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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

22. September – 08. Oktober 2013

1. Annäherung zwischen Iran und USA

Zum ersten Mal seit 34 Jahren haben die Regierungschefs der USA und des Irans miteinander geredet. Im Anschluss an seine UNO-Rede telefonierte der neue iranische Präsident Hassan Rohani Ende September mit seinem amerikanischen Amtskollegen Barack Obama. Das Gespräch war der Höhepunkt einer unerwarteten Annäherung zwischen den beiden Staaten, die durch die Abwahl von Mahmoud Ahmadinejad und die Wahl des als moderater geltenden Rohanis möglich wurde.

In seiner Rede vor den Vereinten Nationen betonte Rohani den zivilen Charakter des iranischen Atomprogrammes und erklärte sich zu sofortigen Gesprächen über eine Kontrolle des Programms bereit.

Obama sagte im Gegenzug in seiner UNO-Rede, die USA würden keinen Regimewechsel im Iran anstreben.

Der Iran ist von wirtschaftlichen Sanktionen schwer getroffen. Mit ihrer diplomatischen Offensive zielt die iranische Regierung offenbar darauf ab, eine Lockerung der Sanktionen zu erreichen.

Nach dem gemeinsamen Telefonat sagte Obama, es gebe noch "bedeutende Hindernisse", bevor Verhandlungen über das Atomprogramm aufgenommen werden könnten. Er glaube aber, dass eine umfassende Lösung gefunden werden könne. Diese Einschätzung wird von einer Mehrheit der israelischen Öffentlichkeit nicht geteilt.

Obama waves the white flag

"Obama repeated, almost word for word, the conciliatory message he sent to the Iranian people and their leaders in 2009. However, this time, unlike in the past, the message was delivered from a position of significant weakness. This is because of the resounding failure of Obama's attempt to gain congressional support for limited military action in Syria and the titanic battle the White House is engaged in

with the House of Representatives on budget issues. There is no chance that Obama would receive a green light from the current Congress to strike Iran, no matter what the reasons.

Obama thus found himself at the U.N. raising a white flag on everything related to America's ability to shape global affairs. [...]

Given the current circumstances, particularly in the wake of the Syrian fiasco, is there a real chance that the soft music being played by President Hasan Rouhani will be translated into a strategic decision by Iran to freeze its nuclear program?"

Abraham Ben-Zvi, IHY 25.09.13

Wishful-thinking syndrome

"Wishful thinking [...] is a relatively common affliction. [...]"

This brings us to the smile on the face of the newly elected Iranian president, Hassan Rohani. What a change from his predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Holocaust denier who regularly threatened to wipe Israel off the map. [...] So why not ease up on the sanctions and give diplomacy a chance? [...]"

Except that as we all know, the guy who calls the shots in Tehran isn't the president but Ayatollah Ali Hosseini Khamenei, and Rohani follows his orders. The Iranians are engaged in an intensive effort costing billions to produce nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, as the centrifuges enriching uranium spin away while Rohani wishes Barack Obama a 'good day'."

Moshe Arens, HAA 08.10.13

Thank you very much for your kind offer!

"Could it be possible that Rouhani, this seemingly moderate Shi'ite cleric, who is totally immersed in Koranic studies, is applying the 'deception and concealment' allowed and mandated under Shia Islam, known as taqiyah? The practice of taqiyah

[...] was initially meant to be implemented in order to save lives when faced with religious persecution. However, [...] it is frequently associated with the concept of dissimulation, which allows Muslims to pretend to accept what is contrary to their belief. [...] History would appear to indicate that taqiyah is especially allowed in the case of dealings with non-believers and that it is possible to excuse lying on almost any grounds that are consistent with the obligatory spreading of the Muslim faith." Ben Lefvitas, JPO 23.09.13

US and Iran can do business

"A US-Iranian reconciliation is a possible scenario in a changing world. [...] In a world in which iron fists rust, Iran and the US can do business. It worked for former Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi: ten years ago he dismantled his non-conventional arms, and low and behold, he was no longer seen as a terrorist. [...]"

