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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Anerkennung Israels als "Jüdischer Staat"

Während eines Treffens mit dem palästinensischen Präsidenten Mahmoud Abbas in Washington sagte US-Präsident Barack Obama, dass "schwierige politische Entscheidungen" notwendig seien, um Fortschritte im Friedensprozess zu machen. Damit brachte er Abbas jedoch nicht dazu, die israelische Forderung einer Anerkennung Israels als "jüdischem Staat" zu akzeptieren.

Diese Forderung war erstmals von Zippi Livni in der Regierung von Ariel Sharon formuliert worden, Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu hatte sie allerdings in der gegenwärtigen Verhandlungsrunde zu einer der grundlegenden Voraussetzungen für ein Friedensabkommen gemacht.

Auch US-Außenminister John Kerry kritisierte Netanyahus Forderung, der zufolge die Palästinenser Israel als "Nationalstaat der Juden" anerkennen sollen. Die Arabische Liga veröffentlichte eine Erklärung, mit der sie die palästinensische Ablehnung einer solchen Anerkennung unterstützte.

Während die meisten Israelis ihr Land als jüdischen Nationalstaat betrachten wird Netanyahu von Oppositionspolitikern vorgeworfen die Forderung absichtlich eingebracht zu haben, um die Friedensgespräche zu behindern.

Those who don't buy into Netanyahu's 'Jewish State'

"The Palestinians, of course, flatly deny that the Bible stories are history or that they give Israel a claim over the Holy Land. They deny that modern-day Israel is the real-estate successor of Biblical Israel.

But so do some Jews. They love Israel and are loyal and devoted to it not because its present leader or previous Zionist leaders declared it to be 'the nation-state of the Jewish people,' but rather as the strong-

ly and determinedly defended haven for all Jews everywhere in the wake of the Holocaust, and as the one state where the Jewish religion and Jewish culture are central components of the national ethos. That makes them Zionist, but with no allegiance to Netanyahu's imperious version of Zionism, nor to his effort to force it down Palestinian throats. [...]

Many Israelis [...] have problems with Netanyahu's domineering view of Israel's past and present – but most especially with his insistence on the Palestinians, hopefully our partners in peace and pragmatism, becoming members of the Zionist executive." David Landau, HAA 1103.14

What lies behind PA refusal to recognize Jewish state?

"The explanation for the strategic Palestinian insistence [...] not to recognize a Jewish state [...] stems of course from the fear that it will greatly damage the refugees' claim to return to Israel proper, but it also stems just as much from the simple fact that Abbas, like the rest of the senior PA officials, is part of a long Palestinian reality which denies that the Jews are a national group entitled to its own state. [...]

In the entire Palestinian ethos and literature there is not a shred of real willingness for such a recognition. [...] Behind the Palestinian insistence lies an organized ideology of refusing to accept Israel, even in the 1948 borders, and to the same extent – a hidden intention to flood it with refugees. Therefore, binding the Palestinians in a public and contractual recognition of Israel as a Jewish state is a minimum, elementary and justified demand."

Shaul Rosenfeld, JED 12.03.14

Netanyahu has left Abbas naked at the White House

"The history of the demand is well-known: Tzipi Livni came up with it in the Sharon-era, as a symbolic step that would accompany the signing of a final

agreement. Sharon did not give it any importance - he believed in unilateral measures, not agreements, and was more concerned with what the Americans were suggesting, not the Palestinians. [...]

But Netanyahu saw its potential. [...] He moved the demand from the final stages to the earlier ones, and made it a red line, a deal breaker. [...]

Abbas [...] fell into a trap. The Israeli right has enthusiastically adopted Netanyahu's demand, and Abbas' right flank has no less enthusiastically taken up his refusal.

These are the emperor's new clothes that Netanyahu has sewn for Abbas, and it is no wonder, therefore, that the Palestinian leader has arrived naked to Washington."

Nahum Barnea, JED 17.03.14

Bibi's great escape from peace

"Netanyahu managed to bury the negotiations, as he was smart enough, yet again, to use his tired, but effective trick. He fished out a rather insignificant issue, a literal definition, and threw it into a sea of emotions and anxieties. [...]

