stability to our political system. Ideally, two large parties – one on the Left and one on the Right – will represent the two mainstream positions on cardinal issues such as security and socio-economics. Smaller parties – particularly national-religious and haredi factions – would be less able to take advantage of our splintered political system to exert influence that far exceeds their size."

JPO 29.10.12 Editorial

2. Geheimverhandlungen zwischen USA und Iran?

Laut einem Bericht der New York Times hat es zwischen Teheran und Washington Geheimgespräche gegeben. Der Bericht stützt sich auf Aussagen von amerikanischen Regierungsbeamten, die angaben, Iran habe sich nun zu direkten Verhandlungen über sein Atomprogramm bereit erklärt. Diese sollen aber erst nach den US-Präsidentenwahlen beginnen. Weder die amerikanische noch die iranische Regierung bestätigten den Bericht.

Michael Oren, der israelische Botschafter in den USA, sprach sich in den Medien gegen Gespräche mit dem Iran aus, die dem Iran lediglich einen Aufschub gewähren würden, und forderte stattdessen verstärkte Sanktionen.

To talk or not to talk

"The assumption that an American-Iranian channel of communication exists needs no further confirmation. From the beginning of his tenure, U.S. President Barack Obama made clear that he intended to pursue a dialogue with Tehran. [...]

The important question is not whether there will be a publicly acknowledged dialogue between the U.S. and Iran, but what concessions Washington will offer or may have offered Iran to consent to a dialogue. [...]

Did Iran's agreeing to talks contribute to the wording of [...] Netanyahu's UN speech, in which he 'granted' the U.S. administration more time, until next spring or summer, for diplomatic efforts? The lukewarm and indecisive responses Sunday from Netanyahu's associates could indicate that the prime minister was not surprised by the weekend's headlines, even if he doesn't approve of the move."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 22.10.12

Is there a secret US-Iran agreement?

"But it is doubtful that in an election year the White House had anything to gain from the leak about a U.S.-Iranian agreement. Without clear specifics about what it actually gained from Tehran, the Obama administration would be exposed to charges that it was not firm at the negotiating table. [...] Whether the U.S.-Iranian contacts that were reported this week are being handled as back-channel negotiations, despite all the known pitfalls of this approach, or as formal secret talks, the Obama administration probably would have preferred that they not have been revealed at this precise time."

Dore Gold, IHY 26.10.12

US-Iran talks waste of time

"Under Obama, the US sent Tehran numerous signals indicating that it seeks reconciliation. An American representative even joined the talks between Europe and Iran. But this round of negotiations failed as well. [...]

The American administration has turned itself into a joke. The US will give Iran the time it needs to complete the development of a nuclear bomb, after which it will be able to conduct negotiations from a position of power - and Israeli and American threats of an attack won't help. [...]

This failed policy is bolstering the extremists and reduces the chances of a peaceful resolution. We can only hope for a different American administration, one that will terminate this absurd plan before it becomes irreversible."

Eldad Beck, JED 24.10.12

Words better than missiles

"Should the US succeed in launching direct talks with the Iranians with the aim of halting the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, Israel will benefit most from such a development.

When people talk, they don't shoot. Despite our tendency to belittle diplomacy, 100 meetings between Iranian and American officials in suits are preferable to 100 missiles on Tel Aviv."

Orly Azoulay, JED 25.10.12

Obama is gambling on Iran

"If The New York Times report was even partially true, Iran is ready to give substantial assistance to Obama in the election. Imagine a pre-election message announcement by the Obama administration that Iran has agreed to temporarily freeze uranium enrichment or that Iran has promised to enrich uranium to lower levels in exchange for the U.S. partial-

ly lifting economic sanctions. Obama could present this to voters as his first major foreign policy achievement. The American public does not want Iran to get nuclear weapons but Americans are also not interested in a war."

Boaz Bismuth, IHY 22.10.12

The Iranian bluff

"There is no doubt that the New York Times report on the resumption of direct talks between Iran and the United States marks yet another attempt by Tehran to loosen the noose around its neck.[...]

The Iranians are seeking to resume the talks from a position of weakness and fear. They fear that the collapse of their economy will lead to a mass public protest and that the major bluff regarding their military capabilities will gradually be exposed. The West is becoming less and less impressed with Iran's claims of advanced capabilities and technology. [...] Iran is seeking dialogue in hopes that the West will ease some of the economic pressure."

Alex Fishman, JED 23.10.12

Talking to Tehran

"The problem is that Tehran has repeatedly used negotiations as nothing more than a stalling tactic to push off sanctions or military actions [...] while advancing toward nuclear arms capability. [...]

Still, perhaps negotiations should be given 'one last chance,' particularly unprecedented direct talks between Iran and the US. [...] It should be done for the sake of the American people, and of the citizens of other Western countries. As sanctions continue to take their toll and a military strike becomes more likely, Americans and citizens of other Western countries should know that every option for a peaceful resolution to the dispute with Iran has truly been exhausted."

