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1. Verhandlungen über Einheitsregierung

Oppositionsführer Isaac Herzog führte mit Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu eine Reihe von Gesprächen über einen möglichen Beitritt der Zionistischen Union zur Koalitionsregierung unter Netanyahus Führung. Ein solcher Schritt wäre für beide Politiker von Nutzen. Netanyahus bislang knappe Regierungsmehrheit würde mit dem Zuwachs von 24 Mandaten deutlich an Stabilität gewinnen. Zudem könnte ihm der Sozialdemokrat Herzog im Kampf um Israels internationales Image als Feigenblatt dienen. Herzog lockt umgekehrt der Posten des Außenministers. Der mögliche Einzug der Zionistischen Union in eine Große Koalition stößt indes auf scharfen Protest bei Herzogs Parteigenossen, allen voran von der ehemaligen Justizministerin Tzipi Livni, die androhte, ihre Partei aus der Zionistischen Union abzuziehen, sollte sich Herzog für eine Große Koalition entscheiden.

Saving Bougie

The political saga unfurling within the Labor Party has a name. It's called the Quest to Save Bougie (...). The man who over the last few months had denied any and all rumors saying that he is in talks with (...) Netanyahu, who had blatantly lied (...) to anyone who had approached him on the matter, claiming it's all rumors, spins, nonsense. (...) Apart from two potential senior ministries — Foreign Affairs and Economy — plus a few junior ministries, he has not received a single promise that the current

Netanyahu government would change its approach. Not regarding the bi-yearly budget. Not regarding a diplomatic breakthrough. Not regarding a halt on all settlement development. (...) Netanyahu wasn't even willing to acknowledge the idea of two countries for two peoples. (...) Netanyahu (...) stuck to his initial and humiliating offer that Herzog should have thrown back in his face. (...) There isn't a single politician who could claim that having the Zionist Union enter the government isn't political suicide. But what's tantamount to suicide for the Zionist Union is a lifesaver for Herzog. That's the whole point. (...) If anything is transpiring, it's in Herzog's head. And he has good reasons for it: his police investigation, the polls that have never looked so bad (...). Pressure from within his own party. Herzog would like to reach the summer session as a minister and spare himself the task of delivering a speech as a head of the opposition whom no one sees as their leader. (...) Because when you have to decide what's worse: facing all of the above or being a doormat in the Opposition, Herzog's answer seems clear. (...) It wasn't long ago that Herzog said that no decent person would enter Netanyahu's government. It would be interesting to know how he perceives himself today.

Sima Kadmon, JED, 11.05.16

Let Israel's Labor Party join the government and bear its shame

(...) The proposal for joining the government that is currently under discussion is indeed embarrassing, and it makes a laughingstock of the large electorate that gave him its votes. At first glance, this move, whose entire purpose is to provide Herzog with a personal lifeline (...), would indeed crush the political left (...). The entry into the government of any of Herzog's loyalists wouldn't necessarily be disastrous. (...) In fact, the Labor Party would shed the viper's skin. And even if it remained lean and shriveled, perhaps finally an ideological opposition to this government of incitement, occupation and settlements would arise, together with Meretz and, with a little goodwill and creativity on both sides, also with parts of the Joint Arab List. A center-left movement would be established that doesn't rely on the Histadrut labor federation's network of hacks, (...) but on an ideological alliance between all those who are suffering to the point of suffocation under the current government and are capable of being potential partners in a return to power. An opposition that dissolves like a baby tooth in a glass of Coca-Cola when faced with an aggressive government that intimidates everyone except its own loyalists doesn't deserve to be called an opposition. We should let it return to its natural place – collaborating with the government.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 12.05.16

Price of unity

(...) the creation of a unity government that includes Labor could be a blessing for a number of reasons. Broadening the coalition would improve this government's stability and thus the chances that it will survive for a full four years. Governments that finish their mandated terms tend to follow through on policy decisions. (...) Presently, the government can easily be toppled by any single coalition party or even by a group of MKs who decide to splinter away from one of those parties. Broadening the coalition would also reduce the leverage power of any single party. (...) With Labor in the coalition there is a better chance that policies benefiting a majority of Israelis will be implemented. The two largest parties – one center-left and one center-right – represent the two mainstream positions on cardinal issues such as security and socioeconomics. If news reports are correct and Herzog will be appointed foreign minister, bringing Labor into the government would also improve Israel's image in the world. (...) A unity government is good for Israel. But only on condition

that Labor is able to make its presence felt within the coalition via domestic and foreign policy. If, however, broadening the coalition is just a tactical move that extends the life of the government, Herzog should keep his job as opposition leader.