The Iranian public enthusiastically welcomes reconciliation with America. Although the road is long and full of potholes, if the regime in Tehran is offered a serious proposal that treats it with respect, its leaders might see it as a way out of its isolation and severe sanctions." Jacky Hougy, GLO 29.09.13

Tiger in sheep's clothing

"Ever since the revolution of 1979, Iran has been run by a belligerent and cruel regime. Currently it is experiencing operational difficulties that are causing it to slow down the race toward a bomb, but this delay is merely part of the plan to accelerate the nuclear program. Iran is trying to show that it is extending its hand in peace, but we must continue to step on its thumb." Hagai Segal, JED 25.09.13

The 'Iran is now moderate' joke

"The story [...] circulated that Iran had renounced Holocaust denial. That turned out to be another lie. Then there was Rouhani's phony New Year's greeting to the Jews. Rouhani also added a Jew to Iran's UN delegation. The message? Rouhani loves the Jews and wants to make peace.

Obama swallowed the bait, eagerly.

But note that Rouhani does not have a moderate record, and that meanwhile Iran now has troops in Syria. What suckers Americans are. [...]"

Already there has been a payoff for Iran in a series of European Union court decisions which recom-

mended the removal of unilateral sanctions against dozens of Iranian firms. [...]"

Iran no longer regards America as the Great Satan, but as the Great Sucker."

Barry Rubin, JPO 23.09.13

The holes in Rouhani's charm offensive

"Rouhani became famous for his remarks in 2005, when he was head nuclear negotiator and national security adviser to former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, at which time he admitted to having exploited the time of the negotiations with the EU-3 [...] so that Iran could complete its conversion plant in Isfahan, where the fuel that is inserted into the centrifuges is produced. He brilliantly used diplomacy to allow the Iranian nuclear program to advance, while giving the Western powers the feeling that Iran was making concessions at the same time.

This is precisely the sort of formula he will seek now as he launches new negotiations with the Obama administration. Only this time, Iran is far closer to its goal of manufacturing nuclear weapons than it was in 2005."

Dore Gold, IHY 27.09.13

2. Israelische Reaktion auf US-iranische Annäherung

Als der iranische Präsident seine Ansprache vor der UNO hielt, verließ die israelische Delegation den Saal. Damit demonstrierte die israelische Regierung, dass sie den moderaten Tönen Hassan Rohanis keinen Glauben schenkt und an der Drohung eines Militärschlages festhält. Dies bestätigte sich auch in der UNO-Rede von Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu. Darin gab der israelische Regierungschef zu verstehen, dass Israel auch zu einem unilateralen Angriff bereit sei, sollte der Iran Nuklearwaffen entwickeln.

Zuvor hatte Netanyahu sich mit US-Präsident Barack Obama getroffen, der versicherte, auch für die USA sei die Militäroption nicht ausgeräumt.

Bibi and Obama dovetail – for now

"Rouhani might very well attempt a 'divide and conquer' strategy, purposely making an offer that some [...] might find acceptable but which is insufficient to dismantle Iran's nuclear weapons program or even completely freeze it. [...] In such a scenario, with negotiations still underway, Israel would find it much harder from a diplomatic perspective to launch

or even threaten to launch a preemptive military strike against Iran. [...]

So, while for the time being there might not be much for Netanyahu to argue about with Obama [...], a rocky road most likely lies ahead. Netanyahu must stand firm in defense of Israel's cardinal interests. And doing so necessitates remaining vigilant and keeping all the options on the table, even as the diplomatic track is tested."

JPO 01.10.13 Editorial

Netanyahu's chance to stop sowing fear

"Israel has an interest in the success of Obama's diplomatic efforts on both fronts. [...] Instead of welcoming the chance to deprive Iran of nuclear weapons while being spared a military entanglement, [Netanyahu] is entrenching himself in his role as angry prophet warning against Iranian deception. The message is that the American president is naïve – one could almost say foolish – and that only the Israeli prime minister is sober and experienced. This isn't just presumption, but arrogance."

HAA 01.10.13 Editorial

Israel's Cassandra moment

"Unless Israel wants to continue to find itself largely alone on the world stage, it will have to find new ways to make its case, so that it is not just talking to itself and its supporters. Simply implying, for instance, that anyone who sits down with Rohani is a modern-day Neville Chamberlain [...] won't do the trick.

To the contrary, it will only give offense and alienate. There are more effective and less shrill ways of making the case for caution, vigilance, and strength."