For the Israelis, Netanyahu dangles the catastrophic image of the Jews being thrown into the sea — for that must be the Palestinians' aim, if they refuse to recognize Israel as a Jewish state — and in doing so, strikes at the center of the Jewish central nervous system, which is, of course, fear of the Holocaust."

Ravit Hecht, HAA 20.03.14

Jewish state debate: Who's right?

"[Abbas] overlooks one very important fact that was just brought to light in the past week. Yasser Arafat, Abbas's mentor and predecessor and the father of the Palestinian national movement, unequivocally recognized Israel as the Jewish state over 25 years ago.

Tablet Magazine posted on its website a newly-discovered video of Arafat saying, in English, 'The Palestine National Council ... said clearly there are two states in Palestine, a Palestinian state and a Jewish state.'

And he repeated it in a 2004 interview with Haaretz when asked whether Israel should continue to be a Jewish state. 'Definitely,' he responded. 'Definitely.'

That gives Abbas the cover he needs — he can always hide behind Arafat — if he wants it. [...] But he may have climbed so far out on that limb of refusal he can't see a way down. [...]

Netanyahu has good reason to believe that without such a declaration any 'peace' with the Palestinians

would prove a chimera, with the battle to remove the Jewish state just entering a new phase; Abbas has good reason to believe that Netanyahu has added it to Israel's bottom line demands as a poison pill meant to abort a peace process he wishes would go away. Each leader has a way out: Yasser Arafat. Netanyahu can claim Arafat set the precedent and that he only asks Abbas to reaffirm it, and Abbas can put all the responsibility on his predecessor and say he is not doing anything new."

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 19.03.14

The right to a Jewish nation

"The demand to recognize the Jewish state is not caprice. It marks the core, the root of the conflict over the 20th century: Do the Jews have a right as a nation to a part of this land? If there's no recognition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, the conflict will persist even after the ratification of an overdue 'peace deal.' [...]

The national right in Israel belongs to one nation alone, and it is the only country that belongs to this people the world over: the Jews. Recognizing that is an extremely important condition for concluding this conflict and putting an end to further demands. It is a litmus test for testing the integrity of Palestinian intentions. Refusing to recognize this should signal the catalyst propelling this conflict's existence. It is not about territory, but our legitimate existence as the Jewish nation in our land."

Dror Eydar, IHY 19.03.14

Calling Mahmoud Abbas' bluff

"To understand the legitimacy of Palestinian concerns, let us ask ourselves what the reaction of the Anti-Defamation League would be to a congressional resolution that sought to establish the United States of America as a Christian nation. [...]

It is a fact that defining Israel as a Jewish state denies the right to Arabs (and all non-Jewish Israelis) of identifying with their state.

To insist on obtaining recognition as a Jewish state will also boomerang for secular and moderate Israelis. Demographic trends make it very possible that in a couple of generations, Israel will have a religious majority. If Israelis insist on defining their state as Jewish, the political and sociological discourse of the day will be carried by partisans of further encroachment of Jewish law in Israeli society."

Rafael Castro, JED 18.03.14

Why Abbas thinks Jewish state is a 'delusional myth'

"Although in the Oslo Accords in 1993 the PLO recognized the existence of Israel, the PA differentiates between recognizing that Israel exists and recognizing Israel's right to exist. [...]

This is not PLO rhetoric from the pre-Oslo days. This is current PA education and indoctrination and remains a most severe impediment to a genuine peace process. [...]

Netanyahu's demand [...] [is] clearly not just a quibble over semantics [...]. Any PA recognition – if it is to impact at all on peace – must include recognition that Israel is the continuation of thousands of years of Jewish history and therefore Israel has a right to exist. Furthermore, in order for these declarations to be more than mere embellishments to yet another insincere agreement, they must be immediately integrated into PA children's education and public discourse."