Editorial, JPO, 12.05.16

Herzog needs to take a clear position

(...) Herzog can still demonstrate leadership by making a clear statement: I tried and wanted to achieve a unity government, but I will not concede my principles for jobs or the Foreign Ministry. (...) Such a statement would have been received as a moral and bold leadership statement. And Herzog still has time to make it. (...) Herzog has not changed. While he is no longer denying the existence of talks, he still has not provided any serious explanation for them. A unity government is not a bad idea. Political polarization in Israel requires efforts to reach a lowest common denominator. And therefore, Herzog's effort is not unacceptable. (...) But a unity government should only be formed on the condition that it makes a difference. A right-wing, ultra-orthodox government cannot turn into a left-wing government, but it can and needs to turn into slightly more moderate government. The gaps are small on economic issues and most Zionist Union members of Knesset (MK) accept Moshe Kahlon as Finance minister. The widest gaps are on diplomatic issues, but they are not wholly insurmountable. (...) Herzog knows that an agreement is not on the agenda, but that does not mean that nothing can be done. In fact, something can be done—freezing settlement building outside the blocs. At least once, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said himself that he backs such a policy, but has done nothing to implement it. As long as it continues, settlement building can turn Israel into a bi-national state. It is a slowly forming disaster. Thus, a unity government is needed to stop it. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, JED, 13.05.16

What's behind Netanyahu's pursuit of the Labor Party? Fear, loathing and a restive army

It is easy to understand why MK Isaac Herzog wants to join the Netanyahu government after a year of no achievements as head of the opposition, utterly crashing in the polls and facing the danger of being deposed from the party chairmanship. (...) What changed in Netanyahu's assessment that is now pushing him into Herzog's arms? In other words, what is Netanyahu afraid of? (...) With the Zionist Union in the government, outside pressure will less-

en, Herzog can go to peace conferences and the American military aid package agreement with the outgoing administration might even be sweetened. (...) The lone-terrorist attacks are embarrassing the right-wing government, which finds it hard to deal with them and is suffering from a lack of scapegoats, in the form of "leftist" ministers who will want to conduct a diplomatic process. (...) After a stormy beginning and a few achievements (...) Netanyahu's revolution is having a tough time figuring out its next objectives. Most of the nationalist bills are stuck in the parliamentary pipeline. The entry of Zionist Union into the coalition will lead to the shelving of these bills. Is Netanyahu afraid of the revolution itself? (...) The admonitions delivered by the deputy IDF chief of staff on Holocaust Memorial Day were perceived as a challenge to the politicians. And no clarification or slap on the back will change that. Netanyahu quickly responded with calls for unity – and rightly so, because bringing the Zionist Union into the government will necessarily weaken the extreme right, which wants to re-educate the IDF General Staff. (...) They both agree that a Palestinian state is not feasible right now, that "Arab lovers" are off-putting to the Jewish public, that Bennett is irritating and should be ousted from the inner cabinet. The deal between them is not yet assured, but Netanyahu has very strong motives for making it – no less than does Herzog.

Aluf Benn, HAA, 15.05.16

2. Israel wird 68

Am 68. Unabhängigkeitstag Israels zählt das Land, nach Angaben des Statistischen Zentralamtes 8,522 Millionen Einwohner, rund zehnmal so viele Menschen, wie es bei Staatsgründung 1948 waren. Entsprechend der Bevölkerung hat auch die Größe der Städte zugenommen. Gab es 1948 mit Tel Aviv nur eine einzige israelische Stadt mit über 100.000 Einwohnern, sind es heute bereits deren 14. In acht Städten wohnen jeweils mindestens 200.000 Bürger_innen. Schließlich erwartet das Statistische Zentralamt bis 2035 ein Anwachsen der Bevölkerung Israels auf 11,3 Millionen Menschen, vorausgesetzt, die heutige Wachstumsrate hält an. Im Moment stagniert die israelische Wirtschaft allerdings, während die Armut im Land stetig wächst und die Schere zwischen Arm und Reich immer größer wird. Auch im Bereich der Außenpolitik ist die Lage angespannt: Der Friedensprozess steckt fest und der internationale Druck auf Israel nimmt zu. An der politischen Front scheint Regierungschef Benjamin

Netanyahu mit seiner knappen Regierungsmehrheit von nur 61 der 120 Mandate nur bedingt handlungsfähig zu sein.