David Harris, HAA 29.09.13

Only one exposing truth

"The sad truth is that our prime minister has no other choice but to continue being the chronic nagger warning against an Iranian scheme. [...] Until proven otherwise, he must continue crying out [...] that Rohani's reconciliation festival at the UN General Assembly was one big fraud.

After all, [...] we are the country most threatened by the Iranians. Even now they keep dreaming out loud about a Middle East without Israel.[...] In the future it may turn out that they really did shelve their nuclear programs, but in the meantime it is our duty to raise the torch of suspicion in public."

Hagai Segal, JED 30.09.13

Not giving diplomacy a chance

"Whenever one of our enemies threatens to annihilate Israel, we scream out that their words should be taken seriously. [...] But if any of these heads of state says he is willing to negotiate or reach an agreement, Israeli prime ministers [...] immediately discredit these overtures. The world which yesterday had to take every threat seriously, today is asked to acknowledge that every remark is part of a ploy, a scam.

What is unnecessary, not to say foolish, is walking out of the hall in protest during Rohani's speech before the UN General Assembly. This is an attempt to force our opinion and demand that everyone reject the Iranian president's attempts to establish a new relationship.

What would have been lost by welcoming the change in Iran's rhetoric or expressing hope for better days? At the same time we could have whispered in the ears of those who need to hear it that they must pay attention to what may be hiding behind these conciliatory statements."

Ariella Ringel-Hoffman, JED 01.10.13

Obama and Israel: looming confrontations

"Insisting that resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian peace 'would have a profound and positive impact on the entire Middle East and North Africa,' Obama has caused many Israelis to question not merely his competence but also his real intentions towards Israel. [...]

Obama linked the Iranian nuclear threat and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, treating them with equal importance -- a clear signal that the U.S. expects Israel to make major concessions to the Palestinians in return for 'undertakings' to prevent the Iranians from obtaining a nuclear bomb.

It must be deeply frustrating for Netanyahu to see the rogue state of Iran courted by the U.S. and Europe, while Israel, a democracy and genuine ally of the U.S., is treated so shabbily. [...]

But [...] Netanyahu [...] realizes that Israel is dependent on a superpower and that today the support of the U.S. both politically and militarily is crucial. [...]

We are not obliged to behave as a vassal state, but we must act prudently."

Isi Leibler, IHY 30.09.13

When it comes to hypocrisy, Rohani is no challenge for Netanyahu

"Maybe the sanctions really worked and Iran is re-considering? [...]

Perhaps the explanation for Israel's strange behavior lies elsewhere. The world has seen that diplomatic and economic pressure on a state that flouts the international community's decisions can yield results. Perhaps we'll be hearing an analogy to another state that has also been blatantly flouting UN resolutions for decades.

The world won't bomb Israel, but why shouldn't it impose economic sanctions if they solve problems? Obama has already mentioned the Iranian nuclear program and Palestinian problem as similar issues. If the sanctions worked in one case, why shouldn't they work in the other? [...]

The next step could be taking the same steps against the other leading recalcitrant state. This is frightening Israel. After all, speeches suspected of being hypocritical and designed only to play for time don't only come out of Tehran."

Gideon Levy, HAA 29.09.13

3. 2 Soldaten im Westjordanland getötet

Innerhalb von drei Tagen sind im Westjordanland zwei israelische Soldaten getötet worden. Im ersten Fall wurde ein junger Rekrut in seiner dienstfreien Zeit von einem palästinensischen Arbeitskollegen in die palästinensischen Gebiete gelockt und dort ermordet. Der Täter hatte laut Medienangaben vorgehabt, seinen Bruder aus einem israelischen Gefängnis freizupressen.

Drei Tage später wurde ein weiterer Soldat in Hebron, einer palästinensischen Stadt mit einer streng bewachten jüdischen Siedlung in ihrer Mitte, von einem Scharfschützen getötet. Keine palästinensische Organisation erklärte sich für die Schüsse verantwortlich.

Als Reaktion auf die Geschehnisse forderte Wirtschaftsminister Naftali Bennet das Regierungskabinett dazu auf, Pläne, palästinensische Gefangene als Konzession in den Friedensverhandlungen freizulassen, zu überdenken.

If you build it, you will win

"Our murderous neighbors have tried, as usual, to disrupt the joy of our holiday. Two of them murdered IDF soldiers Tomer Hazan and Gal Kobi, in cold blood. [...]

