



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 20/12

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

1. – 13. November 2012

#### 1. Obama gewinnt US-Wahlen

*Nach der Wiederwahl von US-Präsident Barack Obama, wird in den israelischen Medien die Bedeutung seiner zweiten Amtszeit für Israel und insbesondere für Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu diskutiert. Die Beziehung der beiden gilt als belastet. Spannungen hatten sich sowohl bezüglich des Friedensprozesses mit den Palästinensern als auch bezüglich des Umgangs mit Iran und seinem Nuklearprogramm ergeben. Zudem hatte Netanyahu seine Unterstützung für Obamas Gegenkandidaten Mitt Romney, der wie Netanyahu Spenden von dem Milliardär Sheldon Adelson erhielt, deutlich gemacht. Nach den Wahlen gratulierte Netanyahu Obama und bezeichnete die Allianz zwischen Israel und den USA als „stärker als jemals zuvor“.*

#### Israel, the Jews and a second Obama term

“There have always been fears by some analysts that once Obama was unrestrained by domestic political considerations (no more elections to run), he could pursue his real ideological agenda, both domestically and internationally. Given his history as a community organizer, his background in the Muslim world, his commitment to redistribution policies both here and abroad, and his past close relationships with many people who are or were bitter foes of the State of Israel [...], that agenda could take a darker turn with regard to Israel, and seek to fundamentally alter the historic relationship between the two countries.”

Richard Baehr, IHY 08.11.12

#### Obama better for Israel

“History has taught us that Republican administrations, due to the traditional support of the American Jewish community for the Democratic Party, tend not to be overly attentive to Israel's wishes and statements. For example, President George W. Bush did not authorize the sale to Israel of weapons

systems that would make an attack on Iran possible. Obama has already provided us with these aerial weapons systems.”

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 05.11.12

#### Obama's test

“The second-biggest loser in the U.S. elections was [...] Netanyahu, who signaled clearly that he was hoping for Obama to be defeated. That turned out to be a double mistake - gross intervention in the democratic process of Israel's greatest, practically only friend, and betting on the wrong side.

Politicians are meant to pay for making such mistakes. Since the prime minister has already brought forward the election, the job of declaring no-confidence in Netanyahu has fallen to the voters.”

HAA 08.11.12 Editorial

#### Fill your sandbags

“Obama's re-election means that Ehud Olmert is going to run against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the upcoming Jan. 2013 Israeli election. [...] Obama is going to intervene aggressively in our election to boost Olmert. It means that a push for immediate Palestinian statehood is back on the international agenda. Most worrisome of all, it means that an American 'grand bargain' with the Iranians, possibly at our expense, is on the table. [...]

There are a myriad of ways in which Obama and his emissaries can make it clear to the Israeli voter that U.S.-Israel relations will suffer if Netanyahu is re-elected. They know that Israeli voters fear U.S.-Israel conflict.”

David Weinberg, IHY 07.11.12

#### Obama and Israel

“Regarding Iran, Obama might ultimately be more disposed than Romney to use military means if necessary.

Romney, who would likely be perceived by the

American Left as continuing George W. Bush's 'regime change' policies in the Middle East, might face a massive anti-war campaign if he launched a military attack on Iran.

In contrast, Obama could be more successful at building a broad consensus – both at home and abroad – for using force to stop Iran's nuclear program."

JPO 08.11.12 Editorial

### **Now all I have is hope**

"Obama will remain the single most important factor preventing the growth of American ties with Israel. While Netanyahu certainly wishes to work with America, Obama's reelection could not have made him happy due to the strained relationship they share. Hopefully Obama will keep a low profile (yeah, right) and things will remain the same. Otherwise it might be time to start looking at the next up and coming superpower for political support."

Meir Liberman, TOI 08.11.12

### **Obama the second**

"Israel needs a furious and determined American president. That is its last chance to save itself from the curse of the occupation. It will never do so of its own initiative. [...]"

A president like Obama, with a well-developed sense of justice and a sophisticated sense of history, is not likely to miss the last chance to do somethingn. [...]"

After the disappointments of the past four years, which were so bitter following the great expectations, this hope is not the same as that which accompanied his first victory. But it is nevertheless hope. And there is no other."

Gideon Levy, HAA 08.11.12

### **Obama's American revolution**

"In recent decades more and more Israelis took to leaning on the reactionary forces in American society. It was convenient. [...] The evangelists didn't ask difficult questions about the settlements, the Tea Party people didn't say a word about excluding women and minorities or about Jewish settlers' attacks and acts of vandalism against Palestinians and peace activists. [...]"