Five key challenges for Israel at 68

For many (...) the marking of its 68th Independence Day is a bittersweet occasion. The pride they feel in Israel's accomplishments is matched by a deep concern for its ability to continue to pursue its mission of building a just society that will ensure its sustainability over time. The real challenges that face Israel today are neither external nor military (...); they are first and foremost internal and principled. (...) Israel's survival in the profound sense of the term depends on its capacity to come to terms with its inner self. The State of Israel was constructed on the (...) ideals of "liberty, justice and peace", along with "full social and political equality for all its citizens without distinction of race, creed and gender", provide the essence of the vision embedded in its Declaration of Independence. (...) Israeli society must urgently reclaim its human face. (...) Israelis have lost their capacity to disagree, debate, discuss and explore differences. (...) No serious self-examination can be conducted without open discussion; no vital policy refinements or alterations can be made without an exchange of views. (...) By all accounts, the illusion of a status quo in the West Bank no longer holds water. (...) An inequitable one-state reality is emerging which not only defies universal and Jewish norms, but puts into doubt Israel's ability to maintain itself both as a democratic and a predominantly Jewish state. (...) The crisis of governability has affected the balance of power between the executive, legislative and judicial branches, resulting in the personalization and centralization of power, increased public corruption and growing citizen alienation. (...) in recent years the state and the nation have been conflated, yielding a narrow, ethnocentric, interpretation of the nature of Israel. This now hegemonic definition has undermined the civic basis of Israeli identity, replacing it with a constricted notion of Jewish sovereignty which belittles the place of non-Jewish citizens and subsequently chips away at its democratic foundations. (...)

Naomi Chazan, TOI, 09.05.16

Amazing era

(...) Not only does a Jewish state exist on the same sliver of land in the Middle East where the story of the Jewish people began four millennia ago, but this state at the age of 68 is thriving to such an extent that it has managed to attract the majority of Jews

throughout the world. (...) Contemporary Israel competes with the most advanced Western states in quality of living and opportunities for professional growth, and it is a place for Jews of all types and affiliations to make a home for themselves without feeling self-conscious about their Jewishness. (...) We fought conventional and unconventional wars against all of our neighbors and an internal war against the Palestinian population. We absorbed a huge immigrant population that included millions from underdeveloped countries. (...) And all along we somehow manage to maintain a strong and vibrant democratic culture of public debate in which people are free to speak their minds and the most fundamental moral questions facing our society are openly discussed. These are no small accomplishments. (...) From anywhere in the world, a Jew can get on a plane and be home in a matter of hours. It was not long ago that such a reality would be unfathomable. (...) And unlike America, where assimilation endangers Jewish continuity, Israel is the only country in the world where the number of Jews is increasing. (...) as we transition from Remembrance Day to Independence Day, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we live in an amazing Jewish era.
 Editorial, JPO, 11.05.16

Israel must fix its flag

(...) Never before has this fragile and delicate identity, comprised of an entire mosaic of beliefs, opinions and tastes and built with great toil over the last 68 years, been forced to face such a fierce internal assault. (...) Israeli identity isn't uniform, and its various components are embroiled in constant conflict, it's necessary to defend it against efforts to foment strife and tear it apart. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the government he heads were to a large degree responsible for destroying the delicate fabric created by the different groups that comprise the State of Israel. (...) The fine stitching of the Israeli flag has been systematically ripped apart, and this symbol of constructive, inclusive Israeliness has become a weapon in the hands of racist, nationalist militias. This Independence Day underscores the need to repair the rents in the blue-and-white flag and to bring under its protection all the groups that make up Israeliness – including those minorities that have trouble identifying with the Star of David in the flag's center or the "yearning Jewish soul" of the national anthem. (...)
 Editorial, HAA, 11.05.16