JPO 21.10.12 Editorial

We need to talk

"It is too early to pin hopes on American-Iranian dialogue. However, it would be a mistake to write off the possibility of its existence, or of it achieving real results. [...] The existence of dialogue does not take the military option off the table. [...]

But [...] it could create an historic turning point in Iran's attitude toward America.

Such dialogue should be encouraged. All countries should aspire to it, especially Israel, which seeks to remove the Iranian nuclear threat not only by curbing Iran's technological ability, but also, in a more

fundamental way, by neutralizing Iran's motivation to harm other countries.”
HAA 23.10.12 Editorial

3. US-Wahlen und Israel

Die letzte Debatte zwischen US-Präsident Barack Obama und dem republikanischen Gegenkandidaten Mitt Romney konzentrierte sich auf die amerikanische Außenpolitik. Dabei betonten beide Kandidaten ihre Verbundenheit zu Israel – und stimmten weitestgehend überein. Während Obama auf die ausgeweitete amerikanische Militärhilfe in seiner Amtszeit hinwies, sagte Romney, er werde Israel auch militärisch zur Seite stehen, sollte es zu einem Angriff durch den Iran kommen. Der israelisch-palästinensische Friedensprozess wurde hingegen von beiden nicht erwähnt. Anstatt einen klaren politischen Standpunkt zu formulieren, schienen Obama und Romney darum zu konkurrieren, sich als der bessere Freund Israels darzustellen.

Their son of a bitch

“It's hard to believe, but the two candidates [...] have narrowed down the range of their positions on foreign policy issues to one decisive question: Which one of them is a better friend to one crazy country, Israel. [...]

There are still people, especially in Israel, who believe that the attitude of the American candidates toward Israel derives from Israel's basic values and the genius of its leaders. [...]

But it seems that the diagnosis for this paradox of America - whose administration usually goes after countries that violate human rights, and which opposes the occupation - is not to be found in the realm of psychology [...]. Its basis is to be found in a statement attributed [...] to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who said of the Nicaraguan tyrant Anastasio Somoza: ‘He may be a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch.’ [...]

Support for Israel is intended first and foremost as a means of garnering the Jewish vote and financial contributions for the candidate, and only thereafter to show ‘responsibility’ to friends as part of a foreign policy that can change at any moment.”

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 24.10.12

Nothing new under the sun

“It is pathetic how Israelis determine their support for a certain American presidential candidate according to their political beliefs. [...]

The US, regardless of which party is in power, has not recognized the liberated/occupied territories in the West Bank - Judea and Samaria - and has not recognized Jerusalem as Israel's united capital. [...] There have been nine different American presidents since the Six-Day War, but only one thing has remained the same: American policy toward Israel. Therefore, Romney and Obama supporters in Israel should calm down, separately of course. The two candidates will most likely continue with the same policy that no American president has dared to change.”

Eitan Haber, JED 22.10.12

All about Israel

“Israel was dragged into the center of this debate, both to its benefit and its detriment. Obama had two main arguments: one, that as long as he occupies the White House, Iran will not have a nuclear bomb, and two, that there has never been a U.S. president who has provided Israel with as much defense aid as he has [...]. The unprecedented defense aid is a documented fact, while the future of the Iranian nuclear endeavor is a matter of speculation. [...] The Obama-Romney debate on this issue will transfer to the Israeli election process. There is no doubt that if Romney wins in November, it would serve as a strong argument for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's camp that there is no prime minister more suited for the job at this time than Netanyahu himself. The same is also true for Netanyahu's opponents should Obama win. It is not clear whether these arguments would be based on truth, but in the battle over public opinion that characterizes an election campaign — which doesn't always entirely adhere to the truth — these arguments for and against will play a central role on the path to the next Knesset.”

Dan Margalit, IHY 24.10.12

The opposition's alternative

„If Barack Obama wins, it will be clear to everyone what a crazy bet the prime minister took for the first time since the establishment of the state, as he clearly identified himself as a supporter of Romney and took an active part in his campaign. For Sheldon Adelson, who has been the patron of both Netanyahu and Romney, a Romney victory in November would be great. It will be a magical journey. If he loses? So we'll drown.”

Ben Caspit, JPO 25.10.12

Overcoming Obama's foreign policy

"Since taking office, Obama has applied a bewildered foreign policy that has weakened America's global stature and political leverage in every corner of the world. [...] The president did not have a single international achievement to note. [...] Starting with a detached speech in Cairo, through Tunis and now the indifference to the civilian bloodshed in Syria, the administration has made the wrong call on almost every Arab Spring opportunity. Most significantly, with the Iranian nuclear crisis, President Obama has opted for a failed policy limited to negotiations and economic sanctions. [...]"