The Obama revolution put an end to this Israeli tea party. From now on, the democratic Jewish state will no longer have the sweeping protection it has enjoyed. [...]"

The strategic alliance with the United States is strong, Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday. Maybe. But this alliance won't last, unless we renew the

ideological alliance with America. With the new America, this time. The America Obama embodies." Ari Shavit, HAA 08.11.12

### **Netanyahu gambled, we'll pay**

"Imagine how different things would be if instead of initiating a purposeless confrontation with Obama over Iran, Netanyahu would have publicly lauded some aspects of Washington's policy vis-à-vis the nuclear crisis and quietly protested, behind closed doors, other aspects.

Netanyahu's conduct will affect us all. [...]"

Undoubtedly, America will remain committed to Israel's security and continued existence. The US will not take Israel hostage because of Netanyahu's conduct, but anything beyond that – we should expect to get the cold shoulder."

Sima Kadmon, JED 08.11.12

### **Israel on the roulette table**

"Netanyahu did not create the tension with Obama. We should not confuse the victim with the rapist. It was Obama who chose to Cairo over Jerusalem; [...] it was Obama who coerced Netanyahu into freezing construction in the settlements. [...] Regardless of his relations with Netanyahu, Obama viewed Israel as a burden in the Middle East rather than a strategic asset."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 07.11.12

### **Bibi can relax, Obama won't punish him**

"National interests determine relationships between states, not the love or loathing between their leaders. So [...] Obama is not likely to 'punish' Benjamin Netanyahu for interfering in the election [...]"

Perhaps deep in his heart Obama would like to treat Netanyahu like that. But he is not a private citizen [...]. He heads a superpower and does not need any unnecessary diplomatic failures. [...]"

Dealing with Iran, Egypt and Syria and the danger of a third intifada in the West Bank will occupy Netanyahu and Obama in the coming year, leaving them no time for fighting. They will have to save the grudges from the election campaign for their memoirs."

Aluf Benn, HAA 09.11.12

### **Obama's second term and Israel**

"The Israeli Left [...] will assert is that Netanyahu has antagonized the U.S. president and therefore he is not fit to run this country. [...] This should not be cause to oust Netanyahu, however. On the contrary, when there is a less-than-friendly commander-in-chief occupying the Oval Office, it is more crucial

than ever to have a leader in Jerusalem who safeguards Israel's security interests with an iron fist." Ruthie Blum, IHY 07.11.12

### **A winner either way**

"America and Israel share common interests and goals. [...] In the ongoing regional upheaval, Israel is the only stable state on which the US can completely rely. And the two countries cooperate in a broad range of nonmilitary fields – humanitarian, commercial and scientific. [...] The vast majority of Americans understand this. [...]"

Regardless of who wins the 2012 US presidential election, the ties between America and the Jewish state will remain strong. The two countries have too much in common and too much to gain from their special relationship to allow petty partisan differences to drive a wedge between them."

JPO 06.11.12 Editorial

## **2. Wirbel um Abbas Interview im israelischen Fernsehen**

*In einem Interview mit dem israelischen Fernsehsender Channel 2 versprach der palästinensische Präsident Mahmoud Abbas, dass es in seiner Amtszeit keine dritte Intifada geben werde. Außerdem gab er an, in seine Geburtsstadt Safed, die im Norden Israels liegt, nur als Tourist zurückkehren zu wollen. Palästina bestehe für ihn der Westbank und Gaza. Das ist eine bedeutungsvolle Aussage, da die Frage des Rückkehrrechts für palästinensische Flüchtlinge und ihre Nachkommen eines der größten Probleme im Nahostkonflikt ist.*

*Während der Präsident Shimon Peres und Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak die Aussagen von Abbas begrüßten, warnte Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu vor einem Täuschungsmanöver, da Abbas seinen Worten keine Taten folgen lassen werde. Ex-Premier Ehud Olmert beschuldigte Netanyahu, israelischen Interessen zu schaden, weil er den Friedensprozess nicht voranbringe. In der Westbank kam es nach Ausstrahlung des Interviews zu Demonstrationen. In einem Interview mit ägyptischen Medien sagte Abbas am folgenden Tag, er habe das Rückkehrrecht nicht aufgegeben und lediglich seine persönliche Position, jedoch keinen Politikwechsel, zum Ausdruck gebracht.*

### **Yes to Abbas**

"The Channel 2 interview [...] depicted a brave and pragmatic Palestinian leader who supports resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict peacefully. [...]"