May we be worthy

(...) I glanced once again at that dreadful number of Israel's fallen -- 23,447 (...). Generations of Israelis, each leading up to that terrible number, have paid the ultimate price. Why does it have to be this way? A persecuted nation that wanted a piece of land where its forefathers lived. (...) I am reminded of all this by the young boy and girl scouts at the ceremony. I looked at them. Recognized them. Some of them are my grandchildren. Do they understand this great miracle? (...) we are here, the Jewish state, in the city that knew Abraham and the binding of Isaac, King David and the Temple that was destroyed. And there is nothing else like this -- a nation that returned to its homeland, revived its ancient language and bounced back from Auschwitz to the nuclear reactor in Dimona. My mother never asked me for anything, except that come what may, I live in this country. Now, as I watched the young generation, I wanted to pass along my mother's wish. We can add the provision that the land remain worthy of them -- or perhaps the other way around: That they remain worthy of this land.

Dan Margalit, IHY, 11.05.16

3. Holocaustgedenktag und die Rede Yair Golan

Anlässlich des Holocaust-Gedenktages mahnte der stellvertretende Generalstabschef Yair Golan mit überraschender Schärfe vor den Anzeichen von „Intoleranz, Gewalt, Selbstzerstörung und moralischem Verkommen“ in der israelischen Gesellschaft. Was ihn im Zusammenhang mit dem Erinnern an den Holocaust besonders beängstige, sei das Erkennen abstoßender Prozesse, die es in Europa und insbesondere in Deutschland „vor 70, 80 und 90 Jahren gab“, in der israelischen Gesellschaft heute. Golan ließ durchblicken, dass er auf jene Stimmen in der israelischen Gesellschaft und Politik anspiele, die sich gegen die Strafverfolgung des israelischen Soldaten aussprachen, der vor wenigen Wochen einen bereits bewusstlosen palästinensischen Attentäter mit einem Kopfschuss getötet hatte. Wirtschaftsminister Naftali Bennett, Chef der Siedlerpartei Habayit Hayehudi, kommentierte zürmend: „Gott behüte, dass unsere Soldaten mit Nazis verglichen werden“. Oppositionsführer Isaac Herzog (Zionistische Union) nannte Golan hingegen einen „tapferen Kommandanten“.

Umstritten in Israel ist zudem die Frage, ab welchem Alter Kinder mit der Verfolgung der Juden durch die Nazis konfrontiert werden sollten.

The IDF General who challenged Netanyahu's suffocating Holocaust analogies

(...) Golan knew that his words would be made public, (...) and (...) he was fully aware that within (...) a few hours he would become public enemy no. 1 for Israeli right wingers and self-styled Jewish patriots abroad. If he didn't know, he's an idiot, if he did and went ahead nonetheless then he's a fool, career-wise at least, but more of a hero as well. (...) Golan's main message, (...) was that the kind of inflamed nationalistic rumble that erupted from the demonstrations in favor of Sgt. Elor Azaria, the soldier who shot the terrorist (...) were ugly and dangerous and, yes, reminiscent of darker times. That such rallies, as well as statements made by irresponsible politicians, carry an implicit and often explicit message that killing Palestinian terrorists, no matter what the circumstances, is not only excusable but also desirable (...). Netanyahu (...) is the last person on earth who can object to comparisons between the Holocaust and the present (...). Gas chambers or not, atomic weapons or not, Netanyahu has embedded Israelis in a world in which they are no more masters of their fate than the Jews of Ghetto Bialystok or Ghetto Lvov, a universe in which the village is always burning and the carving knife is eternally on Israel's neck. (...) By painting such a one-sided world, Netanyahu helps himself, politically, of course, but he also makes it easier for Israelis to feel justified and virtuous. He absolves them of the need for retrospection or for looking in the mirror. (...) There are thousands if not tens of thousands of Israelis who call for ejecting, raping and murdering Palestinians, leftists and even plain old critics of the government, on an almost daily basis. (...)