While it is true that sanctions have hurt Iran's economy, [...] they have not slowed down Iran's nuclear program. [...]"

In 2012, the presidential candidate who sets a clear and credible red line to Iran [...] should receive the majority of the American vote. If the current President continues to appease rather than confront Iran, the American voter should help Romney overcome Obama."

Ophir Falk, JED 22.10.12

Obama's final showdown

"Obama is a smooth liar. With uncanny ease, he takes credit where it is not due, and shirks responsibility where it is.

The most blatant example of this during the debate was Obama's claims that he was tough on the Iranian regime and its race for nuclear weapons. Listening to the appeasement king of the West assert that he laid down the law to the mullahs from the get-go, that his sanctions have been working, and that he will never allow Tehran to proceed toward completing the bomb, one might conceivably be lulled into forgetting what he has been up to."

Ruthie Blum, IHY 23.10.12

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 Ermordung des libanesischen Geheimdienstchefs Wissam al-Hassan:

Assassination in Beirut

"The assassination [...] highlights the fear that the murderous civil war in Syria could overflow into its western neighbor. [...]"

The assassination in the Lebanese capital reflects Hezbollah's growing distress over the situation of its patron, Assad, and increasing demands within Lebanon to disarm the Shi'ite organization.

These days, it is difficult to differentiate between Syria and Hezbollah. [...] There are reliable reports that Hezbollah's most elite forces are guarding bases with the highest strategic value to the Syrian president. [...]"

Like Iran, Hezbollah has an interest in preventing the downfall of Assad's regime. [...] To a large extent, the assassination in Beirut looks like the opening shot in Hezbollah's internal struggle in Lebanon - a clear message to its rivals that there is more to come.

From an Israeli point of view, the worrying aspect is the instability spreading throughout Lebanon."

Avi Issacharoff, HAA 21.10.12

Assad proves he's still here

"What does Syria have to gain from a hit carried out during such a tumultuous period?"

Al-Hassan recently exposed an attempt to smuggle explosives into Lebanon. Former pro-Syrian minister Michel Samaha was arrested on charges of collaborating with members of the Syrian government to import the explosives and launch attacks in Lebanon. [...]"

Therefore, al-Hassan's murder may have been aimed at warning the 'March 14 alliance' - an anti-Syrian coalition of parties and independents in the Lebanese government [...] of the possible consequences of its support for the Syrian rebels. The hit may have also been a warning to Lebanese intelligence that anyone who will try to prevent smuggling from Syria to Lebanon will end up like al-Hassan."

Yaron Friedman, JED 21.10.12

Über die Frage, ob **rechtskräftig verurteilte Politiker** nach Absitzen ihrer Strafe in die Politik zurückkehren sollten, insbesondere bezüglich Aryeh Deri (Shas) und Ehud Olmert (Kadima):

Twice as bad

"For the first time since Israel's establishment, an ex-con former minister and parliamentarian is expected to re-enter the Knesset. [...]

Even after a court deemed Deri tainted with moral decay and corruption and sentenced him to two years in prison for taking bribery, embezzlement and fraud, Deri did not stop inciting the public against the justice system, the police and the media.

The decision to appoint Deri a member of Shas' triumvirate and head of its election campaign staff must spur the members of the 19th Knesset to close the loophole enabling politicians convicted of offenses bearing moral turpitude of entering the House at the end of their cooling-off period."

HAA 21.10.12 Editorial

We don't want criminals in government

"As elections loom, many Center-Left voters [...] are hoping for the return of the three criminals: Deri, Haim Ramon (convicted of forcibly kissing a female soldier) and Ehud Olmert (convicted of breach of trust). The Likud isn't far behind, displaying their prodigal son Tzachi Hanegbi (convicted of perjury). [...]

Lawyers and public officials cannot practice if they have a criminal record, and certain offenses also bar individuals from serving on city councils. But if a criminal wants to serve in Israel's parliament — well, that's a different story. [...]

Why isn't anyone proposing a law that will prevent convicted criminals from becoming elected officials? Are these the people that we want as examples for our children?"

Avi Cohen, IHY 17.10.12

Über erneute **Kampfhandlungen im Gazastreifen**:

Threats on the eve of elections

"The cease-fire arranged between Israel and the Hamas government in Gaza, via Egyptian mediation, put a temporary end to the violent cycle of attack-response-attack, whose brutality has become routine. But the lull solves nothing; it merely enables both sides, and especially their civilian populations, to breathe a sigh of relief until the next time. [...]

If there's any difference between this week's round and similar incidents in the previous three years, it is

in the proximity of the Knesset elections. Suddenly, after years of stubbornly refusing [...] to provide better protection for communities near the border with Gaza, the government discovered both reasons and money to do so. [...]

But beyond that, there appears to be a refusal to recognize the limits of deterrence and the short-lived effects of major military operations."

HAA 26.10.12 Editorial

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