Itamar Marcus, JPO 15.03.14

Kerry's 'Jewish state' blunder

"Last week's remarks by US Secretary of State John Kerry about the 'mistake' being made by 'certain people' when they raise 'again and again' the demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state is the greatest gift that Obama administration could have given [...] Netanyahu. [...]

Kerry's unwise remark about Netanyahu's 'mistake' will give the prime minister a Jewish majority, both among Israelis, and more importantly, Jews in the American Diaspora, and with them, Congress and a large section of the US public. [...]

The decision to pull Netanyahu out of the corner of the Jewish state [...] in order to expedite the peace process, misunderstood the Israeli mentality and Jewish sensibilities, and was an own goal. It allowed Netanyahu to be depicted as a moral righteous man who is trying to rebuff those who are trying to rob Israelis of ownership of the land of their forefathers, whose borders have become blurred over the years."

Ran Dagoni, GLO 17.03.14

Recognition for Israel, the Hebrew state

"When the State of Israel itself is unable to define who and what is a Jew, it cannot make demands to be recognized as a Jewish state. Even more so when one fifth of its citizens are Arabs living in their country and their homeland. Therefore, if there is insistence on recognition of Israel as a 'Jewish state,' it is equally important to insist on it being a

'Jewish state and the country and homeland of the Arabs who are citizens of the state.'

It's clear that the 'linguistic majority' in every country is what determines its cultural identity. At the same time, it wouldn't hurt the majority to learn and know the language of the minority, the language of the next-door neighbor. [...]

The suggested separation between civic nationality and religious-ethnic nationality is designed to bypass a prohibitively tall obstacle – the demand to define the states based on the ethnic-religious majority of its citizens. [...]

What will bring an end to the conflict once and for all is the recognition of Palestine as an Arabic – not a Muslim – state, and of Israel as a Hebrew – not a Jewish – state, and a redeemer shall come to Israel and Ishmael."

Salman Masalha, HAA 19.03.14

2. Zuspitzung an Israels Nordgrenze

Bei einem Bombenanschlag an der syrischen Grenze auf den Golanhöhen sind Mitte März vier israelische Soldaten verletzt worden. Im letzten Monat hatten sich die Vorfälle an Israels Nordgrenzen gehäuft. So hatte die libanesische Miliz Hisbollah Israel Ende Februar für Luftangriffe auf Positionen an der libanesisch-syrischen Grenze verantwortlich gemacht. Dem folgte israelisches Feuer auf "Hisbollah-zugehörige Terroristen" auf den Golanhöhen und im März eine Explosion an der israelisch-libanesischen Grenze, die scheinbar israelischen Patrouillen gegolten hatte.

Der Bombenanschlag auf den Golan Höhen führte nun zu einer Zuspitzung, denn die israelische Luftwaffe flog Tags darauf Angriffe auf mehrere Positionen der syrischen Armee, bei denen ein Mensch getötet wurde – und bekannt sich dazu. Im vergangenen Jahr hatte die israelische Armee bereits ein halbes dutzend Luftangriffe gegen Waffenlager- und -transporte in Syrien verübt, dies jedoch nicht öffentlich eingestanden. Nun sagte Verteidigungsminister Moshe Ya'alon, dass Israel das Regime von Präsident Bashar al-Assad zur Verantwortung ziehe. Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu betonte, dass Israel aktiv geworden sei, um den "Transfer von Waffen" zu verhindern.

Hezbollah's fingerprints, Syrian hands

"Amid the backdrop of the civil war in Syria and the violence spilling to its borders, the Israel Defense

Forces has been preparing for the past few years for a renewal of fighting on the Golan Heights. [...] Since May of last year there have been five [...] attacks -- three roadside bombings and two incidents in which rockets were fired toward the Hermon mountain range -- as well as three incidents along the Lebanese border [...]. Despite appearances that these attacks were perpetrated by different actors, the IDF's Northern Command believes they are all part of a larger picture orchestrated primarily by Hezbollah, which seeks to avenge --'quietly' and 'without fingerprints' -- the series of air strikes in Syria attributed to Israel, in which advanced weapons systems earmarked for Hezbollah were targeted. [...]