Chemi Shalev, HAA, 06.05.16

Scoring an own goal

(...) serious is that a man in this position lacks awareness of the power of his words. (...) why was Nazi Germany the first association Golan made when looking at the difficult aspects of Israeli society?! And on Holocaust Remembrance Day to boot. (...) what about the sane among the Left -- do you have no criticism for the general's problematic comparison? (...) The truth is that Golan's comments are the bitter fruit of the Holocaust denial discourse that has been ongoing since the 1950s. (...) Take a look at who spreads this propaganda among us and throughout the world -- for the most part, it is those who are fighting against the existence of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people. Golan inadvertently granted legitimacy to this tainted dis-

course. (...) These words are several times more serious when they come from the mouth of someone in charge of IDF combat soldiers, who are loyal to the promise "never again." What motivation will a soldier have to fight after hearing this false comparison? (...) Maj. Gen. Yair Golan is a highly regarded combat soldier, but his words created a propaganda attack at the height of the difficult campaign that Israel is now facing in the world as it fights to defend its justness and its rights. (...)

Dror Eydar, IHY, 07.05.16

The Israeli generals who shoot and cry and shoot again

(...) it's the turn of the most senior commanders in office who are sobering up and sounding the alarm, the threesome of Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot and Deputy Chief of Staff Yair Golan. It could have impressed and inspired respect had it not been for one tiny problem. The three aren't doing a thing to change the situation that they are taking exception to. (...) It's hard not to appreciate their courage (...). All three bear direct and heavy responsibility for the situation that they are criticizing and have contributed for years to bringing it about. (...) Ya'alon is warning about the army becoming bestialized? But it is he who has been in charge of it, first as IDF chief of staff and currently as defense minister. Who can change it, if not him? (...) One can, of course, cry after committing an act. It's never too late to sober up, to make amends and to atone. But before these military men become heroes of conscience and Israeli champions of morality, they would do well to examine their roles in the moral decline of the country and of the army and question what they are doing now in their high positions to institute change. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 08.05.16

Political survival at the IDF's expense

It's a bit problematic to compare the processes that led to mob mentality and brutalization in the German Weimar Republic early last century to what is happening in Israeli society today. (...) this is a matter for historians to deal with and research using the proper scientific methods. (...) The eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day (...) is not exactly the place to make decisive statements on such a sensitive issue that is not within the purview of a military man. Be that as it may, (...) the message Maj.-Gen. Golan sought to convey is the right one, and an appropriate one at that. (...) Yair Golan is qualified to say

what he did, and was meant to say it. The bottom line is that Golan chose the wrong place, time, and perhaps even the wrong historical analogy. The prime minister definitely had reason to show Golan up and perhaps even reprimand him for exceeding his authority. (...) there was no justification to publicly undermine the deputy IDF chief for the mistake he made. It wasn't just the honor of Yair Golan (...) but also his authority as a senior commander who sends people to battle. (...) When the time comes to appoint a new IDF chief of staff to replace Eisenkot, this scandal will be brought back to the surface once more. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED, 10.05.16

The Holocaust: Many villains, few heroes

(...) we must ask some disturbing questions about those who were never tried for their complicity in the world's worst genocide. (...) the guiltiest individuals were the Nazi leaders who directly planned and implemented the final solution. (...) These Nazi leaders had the help of many "willing executioners," both in Germany and in the countries under its control. Among the worst culprits were individual Lithuanians, Latvians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Poles, Ukrainians, and others. (...) The French government deported more Jews than the Nazis demanded. Other governments, including those of Norway, Holland, Austria, Hungary, also helped the Nazis achieve their genocidal goal. (...) There were also the countries that refused to accept Jews who might have escaped the Nazis had they been permitted to enter. (...) Many Arab and Muslim leaders also played ignoble roles, siding with the Nazis and conducting their own pogroms against local Jews. (...) There were also the actions of those who pardoned and commuted the sentences of Nazis convicted at Nuremberg, and those who helped Nazis escape prosecution after the war ended. (...) There will never be perfect justice for those who helped carry out the Holocaust. (...) It is important to calibrate the responsibility of those who played very different roles in the Holocaust. This is a daunting task, but it must be undertaken if future genocides are to be deterred.