The incidents [...] have one obvious common denominator: although ostensibly carried out by human beings, the perpetrators do not value human life at all. They suffer from a brutal tribal and psychological disorder that emerges from their desert origin [...].

These are not isolated murderers, but emissaries of a culture of murder, jihadist religiosity and envy of the Jewish achievement of turning a desolate and gray land into paradise. [...]

There is a single way to memorialize those murdered in the past week and over the years of our return to our homeland. Build everywhere in the land of Israel, establish settlements, construct housing and public institutions and pave roads, relentlessly, day and night.

Construction is the only language our enemies understand."

Haim Shine, IHY 24.09.13

The price of prisoner swaps

"The murder underlines the steep price Israel pays for releasing Palestinian terrorists. [...]

Every time Israel agrees to an unequal prisoner swap, a dangerous dynamic is set in motion. If large numbers of prisoners are released in exchange for a few kidnapped Israeli soldiers – alive or dead – Palestinian terrorists [...] are encouraged to kidnap, and kill, more soldiers. [...] Twenty-seven attempts to abduct soldiers were foiled in the first six months of the year – twice as many as the same period in 2012.[...]

And when prisoners [...] are released before they serve their sentences, it emboldens Palestinian terrorists such as Amar who rightly gamble that they too will be released early in a prisoner swap or a 'goodwill gesture.' And they have good reason to be optimistic."

JPO 22.09.13 Editorial

A strange murder in Israeli society's backyard

"The incident wasn't strictly nationalist, nor was it strictly criminal: this was a tragedy that originated in personal anguish.

Hazan worked as a shift chief at a Bat Yam restaurant and knew the Palestinian who would murder him. [...]

The killer [...] killed based on the ill-guided thought that he could negotiate to exchange Hazan's body for the release of his brother from an Israeli prison. [...]

But populist claims that could have spread in the wake of the murder - that is to say, calls in the style of 'here's more proof that we can't trust the Arabs' - didn't take hold. The reason this didn't happen lies, among other things, in the quick response of the murderer's family. In an admirably ethical step, they denounced the act immediately, without trying to deny it. [...]

And still, from the perspective of the media and of public opinion, the incident didn't take over the public agenda. It is hard to explain except in terms of the yawning distance between the incident, which happened in some twilight zone of Israeli society, and the mainstream. Even though the territories have been the focus of the public debate for decades, most Israelis don't visit them of their own volition. Anyone who risks going over the Green Line becomes the exception. Most of us have no Palestinian friends or acquaintances and those who do are considered weird."

Avi Shilon, HAA 25.09.13

Tackle incitement, stop the killing

"Palestinians are again killing Israelis. [...]

There is a way forward [...]: It is called tackling incitement. [...]

Official Israel is not without blame in this most fundamental of areas. We, too, have our textbooks, and our maps, and parts of our media, and some of even our most senior politicians, peddling a Holy Land narrative that excludes the Palestinians. [...] But most Israelis have long since come to terms with the fact [...] that there were and are Palestinians as well as Jews in this coveted land, [...] and that we are all going to have to find a way to somehow live alongside one another.

On the Palestinian side [...], there is no such wearied recognition. [...] Incitement against Israel's very existence remains widespread — in Palestinian schools and summer camps, newspaper articles and caricatures, TV shows and advertisements. [...]

There has to be a change of climate. [...] So that an illegal Palestinian worker knows his own people will try to thwart his premeditated killing of an Israeli off-duty soldier, lured from their common place of work in Israel to his home village in the West Bank. So that, if a Palestinian sniper picks up his rifle in the hills of Hebron and prepares to take aim at a young sergeant at an IDF position, those around him will intervene and prevent the killing, not hail him and hide him after the deadly act is done."

David Horowitz, TOI 23.09.13

The Shin Bet's success

"It is important to understand that the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers is perceived by Palestinians both as a successful military operation against the Zionist enemy and as a legitimate and acceptable response to the Israeli occupation. Moreover, these operations confer considerable honor on those that pull them off successfully, and more importantly, as experi-

ence has shown, are very likely to result in the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

The Shin Bet [...] does thwart a significant portion of all terrorist attacks aimed at us. This success has nothing to do with luck, but is rather due to professional, thorough intelligence-gathering work that goes on 365 days a year."