The uptick in attacks along Israel's northern borders will occupy the senior political and security echelon in the coming days, who will seek a solution to the question of if (and how) it is possible to deter the terrorist actors operating with impunity inside Syrian and Lebanese territory. To this point, Israel has managed to stay out of the civil war in Syria, but it now seems we are being slowly and disconcertingly dragged into the quagmire."

Yoav Limor, IHY 19.03.14

A message from Hezbollah

"Even if the exact identity of those responsible for these attacks is not clear, what is clear is that these incidents are no coincidence. The Assad camp -- the regime, Hezbollah, and militias identified with Syrian President Bashar Assad -- are responsible for a series of attacks that were aimed at Israel. [...]

The relative success of the Assad-Hezbollah camp in blocking the rebel groups' progress and the removal of an immediate threat to the regime in Damascus may have boosted both parties' self-confidence. [...]

Conventional wisdom has been that the main players are too busy battling each other to attack Israel. But the ongoing instability is gradually wearing down the security bubble in which Israelis have been living in recent years."

Amos Harel, HAA 19.03.14

Nasrallah seeks revenge without fingerprints

"Hezbollah is not interested in a major escalation in the region right now. Its political and social situation in Lebanon is not at its best, and it is constantly forced to defend itself due to its involvement in the Syrian civil war [...]. Acting out against Israel could lead to a harsh IDF response. [...]

A regional escalation is also contrary to the interest of Iran, which wants to keep Hezbollah's arsenal of missiles and rockets for a day in which there will be a need to harm the Israeli home front, such as in the case of an attack against nuclear facilities. Thus Hezbollah is not claiming responsibility and might even operate radical organizations to announce their alleged liability for the operation. It could be assumed that the explosive and the harming of Israeli soldiers would be seen as a success to Nasrallah, which would justify the cessation of the chain of vengeful attacks."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 18.03.14

Assad may now be the greater evil

"The latest events on the Golan border are not simply the result of Hezbollah's desire to retaliate for the recent Israeli attacks [...] but rather the consequence of the latest military successes of the Assad regime, with the critical support of Iran and its Shia proxies. [...]

The lack of reaction by the U.S. and Europe in the face of the fierce bombings of the Syrian big cities, the advances of the regime army, as well as the perceived Western weakness during the Ukraine crisis and the success of Syria's Russian ally, have no doubt emboldened Assad, Iran and Hezbollah. [...]

On the military level, the warming of the Golan border with Israel by using Hezbollah fighters and possibly other proxies is also a sign of the degree of self-confidence the Damascus regime and its allies have reached. [...]

The Israeli government and military now have the difficult task of devising a strategy that deters Syria and Hezbollah from attacking the Golan and at the same time makes sure that the Syrian jihadist forces do not take control of the zone close to the border.

Israel could finally decide that the Assad regime and its alliance with Iran and Hezbollah is indeed the greater evil, and act accordingly."

Ely Karmon, TOI 23.03.14

Syria's rebels are pitting Israel against Hezbollah, and winning

"The Syrian rebels have been claiming for the past three years that Assad and Nasrallah are turning their weapons on the Syrian people instead of Israel. [...] Are the pressure and criticism for lack of fighting against Israel starting to affect the Shiite axis? [...]

Israeli analysts have explained that Hezbollah is avenging a series of previous Israeli operations, including the elimination of several of the organiza-

tion's leaders, and taking out a missile convoy from Syria to Lebanon. But is it fair to assume that after 40 years of relative calm in the Golan, Syria and Hezbollah have chosen to open a new front against Israel, when Syria is entangled in a civil war and Hezbollah is busy fighting in several different arenas as Assad battles for his very survival? [...]

The frustration among Syrian rebels over Assad's achievements has given rise to new battle tactics. [...] The rebels' last hope is the southern border, with Israel. In order to motivate the Israeli army against the Syrian army, the rebels must create the illusion that Hezbollah is opening a new front against Israel in southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights. [...]