It is disappointing that the political parties fighting for a spot in the center of the Israeli political map have

responded so coolly to the encouraging messages [...]. It is the duty of the parties running in the upcoming Israeli national election to place this issue at the top of their agendas, rather than sufficing with making meaningless calls for renewing negotiations. Otherwise, they will bear responsibility for the disastrous consequences of losing Israel's Palestinian partner."

HAA 05.11.12 Editorial

### **Sacrifices don't bring peace**

"Before taking his remarks seriously keep in mind both he and his predecessor Yasser Arafat have a long history of making statements for Western audiences, which end up being dismissed when they speak in Arabic to their own audiences. Thus, his comments cannot be viewed as sincere. Deeds, not words will demonstrate his sincerity."

Dan Calic, JED 05.11.12

### **Peace divide**

"Given the narrative they are fed by their leaders, why would the Palestinian people agree to compromise with an ostensibly illegitimate Zionist entity on the refugee issue? [...] Abbas and other Palestinian leaders could and should have worked to prepare their people for peace with Israel.

[...] The capacity to make peace depends on changing perceptions – including the national narratives we tell ourselves and our peoples. The fallout from Abbas's Channel 2 interview is yet another dismal indicator that the Palestinian people have yet to be prepared by their leadership for such a change."

JPO 04.11.12 Editorial

### **Abbas' bold statement**

"In the Palestinian ethos, the right of return [...] is considered a sacred right that must never be waived. It is [...] among the stumbling blocks on the path to reconciliation and a peace agreement. [...]"

The Palestinian Authority's leadership [...] has gradually come to terms with the notion that the Palestinians will not be able to realize the right of return. [...] But the general Palestinian public, including the refugees themselves of course, is not willing to give up this right. [...]"

This gap between the leadership and the public is huge, but Abbas' statement may ignite a debate and start a process that will lead to the acceptance of reality."

Roni Shaked, JED 04.11.12

### **The leader and the leaderless**

"To resolve this conflict we need real leadership. Abbas has once again demonstrated his leadership

and his courage. Netanyahu, by not responding seriously to Abbas, has once again proven his lack of leadership.”

Gershon Baskin, JPO 05.11.12

#### **A time to speak**

“What are you waiting for, Benjamin Netanyahu? [...]

Abbas [...] said [...] that he is willing to return to Safed [...] as a tourist. Implicit in his words is the most explicit renunciation of the ‘right of return’ that an Arab leader is capable of uttering at this time. [...] True, Abbas did not expressly say the words ‘renunciation of the right of return.’ [...] Still, there is something new here, there is a hint. [...]

I will remind you, Mr. Netanyahu, that you were elected to lead Israel precisely in order to discern these rare hints of opportunity, in order to transform them into a possible lever to extricate your country from the impasse in which it has been stuck for decades.”

David Grossman, HA A 06.11.12

#### **Escapism and the peace process**

“This was an important yet futile attempt to convince Israeli public opinion, at election time, that there is a Palestinian issue to deal with, that there is a partner for peace, and to sway Israeli public opinion toward moderation. [...]

Yet, with the exception of President Shimon Peres, Abu Mazen’s message of peace went unnoticed by an electorate persuaded by all political contenders that there is no place for the Palestinian issue on our national agenda.”

Uri Savir, JPO 08.11.12

#### **Again that guy with his peace talk**

“Yes, Abbas’ intent was to interfere in the Israel election campaign, and that’s a good thing. [...] Abbas was doing the work of those Zionist parties who have joined the foolish march of the right toward the abyss of a binational reality and apartheid. Truly, you can’t rely on the Arabs. Their ‘no’ might actually turn into a ‘yes’. By us, no is no.”