Lior Akerman, JPO 26.09.13

Encouraging terror attacks

"The questions we need to ask ourselves are simple: Are we supposed to let the murder of two soldiers at the hands of terrorists pass without a response - and by doing so undoubtedly encourage other terrorists to 'show initiative' of their own? Will our silence – or lack of a crushing response – lead to more incidents in which Israelis are murdered by Palestinians? The answer to both questions is clear.

Certainly, we must at least suspend the 'peace talks' between Tzipi Livni and her counterparts from Mahmoud Abbas' side. [...]

As long as the leaders of the Palestinian Authority are unable to control the residents of the territories and drive home the message that calm is in their interest, we will achieve nothing and only see more victims. [...]

Stopping the release of prisoners and freezing the talks may convince the other side to take the necessary steps. Any more concessions on our part will only make matters worse."

Noah Klieger, JED 26.09.13

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.

*Zu den **Bundestagswahlen** in Deutschland:*

Is Germany's Merkel good for the Jews?

"Merkel [...] is first of all good for the German people. She has managed to maintain low unemployment and economic growth, while her neighbors to the south are collapsing. She has turned Germany into the undisputed leader of Europe. She has restored the German people's pride in being German,

with pride in being part of the European family being secondary. [...]

So is Merkel good for the Jews? The proposition was severely tested last year, when a court [...] ruled that it was illegal to perform circumcisions in Germany. [...]

And then, [...] the government stepped in. An amendment to the law, initiated by Merkel's government, restored the situation to the status quo ante. Merkel explained that it's important to preserve freedom of religion in Germany, and that the state welcomes Jewish life on its soil, particularly 70 years after the Holocaust.

With regard to Israel, things are much more complex. It is no secret that Angela Merkel does not particularly like Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. [...]

Behind closed doors, Merkel is furious at Israel over its continued occupation of, and construction in, the territories. [...] Outwardly, at official ceremonies and gatherings, Merkel takes care to repeat Germany's commitment to Israel, stressing the special relations the two countries enjoy. [...] Germany continues to supply Israel with submarines which, according to foreign sources, have nuclear capabilities. [...]

Good for the Jews? Decidedly so. For Germans? No less so."

Ofer Aderet, HAA 22.09.13

*Über die anstehenden **Lokalwahlen in Jerusalem:***

Selling Jerusalem down the river

"The battle for Jerusalem is almost lost. Ultra-Orthodox students currently account for 39 percent of all the capital's school children. Arab students account for 37 percent of the capital's school children. Zionists account for only 24 percent of the capital's school children and, of those, only half are secular. Demography has had its say: Barring some dramatic change, secular Jews will have no hope in Jerusalem. [...]

And yet, amid this almost-lost battle, a Jerusalem miracle has occurred in recent years. [...] New winds of social activism have established creative communities, launched technological initiatives and developed countless frameworks for a bubbling Jewish pluralism. [...]

Mayor Nir Barkat [...] is the one who enabled this renaissance to happen. [...]

The ones who are seeking to send Jerusalem backward are Shas chairman Aryeh Deri and Yisrael Beiteinu chairman Avigdor Lieberman. The deal they

concocted to run Moshe Leon against Barkat is a very ugly deal born of a very old politics. [...]

Over the next 20 days, we must do everything possible to ensure that the surprising resurrection now occurring there doesn't go down the drain. To this end, every Zionist resident of Jerusalem must vote – for Barkat."

Ari Shavit, HAA, 03.10.13

Election turmoil, but little change?

"The non-haredi Jewish sector has too many lists representing it, the Arab sector is traditionally not represented, and the haredim, who constitute about 40 percent of the city's Jewish population, have two strong lists [...] that will, according to all forecasts, ensure them at least 13 or 14 of the council's 30 seats. [...] the impression that one gets from having a single bloc account for almost half the seats on the city council is not a pleasant one, and in many ways, that impression is what lies behind much of the noless- unpleasant attitude that non-haredim express toward the ultra-Orthodox sector and its representatives. During the campaign for these elections, there have been many attempts to organize a united non-haredi council list that would represent most of what politicians call the "Zionist" sector in the city, but all of them have failed. [...]

Meanwhile, campaign brochures by all sides have flung false accusations at all other sides, along with disdain and attempts to downplay competitors' achievements."

Peggy Cidor, JPO 26.09.13

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

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