Israel cannot allow itself to suffer attacks on its territory, but must choose its targets carefully, and ensure that it is not inadvertently serving the purpose of Syria's jihadist rebels. Regretfully, the enemy of my enemy in Syria, like in Gaza, is an even more intractable foe."

Yaron Friedman, JED 21.03.14

Israel pointing finger at wrong terror group

"The Israeli establishment still believes that Syria is Assad – and therefore the punishment for the border fence attack was directed at Syrian army bases. Reality, on the other hand, is different: Assad controls about one-fifth of the country, and most of our border is no longer under his control but under the control of the different rebels, most of whom are jihadist Sunnis. [...]

The Israeli border is not a Hezbollah area, but the area of Salafi rebels. [...] Because Syria's borders have been broken open to Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and part of the Jordanian border, thousands of Sunnis join the battles every day, most of them from Arab countries. [...] Until now, these forces were busy fighting the regime's army, but they are slowly taking over additional territories and finding time for Israel."

Guy Bechor, JED 21.03.14

The Syrian inferno

"Nothing is necessarily what it seems in Syria. The country has deteriorated into a free-for-all fire zone the likes of which even this erratic region had never known. It has become an arena for every terrorist group from the Sunni-supported al-Qaida to its Iranian-propped Shi'ite arch-rival Hezbollah. [...] Crimes against humanity are perpetrated blatantly by all sides and, occasional lip-service notwithstanding, the world hardly cares. [...]

As the Syrian inferno continues to burn, it sends messages of existential importance to Israel – messages we must not ignore if we want to live.

If this is the way Arabs treat one another, what would they unleash on the Jews all of them had been brainwashed to abhor? [...]

The merciless conflagration that consumes Syria could just as likely consume the Palestinian state for which the international community hoarsely clamors. Jihadist imports with nothing to lose would just as frenziedly turn Judea and Samaria into killing fields, should we yield them. [...]

All the talk about territory no longer mattering in our technological and globalized reality has been revealed as so much cerebral claptrap. It is harrowing enough to envisage what our lot would now be had we succumbed to the advice of the weak-willed among us and surrendered the Golan to Assad. [...]

If Syria teaches us anything, it is that territory still counts and counts big, contrary to trendy wishful-thinking."

JPO 19.03.14 Editorial

3. Kampagne gegen Rassismus

Anlässlich des internationalen Tages gegen Rassismus am 21. März haben eine Reihe von zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen in Zusammenarbeit mit der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel eine Medienkampagne initiiert, durch die die Öffentlichkeit auf das Problem aufmerksam gemacht und Lösungsvorschläge präsentiert werden sollten. Die Kampagne "Rassismus nicht an unserer Schule", die mit Hilfe von sozialen Medien und einer Internetseite durchgeführt wurde, richtete sich an Schüler, Lehrer und die weitere Öffentlichkeit.

Sie wurde in der Knesset im Rahmen einer Konferenz zum Thema "Aufklärung über Rassismus" präsentiert.

Im Vorfeld der Kampagne wurde außerdem eine Umfrage zu Rassismus in Israel durchgeführt. Nidal Othman, Vorsitzender der Plattform für den Kampf gegen Rassismus in Israel, sagte anlässlich des hohen Prozentsatzes von Israelis, die laut dieser Studie mindestens eine Gruppierung rassistisch diskriminiert sehen, dass die Öffentlichkeit vom Bildungssystem eine Führungsrolle im Kampf gegen den Rassismus erwarte: "Wir rufen das Bildungsministerium auf, die Lehrinhalte über Rassismus hinzuzufügen und auszuweiten."

95% of public concerned about racism in Israel

"An overwhelming majority of the Israeli public -- some 95 percent -- believes Israeli society is plagued by racism, a new poll has found. [...]

The survey found that 79% of the public believes that the Ethiopian community suffers from racial discrimination the most, followed by Israeli Arabs (68%) and the ultra-Orthodox sector (41.8%). [...]

Asked what they thought was the most effective way to eradicate racism, 50% of those polled said education was key."

