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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Zusammenbruch der Friedensgespräche?

Seit Sommer 2013 hat US-Außenminister John Kerry den israelisch-palästinensischen Friedensprozess in den Mittelpunkt seiner diplomatischen Bemühungen gestellt. Während er jedoch anfangs darauf abzielte, innerhalb von neun Monaten einen vollständigen Friedensvertrag auszuhandeln, war bald nur noch von einem Rahmenabkommen, das den weiteren Prozess vorzeichnen sollte, die Rede. Zuletzt drehten sich die Gespräche hauptsächlich darum, ob die Verhandlungen über die Neunmonatsfrist Ende April hinaus weiter geführt werden würden.

Als Israel schließlich die Freilassung der letzten Gruppe von palästinensischen Gefangenen, die im Rahmen vertrauensbildender Maßnahmen freigelassen werden sollten, ablehnte, setzten die Palästinenser ihrerseits ein Zeichen und unterzeichneten 15 internationale Konventionen, um die Akzeptanz Palästinas in der internationalen Gemeinschaft vorzubereiten. Dies führte wiederum zu enormer Verstimmung auf israelischer Seite. Angesichts dieser Probleme hat Kerry sich nun erstmals skeptisch zu seinen Erfolgsaussichten geäußert. Er sagte, die amerikanische Regierung müsse ihre Herangehensweise überdenken und entscheiden, ob weitere Bemühungen überhaupt anzustreben seien, wenn Israelis und Palästinenser zu keinerlei "konstruktiven Schritten" bereit seien.

Too early to say Kaddish on peace

"Before rushing off to mourn the failure of Israeli and Palestinian leaders and American mediation, everyone should make a final effort to deliver results.

First, it's up to chief negotiator Tzipi Livni. Her diplomatic efforts should be reinforced. Professional teams should begin working alongside her and her counterpart, Saeb Erekat, and begin addressing

issues on the micro-level. [...] Livni should remind Netanyahu of articles 17 and 18 in her coalition agreement with him, which specify authorities to set up a professional Israeli negotiations unit. Realizing these articles may help infuse the frail peace process with some substance.

Second, it's up to Secretary of State Kerry to a) share an objective view of what took place in the negotiations room, and b) provide parameters for continuing the talks. [...]

Third, trust must be built between Netanyahu and Abbas. [...] Netanyahu and Abbas have to meet." Tal Harris, JPO 06.04.14

Dear John, it's time for Plan B

"Now – when the sky falls – the Americans must not falter. [...] The expectations have been raised too high, and the risks that have been created are too great. They can't just get up and go. [...] Any idea that could buy time and extend the negotiation period must be welcomed."

Ari Shavit, HAA 03.04.14

Palestinian blackmail

"The gap in the positions of the two sides is too large to bridge even by a creative diplomacy backed by a superpower. The two sides still display tremendous energies to fight for things that are important to them. Peace and coexistence are not the most important goals of the two warring societies. Therefore, the strategy of conflict resolution needs to be replaced by a more realistic approach of conflict management. The good intentions of the international community should be directed towards minimizing the suffering on both sides rather than ending the conflict."

Efraim Inbar, IHY 06.04.14

Blaming Israel for the collapse of talks

"It requires two parties to make peace, and further unilateral concessions merely provide an incentive for the Palestinians to make increasingly more outlandish demands. [...]

For our part, we should make it clear that we do not intend extending further concessions to bribe the PA to negotiate with us. We remain willing to negotiate for the creation of a Palestinian state without pre-conditions. When the Palestinians signal willingness to conducting bona fide negotiations, we will respond positively and again demonstrate a willingness to make sacrifices to achieve a genuine peace."

Isi Leibler, IHY 07.04.14

Re-evaluate basic assumptions

"A comprehensive agreement to end the conflict is not within easy reach. The Palestinians long ago took a decision to reject the two-state solution as Israelis and most American policymakers envision it. [...]

Given this reality, and given the Arab earthquakes that are destabilizing Israel's borders, it is folly to shoot for an unattainable 'historic' breakthrough in Palestinian-Israeli diplomacy.

Rather, what is now required are strong Israeli and international countermeasures against the punch-drunk Palestinian leadership. Israel must act to knock some realism into Palestinian thinking. [...]

Before any realistic peacemaking might possibly emerge, Palestinian leadership must be disabused of the notion that it can harm and coerce Israel by appealing to international courts and tribunals. [...]