Alan Dershowitz, JPO, 02.05.16

Janusz Korczak and Holocaust education

(...) Janusz Korczak, the esteemed educator and orphanage director wrote in his diary: "It is a difficult thing to be born and to learn to live. Ahead of me is a much easier task: to die. (...)" The question of how the Holocaust should be approached and

commemorated in our classrooms has sparked ongoing public and pedagogical discourse throughout the years. (...) The reality of life in Israel means that children encounter the Holocaust from their earliest days; when they hear the blare of the sirens, passively consume television programming and attend ceremonies with their parents. It is reasonable to assume that Korczak would have recommended including the children in Holocaust Remembrance Day events in such a manner that derives from the following question: What can they be as human beings? (...) Korczak does not reject texts, but suggests maintaining an awareness of the thin line between arbitrary and simplistic dogmatic education and practical education espousing personal strength, fortitude, self-confidence, sound judgement, setting proper boundaries and morality. (...) Korczak said we surrender to the illusion that the child is satisfied with an angelic view of the world -- one with no weaknesses or ills, contradictions or setbacks. Because of this, he argued, hiding the truth will only deepen a child's misunderstandings. (...)

Dr. Michal Sadan, IHY, 03.05.16

The Holocaust can wait

(...) The trend of teaching the Holocaust in preschools has gained steam in recent years. It was enshrined in state policy by our previous government. The official reason is to strengthen children's identity and sense of history. (...) I don't want to make a political statement; I want this practice to end. Preschool and early-school-aged children are too young to confront the Holocaust. Premature contact with these tragedies will not bring any good. (...) In the preschool and early school years, we need to explain the staggering siren that momentarily halts life here on Yom HaShoah and Yom HaZikaron. I tell my kids that we stand silent together to remember people who died. That's enough. (...) I realize that some kids hear about the Holocaust from the news, parents, and older siblings. As a result, adults want to respond to their questions and fears. Yet, formal Holocaust education can wait until children can grasp the painful and complex concept of genocide. They have a lifetime to learn about the world's ills. Waiting a little won't compromise their identity. (...) Let our kids be kids. The Holocaust can wait.

Melanie Takefman, TOI, 04.05.16

4. Medienquerschnitt

Antisemitismus und muslimischer Bürgermeister in Großbritannien

Livingstone, the Labor Party and Holocaust remembrance

(...) Ken Livingstone (...) did us a great service with his ridiculous statement about Hitler supporting the Zionist cause (...). He reminded us that the Holocaust didn't take place in Syria or Iran, but in the country which at the time was considered the most civilized in the Western world (...) Livingstone (...) seems to have forgotten that Israel only came into being almost 15 years after the events he describes in the early days of the Nazi regime. (...) Livingstone, Galloway and their cronies (...) have succeeded in one thing only: ensuring that moderate and liberal members of the Jewish community in the UK (...) who would like to see Israel act differently with respect to the Palestinians have become convinced that any legitimate criticism of Israel by these people can no longer simply be detached from raw anti-Semitism, and that the last people on earth who will ever have any influence on resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict are those who display their blatant anti-Semitic and racist beliefs. (...) Labor Party (...), the once proud bastion of the fight against racism and oppression is becoming synonymous with the concept of "new anti-Semitism," the bottom line being that you can be anti-racist and anti-Semitic at one and the same time. (...) If anyone is the inheritor of Hitler (...), it is not, as Livingstone stated this week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...) but Livingstone himself. (...)

David Newman, JPO, 02.05.16

Like too many Jewish Londoners, I know how discrimination feels

(...) Like too many Jewish Londoners, I know from personal experience how it feels to be discriminated against because of your faith. Shamefully, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are both on the rise in London. Synagogues have to hire private security guards – as do Jewish schools. (...) I will always protect communities whose beliefs and practices attract the inexplicable hostility of others, and I'll get to grips with religious hate crimes. I'll make tackling hate crimes a far higher priority for the Metropolitan police, and I'll work with London universities to ensure that anti-Semitic or Islamophobic preachers of hate are not welcome and are not given a platform for their poisonous views. As mayor, I will be the

British Muslim who finally roots out extremism and radicalisation from British society. I will support mainstream Muslims to challenge extremists and work with the internet providers to ban extremist websites. (...) I relish the chance to face those challenges in City Hall, and to stand up for all Londoners – no matter who they are, where they're from or what they believe.