Akiva Eldar, HAA 05.11.12

### **3. Politiker positionieren sich für Neuwahlen**

*Seit in Israel Neuwahlen für den 22.01.2013 angekündigt wurden, positionieren sich Politiker wie Parteien und in den Medien wird eifrig diskutiert, welche Bündnisse besonders gute Ergebnisse erzielen würden. In Israel ist es nicht ungewöhnlich, dass Politiker innerhalb ihrer Laufbahn die Partei (mehr-*

*mals) wechseln. Zuletzt stand Kommunikationsminister Moshe Kahlon (Likud) im Zentrum der Mediendebatte. Der populäre Minister hatte zunächst angekündigt, sich aus der Politik zurückziehen zu wollen, nur um dann mit der Gründung einer neuen, sozial ausgerichteten Partei zu liebäugeln. Erste Blitzumfragen hatten ihm bis zu über zehn Sitze in der Knesset prognostiziert. Nachdem Parteifreunde Druck auf ihn ausübten, entschied er sich schließlich gegen eine neue Partei und sagte Premier Netanyahu seine Unterstützung zu.*

*Auf der anderen Seite des politischen Spektrums wurde darüber debattiert, wer einen Mitte-Links-Block erfolgreich einen könnte. Tzipi Livni (Kadima) rief Präsident Shimon Peres dazu auf, sein Amt niederzulegen und sich der Wahl zum Premierminister zu stellen. Peres gab jedoch an, nicht in die Parteipolitik zurückkehren zu wollen.*

#### **The politics of confusion**

“Vision — that is no longer important. Party platforms — they’re gone. Values have been replaced by poll results. [...]

And who is really ‘Right?’ Who is really ‘Left?’ What’s the connection, for example, between the ‘social justice’ champion Kahlon and his support for the Edmond Levy report (asserting Israel’s legal right to build in Judea and Samaria) and Yacimovich, who brands herself as a centrist and distances herself from the Left, but in the same breath speaks glowingly in support of the Clinton peace proposal? [...]

How do our elected officials expect us to take them seriously if it’s so easy for them to switch political parties and change their views like dirty socks, sometimes within a matter of days?”

Nadav Shragai, IHY 02.11.12

#### **Social misfits?**

“You don’t have to be a political whiz [...] to understand what the prime minister has to gain by separating Moshe Kahlon from Likud and fielding him at the head of a ‘social’ party.

Forming a joint list with Yisrael Beiteinu will at best leave the rightist bloc the same size. In contrast, a party headed by Kahlon could increase the bloc’s strength by half a dozen Knesset seats, if not more. [...]

It may all be my imagination. But the circumstantial evidence indicates that Kahlon’s retirement from Likud, the flattering surveys and the possibility of his heading a ‘social’ party in the upcoming election are no more than a typical Bibi-style political ploy.”

Akiva Eldar, HAA 02.11.12

### **Kahlon may find himself out in the cold**

“The rumor went on to suggest that [...] Kahlon's recent announcement that he planned to establish his own, socially-motivated party was a massive trick meant to siphon votes away from the Left and bring them to the Right. [...] This rumor comes on the heels of a long list of rumors and spins which have turned the political arena into a big bowl of speculation in the last few days. [...]

Kahlon [...] still refuses to acknowledge the fact that exiting Likud and establishing a new party is tantamount to a declaration of war. [...]

But one day, it could be today or a few months from now, Kahlon will open his eyes and realize that all those who are now lifting him up don't actually belong to his camp — they never have and they never will. They are the ones who will always be on the other side of the political spectrum, and are now simply using him to harm the very people that share his values.”

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY 02.11.12

### **Calling all Kahlonites**

“Kahlon opened the cell phone market to competition, faced off bravely against economic concentration and the super-rich who control it, allowed virtual companies to enter the market and brought rates down by 74 percent. For that the opinion polls gave him the Israel Prize. And what else? Not much. [...]

As social affairs minister we hardly heard from him. In fact, he voted against a series of social-minded bills. [...]

The level of Israeli politics has already been decided: Moshe Kahlon as the great promise. Need we say more?”

Gideon Levy, HAA 04.11.12

### **Faked social awareness**

“In Likud they are still wooing him. The whole party is embroiled in an ethnic trap. The party sees itself as the great savior of the Mizrahi Jews [...]. But out of 15 Likud ministers in the cabinet, Netanyahu appointed only two Mizrahim – Silvan Shalom and Kahlon – and without Kahlon he'll have only one, an electoral disaster. [...]

That's why Netanyahu so much wants the return [of Kahlon]. [...] He smiles, and he's considered socially aware, even though it's fake social awareness.”

Nehemia Shtrassler, HAA 06.11.12

### **Run, Peres, run**

“More liberal Israeli constituents are desperately looking for a promising leader to fight Netanyahu and the emerging hawkish coalition. [...]