Yael Branovsky, IHY 17.03.14

Survey: Who suffers from racism in Israel

"Only 10.3% of the respondents said they believed the Israeli government was acting adequately toward reducing racism. A clear majority (70.2%) believed the government was not doing enough to combat racism and 19.5% of the respondents believed the government actually encouraged racism. [...]

As such, 58.4% of the respondents said the Education Ministry needed to take on the responsibility of reducing racism, while 21.5% said this was a task for the Prime Minister's Office."

Lidar Grave-Lazi, JPO 17.03.14

Poll: 95% of Israelis believe racism is a problem

"Only 4.4 percent of respondents to the poll, taken ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on Friday, said that none of these groups experience racism."

HAA 17.03.14

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 ein **neues Gesetz**, demzufolge ein **Volksentscheid** die Abgabe von Land – etwa im Rahmen eines Friedensabkommens – absegnen muss:*

To whom does the referendum law refer?

"The Knesset decided to create a Basic Law requiring a direct popular vote to approve a peace agree-

ment, or any government decision to give up territory under Israeli sovereignty or jurisdiction, unless it was approved by a supermajority of at least 80 lawmakers. [...] Similar requirements were already included in a law that was passed in 2010, but only as a regular law, and it seems that the current motivation to fortify that legislation stems from a pending appeal in the Supreme Court challenging its constitutionality. With a Basic Law in place, detractors would find it hard to mount a judicial challenge. [...] It could be argued that holding a direct vote on any issue only serves to strengthen democracy. But it begs the question: Why hold a referendum specifically for territorial concession? [...]

Building settlements does not require a national referendum, nor does refusing a possible peace deal. But the opposite decisions - evacuating settlements, signing a peace deal - require the direct approval of a majority of the public.

That's why this Basic Law is biased, and actually harms the principles of democracy – it fortifies a specific political position and requires a national referendum to change it. [...]

The purpose behind the law is to make future peace negotiations more difficult. [...]

While a referendum is typically meant to express a people's desire for self-determination, Israel's new Basic Law stipulates that decisions on the future of contested territories will not be made by the people who live there, but rather by citizens of the occupying power."

Aeyal Gross, HAA 16.03.14

The referendum law's problem

"While this measure does not apply to the occupied West Bank itself, it would, however, force a national vote on land swaps inside the Green Line [...] as well as any attempt to cede part or all of east Jerusalem, perhaps chief among the Palestinians' demands for a final agreement. [...]

In essence, the Israeli government legally stripped itself of its own power to cut a deal, effectively tying its figurative hands behind its back in case the Palestinians decide they want to shake. The law's hawkish architects in the Knesset shrewdly recognized that a mandated referendum all but guarantees the map will remain unchanged for years to come. Israel's continual shift to the political Right [...] makes an already extremely difficult vote improbable, if not impossible."

Edan Johna, JPO 23.03.14

*Über einen **Streik der Angestellten des Außenministeriums:***

A worthy strike

"The workers' union of the Foreign Ministry started an unprecedented strike this week, closing, for the first time ever, its embassies all around the world. The ministry's workers have strong arguments which deserve to be heard. [...]

The wages in the public sector are, in general, incredibly low. A person who decides to work in this sector knows that he will be sacrificing some of his private welfare for the good of the country. But there is a limit to how much we can expect talented individuals to sacrifice in order to serve their country. [...]

For example, one diplomat with over 13 years of experience makes a mere [...] \$21,000 per year. [...] The low salary and tough conditions mean that Israel's diplomatic corps is having increasing difficulty getting young diplomats to stay in the ministry, and to recruit talented new young recruits. This becomes a direct strategic threat to Israel."

Dan Illouz, JPO 27.03.14

Diaspora diplomats: Rescue Foreign Ministry

"There is no doubt that the strike has already inflicted huge damage, including the cancellation of the visit of the first pope to appear to be really well-disposed toward Israel. [...] Something needs to be done. Unless, of course, you believe that Israel [...] can tolerate the very high costs of an outrageous strike."

Edward N. Luttwak, HAA 25.03.14

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