Israel should flex a bit of muscle and evince perseverance in this battle of wills."

David Weinberg, IHY 08.04.14

The blame game

"Both parties seem to be haggling over everything but what they're supposed to be talking about: peace. [...]

The glue in the talks seems to be a mutual desire to avoid being blamed for the collapse. They'll pull together an extension agreement for another reason: neither side, despite their lofty rhetoric to the contrary, may be willing to make the tough choices necessary for a peace agreement, but each is ready, willing and able to make the other one's life miserable. [...]

For these reluctant peacemakers success will come when Kerry tosses in the towel, goes home and

says, 'OK, you're on your own.'"

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 02.04.14

Leave us alone, Kerry

"Please, John Kerry, stop running between us and the Palestinians. [...] Just leave us alone, and let's see what happens. We probably won't fall apart. 'The conflict' will just be handled more brutally, the army will become less moral and less smart, and the government will become even more corrupt. [...]

True, Mr. Kerry, this is terrible, but if this is our truth – better for it to be exposed now and not when it is dangerously late, when the citizens of this country will see that the path down which they were led was one of disaster. Better a moment sooner, when they can still choose a sane alternative."

Avirama Golan, HAA 07.04.14

Peace requires a different Israeli government

"There never was and nor will there be any chance that the current Israeli government will approve any agreement with the Palestinians. There is no agreement that does not require the evacuation of settlements and there is no agreement that does not include a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods. [...] The two right-wing parties in the coalition will not let this happen - they will sabotage any attempt made by their prime minister to sign such an agreement. [...]

The reality on the ground after the demise of the negotiations will change for the worse: More violence in the territories, punitive measures that will increase the poverty and the bitterness, a further expansion of settlements and 'price tag' activity. This is a vicious circle that positions Israel as one state for two peoples, torn by a violent ethnic conflict and increasingly isolated in the world."

Ephraim Sneh, JED 08.04.14

Last days of the two-state solution

"Abbas is about to turn to the UN to ask for membership in some 15 organizations. [...] This might create a huge problem: the U.S. Congress has passed a law that would require the U.S. administration to stop financing the Palestinian Authority if Palestinians resort to unilateral steps at the UN or the International Criminal Court. Abbas could therefore create a situation in which he has legal means to put pressure on Israel, but no money to run the Palestinian Authority. He might then be forced to drop off the keys for the PA on Netanyahu's desk, and Israel from this moment on would be responsible for running the West Bank again. [...] Palestini-

ans will argue that the West Bank is de facto part of Israel and that they are therefore entitled to full political rights. Israel would then face the full South Africa scenario: The international community would probably accept the Palestinian demand and see the situation as apartheid. [...]

Meanwhile we should all prepare ourselves for the two-state solution's funeral. It is just a matter of time until the medical authorities officially and finally declare its demise."

Carlo Strenger, HAA 06.04.14

2. Debatte um die Freilassung Jonathan Pollards

Jonathan Pollard, ehemals Analyst für Geheimdienstinformationen bei der US-Navy, ist als Spion für Israel 1987 zu lebenslänglicher Haft verurteilt worden. Während die israelische Regierung ihm zunächst jede Hilfe verweigerte, gab sie seine Spionagetätigkeiten 1998 zu und bemüht sich seit Jahren um seine Freilassung.

Insbesondere im rechten Lager ist Pollard zu einer Ikone geworden.

Nun ist seine Freilassung erstmals im Rahmen des israelisch-palästinensischen Friedensprozesses erwogen worden. Um Israel zu einer Weiterführung der Verhandlungen zu bewegen, soll die amerikanische Regierung einer Freilassung zugestimmt haben. Im Gegenzug müsste Israel palästinensische Gefangene, darunter erstmals in dieser Runde der Verhandlungen Palästinenser mit israelischer Staatsbürgerschaft, freilassen. Die Palästinenser hingegen müssten ihre Beitrittsbemühungen zu internationalen Konventionen einstellen.

Weder die palästinensische noch die israelische Seite hat dem amerikanischen Vorschlag jedoch bisher zugestimmt.