Shimon Peres is the most suitable candidate to challenge Netanyahu. [...] He receives remarkable

support from a wide spectrum of the Israeli public. [...] Shimon Peres has the unique combination of a strong background in security and diplomatic affairs and a passion for socio-economic issues. While Peres has been defeated many times in previous elections, his renewed popularity among the Israeli public should lead him to reconsider running once again for prime minister.”

Aaron Magid, JPO 12.11.12

### **Prepare for the coming of the president**

“If Peres wants to go down in Jewish history as a great leader he cannot afford to stand idly by. Peres is the only man capable of slightly deflating the pumped-up egos leading the political camps to the left of the religious-right bloc. He is the only one whom none of those egos would presumably feel insulted to stand behind. [...]

There is nothing this nation needs more than a seasoned guide to preach a bit of morality from his authoritative pulpit.”

Eyal Megged, HAA 04.11.12

## **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 **Gefahr einer Eskalation auf den Golanhöhen**, nachdem von syrischem Gebiet aus mehrere Granaten auf die Höhen abgefeuert wurden.*

### **Syrian collision course**

“The conflict in Syria has [...] forced Israel to contend with a variety of scenarios, including absorbing Syria's fleeing minorities and the prospect of Sunni extremists filling the vacuum in the wake Assad's ousting. While the IDF has gained experience in dealing with the above scenarios from the situation along Israel's southern borders, its leadership is now faced with the far more disheartening prospect that Assad may purposefully lure the IDF into his conflict. [...]

As the Assad regime grows increasingly desperate, the prospects for a provocative attack against Israel will only increase, leading to a widely-feared regional escalation. Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has already threatened that Israeli intervention in Syria

would cause his militia to unleash some 70,000 rockets currently pointed at the Jewish State. [...] The term 'powder keg' would be the fitting term to describe the situation had it not become such a cliché in the Middle East.”  
Daniel Nisman, JED 08.11.12

### **Not quiet on any front**

“It is [...] likely that also there, as in Sinai and the Gaza Strip, gradual escalation is taking place and Israel's dilemma is just worsening. Currently, no one has any intention of being drawn into fighting in the north because there is no defined enemy to fight and, most of all, from the fear that it would give Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad an excuse to combine Syrian army and rebel forces against a common external enemy. But intensive work on the northern border fence and closing the gaps in land mine fields, as well as Sunday's call to Golan Heights residents to obtain the necessary equipment for personal protection, hints that the IDF expects action in the future on the northern front.”  
Yoav Limor, IHY 12.11.12

### **Über eine erneute *Eskalation und Raketenbeschuss am Gazastreifen:***

#### **Dragged into unwanted war**

“All of the sides involved are aware that a broad military campaign in Gaza may cause them great suffering and damage, but no one is able to stop the process. [...] Hamas did not initiate the missile attack on Saturday, [...] because the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Cairo wants calm in both Sinai and Gaza. Morsi needs this calm because he has yet to establish political dominance in Egypt and also because he wants to stabilize the economy and internal security. Hamas fears an Israeli invasion that will cause great suffering to Gaza's residents and frustration that could threaten its rule in the coastal enclave. [...] Hamas [...] wants to engage in an armed conflict [...], with the assistance of the defiant terror groups, without dragging Israel into an extensive military campaign. [...] Hamas' leadership [...] is assuming that the current Israeli government will not want to launch a major military operation before the elections. This is apparently one of the reasons for the escalation along the Israel-Gaza border. Now it is up to the IDF to prove to the Gaza terrorists their calculations were wrong – but without angering Egypt. This is not an easy task.”  
Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 11.11.12

### **The limits of deterrence**

“The State of Israel is not entitled to let thousands of its citizens live under fire. The dispute is over how the state should achieve this goal. [...] Israel [...] assumes that use of greater force will lead to a more submissive enemy. [...] In contrast to this worldview, the indirect dialogue with Hamas, via Egyptian mediation, has actually proven its ability to achieve periods of calm and even cooperation in the battle against terrorist organizations that see shooting at Israel as a way of undermining Hamas' control over Gaza. [...] Israel would be better off recognizing that the deterrence formula has limits and adopting the mechanism of informal agreements instead.”  
HAA 13.11.12 Editorial

HAA = Haaretz; JED = Jedioth Ahronoth; JPO = Jerusalem Post; IHY = Israel HaYom, TOI = Times of Israel

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