Sadiq Khan, TOI, 07.05.16

Eskalation in Gaza

Forecast: A very hot summer in Gaza

(...) Fewer than 40 rockets have been fired at Israel since Protective Edge, and the number of Israeli casualties has been the lowest it has ever been. (...) Below the surface of this idyllic situation, however, Hamas was busy digging its tunnels. (...) The tunnel project was given ultimate priority; the number of diggers was significantly increased, along with the budget. (...) The intelligence gathering campaign (...) was put into high gear, as was the push to develop the proper technology. This was clearly a race against time: Detect the tunnels before Hamas put them to use. (...) The IDF is digging to locate more tunnels, Hamas is shooting to disrupt these efforts and to warn Israel. (...) The situation in Gaza now is worse than it was before Hamas decided to go to war two years ago (...). All these factors, together with the threat to its tunnel project now posed by Israel, could lead Hamas to conclude that it has nothing to lose. (...) Suspicions are rising and with them the potential for a harsh escalation. Considering these conditions, you don't need to be a weatherman to forecast a very hot summer in the south this year.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 05.05.16

Französische Initiative

Netanyahu, accept the French peace initiative

(...) In light of the continued and dangerous stalemate in the diplomatic process, there is no reason to reject the French initiative, which, even if it doesn't resolve the fundamentals of the conflict, will at least put it back on the global agenda. (...) Acceptance of the initiative could have also extracted Israel from the regular rejectionist hole in which it has placed itself for years, and encouraged the Palestinians to believe they have a partner on the Israeli side. (...) As the Netanyahu government sees it, any mention of the term "process" means the obliteration of Greater Israel, an idea that has grown deep roots

during Netanyahu's long term in office. Secure borders, peaceful neighborly relations and resilient international standing are all trivialities in the premier's eyes. (...) Netanyahu (...) should stop hiding behind the "Without precondition" cover (...). He should simply initiate direct talks with the Palestinians. (...) It is not only the United States, Britain and France that are running out of patience with the state. Germany, too, with its "historic debt," has recently been demonstrating its displeasure. (...) Netanyahu needs to accept the French initiative – and not only as a goodwill gesture. He should give it substance that will ensure the security and well-being of Israel's citizens.

Editorial, HAA, 01.05.16

US-Militärhilfe für Israel

Military aid, but at what price?

(...) According to Israel, the agreement with Iran endangers its security, and therefore the US, which had been the driving force behind the agreement, should help Israel with the resulting threats. The Obama administration, on the other hand, sees the agreement with Iran as a strategic accomplishment that will decrease the nuclear threat to Israel. (...) The current US administration sees the peace process as the best support it could give to Israel's security, while Israel foresees considerable security risks that will arise as a direct result of a future peace agreement (...). Israel has been allowed to convert a quarter of the dollar amount into shekels for purchases for the affected Israeli security industries. The administration supports cancelling this arrangement in the aid package, even if only gradually. This is a serious blow to local defense industries and a burden of three billion shekels on the defense budget. (...) Netanyahu is worried that, if Obama has the chance to prove yet again his unwavering support of Israel's security via the agreement, it will make it easier for the administration to act in the Palestinian arena, even on issues that have not been agreed on with Israel. (...) I would recommend renewing the negotiations with the Americans on comprehensive agreements on security issues, starting with a long-term response to the Iranian threat, maintaining Israel's qualitative edge, and upgrading Israel's technological and intelligence permissions level. In addition, a security agreement is required that will increase the aid to Israel in a real and not symbolic way, not harm the defense industries and maintain Israel's right to request additional aid from the next administration and from Congress

if the pessimist predictions come true about the strengthening of Iran, ISIS or another negative development in the area.

Amos Yadlin, JED, 02.05.15

Kein Pardon für Ex-Präsidenten

Katsav's pardon

(...) Moshe Katsav (...) seems to be not at all cognizant of the damage he caused to his victims. Indeed, he sees himself as the victim. This increases the chances that he will repeat his actions. It also increases the chances that Katsav will continue to harass his victims (...). One of the functions of incarceration – besides implementing retributive justice – is to remove from society individuals deemed to be dangerous. It is a preventive use of force that aims to protect potential victims from future violence. It is not about the imprisoned person's blameworthiness. As long as Katsav continues to view himself as the victim and denies the pain he caused to others, he remains a danger and should remain in prison for the duration of his sentence – not as a punishment but as a preventive measure. (...) Though the institution of pardon incorporates humanness and kindness, it must consider not only the feelings of the person sitting in prison but also the feelings of that person's victims. It is not too late for Katsav to embark on a process of healing and reconciliation with his victims. (...)

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HAA = Haaretz

JED = JediothAhronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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