American values demand Pollard's immediate release

"Jonathan has now entered his 30th year in prison. This, for spying for an ally! Others, who were arrested for spying against enemy countries have been jailed and released in the interim. [...] It is clear that justice has been served, and the offer to release him this week is proof positive that Jonathan does not hold any secrets which could damage the security of the United States. [...] It is my hope and prayer that President Barack Obama will do what is right – according to core

American values and basic human decency – and release Jonathan Pollard now."

Dov Lipman, JPO 06.04.14

Undo historical injustice, free Pollard

"There is no argument over the fact that freeing Jonathan Pollard as part of a deal securing the release of murderers raises a moral problem even for Pollard himself. [...]

The moral question should not bother Netanyahu. He wants to save Jonathan Pollard and is fulfilling the mitzvah of 'he who saves even one soul,' etc. If Arik Sharon let himself cut a shameful deal with Hezbollah in exchange for Elhanan Tennenbaum, who engaged in drug trafficking, and no one protested vigorously, Netanyahu can definitely release Pollard, who the State of Israel owes ten times more."

Tami Arad, JED 03.04.14

Why I don't care about Pollard

"Pollard isn't part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The issue of his release is part of the overall relationship between Israel and America. [...] On Israeli society's list of priorities, Pollard is much less important than other burning issues.

For many years now, his image has been inflated by cynical Israeli leaders to the proportions of a national icon [...] whose only crime was his willingness to endanger himself for the sake of the country's security. [...]

The truth is that Pollard was a spy who betrayed his own country – which happens to be Israel's greatest ally in the world – for money. Perhaps he also had Zionist motives. Perhaps Israel is obligated to make an effort on his behalf. That's a legitimate position. But no relationship of mutual responsibility exists between him and Israel's citizens on a scale that would necessitate conditioning the continuation of the negotiations on his release."

Rogel Alpher, HAA 30.03.14

Pollard's release an indecent proposal

"The only person who can take some satisfaction in this deal is President Barack Obama. He will get the Jewish people excited by releasing Pollard, hooking an inexistent peace process up to life support, give his secretary of state a little more rope to play with, and will not be forced to deal with a Palestinian appeal to the UN instead of a peace process. [...]

The deal lacks any diplomatic purpose and hope. It is also morally indecent towards the families of terror

victims whose world has been shattered, towards Israeli citizens who still see Benjamin Netanyahu as a man of principles fighting terror fearlessly and uncompromisingly [...], and towards Secretary of State John Kerry, who is deluding himself that he is running a peace process."

Alon Pinkas, 02.04.14

We want Pollard, but not like this

"Introducing the name 'Pollard' into the equation is a cynical, harmful attempt to exploit certain Jewish values, including the value of 'returning our sons to their land,' over others. [...] Our friend the U.S. is forcing us to try to complete an unfair equation: one prisoner for 426. [...] We all want to see Pollard out of jail and in Israel, but not like this.

We are allowed to say 'no' to the Americans."

Danny Danon, IHY 02.04.14

The deal: Pollard-Barghouti-Fayyad

"The new method for buying time should be based on Pollard and Marwan Barghouti. Trading Pollard for Barghouti and more time would be a deal that none of the three sides could turn down. American national security couldn't be harmed by releasing a spy from the 1980s. The Israeli nationalist movement cannot harm the value of redeeming prisoners by demanding to see one Palestinian sitting in jail longer and longer. The Palestinians couldn't refuse a deal to release the current generation's most important symbol of the Palestinian resistance movement. Even against their will, Washington, Jerusalem and Ramallah would become partners in a three-way trade having minor significance for security but incredible symbolic importance, and in the process they would buy the necessary time."

Ari Shavit, HAA 10.04.14

3. Verurteilung Ehud Olmerts

Der ehemalige israelische Premierminister Ehud Olmert ist Ende März wegen Annahme von Bestechungen während seiner Amtszeit als Bürgermeister von Jerusalem verurteilt worden. Das Strafmaß steht noch aus. Olmert hatte 2008 aufgrund der Anschuldigungen gegen ihn als Premierminister zurücktreten müssen. 2012 war er in einem anderen Fall freigesprochen worden. Nun allerdings hat ihn ein Gericht schuldig gefunden, Bestechungsgelder von Bauunternehmern entgegen genommen zu haben, um den Bau des Wohnkomplexes Holyland in Jerusalem zu ermöglichen. Auch sein Amtsnachfolger Uri

Lupolianski ist verurteilt worden. Olmert hatte stets auf seiner Unschuld beharrt und kündigte an, Berufung einlegen zu wollen. Allerdings hat die Polizei nun eine weitere Untersuchung gegen ihn begonnen: Ihm wird Rechtsbehinderung vorgeworfen, da er seine langjährige Mitarbeiterin Shula Zaken unter Druck gesetzt haben soll, nicht gegen ihn auszusagen.

One judge has purged the sons of darkness

"It's sad, embarrassing and depressing to see who became prime minister, and the kind of corrupt absciss that influenced his life and surroundings. But [...] in one fell swoop, a single justice managed to remove the distortion that such dark individuals had spread throughout the justice system, restoring not only the Israeli patriot's pride in his legal system, but his great hope too."

Dan Margalit, IHY 01.04.14

Olmert's conviction

"The Holyland trial and other cases that have come before our courts have revealed the problematic connections between business and politics and the rampant phenomenon of what economists call 'rent-seeking' or the special sort of money-making made possible by big business's connections with political figures and their subordinates. [...]

We can only hope that Olmert's conviction will set in motion a process of soul-searching and a serious scrutiny of the problematic relationship that exists between business and politics, a relationship that is not unique to Israel."

JPO 31.03.14 Editorial

The two Ehud Olmerts

"The claim that Israel is a corrupt country received further support Monday. The fact that we have a president sitting in jail, that a prime minister could go to jail, that ministers have already sat in jail, that a chief rabbi is expected to stand trial, and that there are more investigations on the way should serve as a certificate of honor for a state rooting corruption out of its arteries.

But who will present the state with this certificate of honor? The man who was president? The former prime minister? And perhaps the ceremony itself should be held within the walls of the Ramla prison."

Eitan Haber, JED 02.04.14

If he'd been acquitted

"In a different, more ethical environment, such as is standard in most Western countries, Olmert would have been banished from public life years ago. [...] For 30 years, Olmert's name has been connected with episodes that gave off a bad odor. [...]

Despite all these ethical warning signs, Olmert continued to freely navigate the corridors of power, carving out a gold mine for himself [...]. The higher he climbed, the [...] more unbridled his arrogance became. Is it really any wonder? As a whole, Israeli society is incredibly forgiving of inappropriate conduct by public figures [...].

Even after he was convicted in the Jerusalem District Court of breach of trust, and barely acquitted of the charges in the Talansky and Rishon Tours cases, Olmert was still being wooed by the Israeli elite and seriously flirting with politics."

Uzi Benziman, HAA 04.04.14

Israel's pride

"In a truly democratic country, where freedom of speech and thought are more important than petty politics, such behavior might not have taken place. An open, truth-driven press could have prevented it. [...]

Had the media done its job from the very beginning, maybe Olmert and his friends would have understood that crime does not pay. Or, perhaps an informed public could also have acted, or voted differently."

Yisrael Medad, JPO 02.04.14

A mark of shame

"The Supreme Court has, in the past, explained at length about the grave injury bribery charges against public officials inflict not only on the public coffers, but also -- and mainly -- on the public's trust in the government and in the rule of law. [...]

Due to the unique nature of this offense, it has been determined in the past that punitive actions applied to it must do more than ensure those guilty of it pay for their crimes -- they must also be branded with a mark of shame that fully expresses society's disdain for bribery offenses, with the aim of deterring potential offenders."

Aviad Hacohen, IHY 01.04.14

Rid our house of this affliction

"The story of Olmert's transformation is the dismal story of the unraveling of ethical norms in Israeli society. The older among us surely remember the war Olmert waged on organized crime, a war in

which he himself fell captive, succumbing to greed and personal gain. [...]

Israeli society, once imbued with a sense of 'we' [...], became the society of 'me,' in which each person is for himself -- and to hell with the rest."

Haim Shine, IHY 01.04.14

That was the week that was

"What is most infuriating about this case is that even though one cannot claim Olmert is a major crook, or that he holds illegal bank accounts in Switzerland containing billions of dollars, he is both one of generators and an upshot of the corrupting relations between tycoons and politicians that seem to have overrun our society and system of government, to the detriment of all the rest of us. The symbolism of Olmert's sentence is thus extremely important, even though many say that the cancer is already so deep and widespread that it will not be swept away so easily or so fast."

Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO 06.04.14

Wake up and smell the sleaze

"Last week's court verdict could, hopefully, constitute a watershed. The public has always understood that there was corruption in the system but the blatancy of the Holyland affair and the complicity of Olmert, a future prime minister, has made virtually every public official in the country, local or national, of high rank or low, suspect. Anyone with access to the public trough is now viewed as potentially guilty until proven innocent. Civic groups and the media must prepare themselves for battle against the rot that is endangering the country."

Abraham Rabinovich, TOI 07.04.14

A state governed by civil law

"The further the exaggeration went, the more we went overboard in praising ourselves: Look at us, how we fight corruption. The key words were courage and integrity, law and justice. [...]

But its great corruption is not in Morris Talansky's cash or Shmuel Dechner's kitty. It is good that Israel is using heavy artillery to kill an ant; this corruption needs to be stamped out as well. [...] But what about proportionality? It needs to be said yet again: The occupation is Israel's biggest act of corruption [...] and nobody is being prosecuted for it."

Gideon Levy, HAA 03.04.14

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 **Gewalt von jüdischen Siedlern** in der Westbank, insbesondere einen Vorfall, bei dem ein Armeeposten beschädigt wurde:

Are Jewish rioters above the law?

"The Shin Bet people are busy preventing and thwarting Palestinian terror attacks, and they assume – perhaps erroneously – that with today's government, and with the current atmosphere in the territories, there is no urgency in arresting Jews, and certainly not in prosecuting them.

True or false, this is the atmosphere today among many of the settlers in Judea and Samaria, despite the condemnations pouring in on the unknown rioters' heads from all directions. Sunday's wave of condemnations included everybody who is somebody in this country – from the prime minister and defense minister all the way down. But the settlers know from past experience that after the condemnations, the police, the IDF and the Shin Bet won't lift a finger to prevent the next riot."

Eitan Haber, JED 08.04.14

Rioters endanger settlements

"The fight for Judea and Samaria is still going strong. The only way to protect the settlement enterprise from a hostile world is by settling in the hearts of Israel's citizens.

Our fortitude depends on unity and internal harmony. Most Israelis acknowledge the settlements' value and respect their residents. Today, the importance of the settlements to national security is clear to anyone with eyes. The places we were forced to leave have become terror nests. Every foot of land in Judea and Samaria handed over to strangers will turn into the global terror front.

A small, isolated group among the settlers, a group of violent youngsters, who after the expulsion from Gush Katif in Gaza lost their faith in the state and see the IDF as a hostile entity, is endangering the entire enterprise. Their criminal acts could cause the

rest of Israelis to tire of the settlements. Their activity, if it doesn't stop immediately, will cause settlers in Judea and Samaria to pay the heaviest price yet. [...]

Settlement leaders and rabbis are responsible for preventing the disaster that will result from the 'price-tag' incitement."

Haim Shine, IHY 09.04.14

Über einen Untersuchungsbericht, demzufolge 10% aller Haushalte in Israel **nicht immer genügend Nahrungsmittel** zur Verfügung haben:

Poverty in Israel is a result of policy

"This is a warning sign for all of us: There are many hungry people here, who are barely raising another generation of poor children. [...] This is the result of a years-long policy, years in which the state shrugged off responsibility, cut budgets, reduced pensions and decreased health, education and welfare services. [...]

The state's leaders [...] are far away, both practically and ideology, from the basic trust agreement between a man and his state, in the social-democratic society. [...] No, our elite still believes that 'wealth will pour slowly from the top,' a theory which has clearly failed miserably. Wealth does not pour down, it remains stuck in the top. "

Yehuda Nuriel, JED 08.04.14

Don't talk only about hunger

"The National Insurance Institute survey [...] showed that about one fifth of Israeli families suffer from food insecurity – a very worrisome figure [...].

People who suffer from food insecurity do not look the part of hungry children – they often suffer from malnutrition, which is carbohydrate-rich but poor in essential nutrients. [...]

The cause of food insecurity is not lack of food, but lack of economic access to food: Insufficient income and weakened purchasing power cause people to deteriorate to a situation of food insecurity. [...] The root of the problem is in economic policy that leads people into poverty and massive cuts to benefits, including welfare, alongside rising food prices. Therefore a basic, healthy, accessible food basket is needed, whose prices are subject to oversight."

Aeyal Gross, HAA 09.04.14

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JPO = Jerusalem Post
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