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1. Netanyahu weiter unter Korruptionsverdacht

Die Korruptionsvorwürfe gegen Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu verdichten sich. Eine Anklage zeichnet sich ab. Die Akte 2000, bei der es um einen unsauberen Handel mit Arnon Mozes, dem Herausgeber der Tageszeitung Yedioth Ahronoth geht, rückt ins Zentrum der drei Affären, nachdem die Polizei Ari Harow, ehemals Stabschef im Büro des Ministerpräsidenten, als Kronzeuge gewinnen konnte. Kernstück der Beweisaufnahme in der Affäre, die die Polizei unter Ausschluss der Öffentlichkeit untersucht, ist der Mitschnitt eines Telefonats zwischen Netanyahu und Mozes, das mit Harows Mobiltelefon gemacht wurde. Im Gegenzug für eine wohlwollendere Berichterstattung des sonst regierungskritischen Blattes wollte Netanyahu offenbar dafür sorgen, dass die Konkurrenzzeitung Israel HaYom ihre Auflage reduziert und die Wochenendausgabe einstellt. Netanyahu beteuerte wiederholt seine Unschuld. Stattdessen hält der Regierungschef die Medien, politische Widersacher und namentlich Meni Naftali, ehemals Haushälter der Familie Netanyahu, für eine Schmutzkampagne und die laufenden Untersuchungen gegen ihn verantwortlich. Naftali wurde kurzfristig festgenommen, weil er über Facebook zu einer von der Polizei nicht genehmigten Demonstration vor dem Haus von Oberstaatsanwalt Avichai Mandelblit aufgerufen hatte.

Caution advised

The forthcoming testimony of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's former Chief of Staff Ari Harow will bring Case 2,000 back to center stage. (...) Until now, this case was considered the weakest of the corruption affairs in which the prime minister has been implicated. (...) the way things look at the moment (...), Netanyahu is likely to be indicted. But still, the media must exercise caution -- something that appears to be completely absent when it comes to Netanyahu. Just like on the eve of the last election, the media and the opposition are reading the map all wrong. Their inability to exercise patience when they see Netanyahu bleeding plays directly into his hands time and time again. Netanyahu's approval rating is currently rising in polls, and not by chance. (...) The only bug in the developing political drama is Case 2,000. As opposed to the allegations surrounding gifts or submarines, in this case Netanyahu, in the eyes of his right-wing voters, went to bed with the enemy. (...) The political system and media are interlocked in a never-ending give-and-take relationship. To focus on only one such incident will turn out to be problematic, with all due respect to the state's witness.
Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 06.08.17

Netanyahu's corruption isn't the problem, it's his ideology

(...) instead of arguing with him about his economic doctrine that killed off what remained of the welfare state, that privatized everything that moved and created levels of poverty and social gaps unlike what Israel has ever known, we are focusing on the pistachio ice cream scandal or the fact that his wife (...) threw shoes at one of her employees. Instead of confronting his diplomatic doctrine, which hollowly declares the acceptance of the two-state solution but at the same time expands settlements to monstrous proportions, we are once again talking about the expensive cigars his friend gave him. (...) The fact that replacing Netanyahu is dependent solely on his behavior or on his personal integrity, on the question of whether or not his son has to collect his dog's poop, or even on how many and what kind of submarines must be purchased for the navy, whose role in the next war isn't really clear, and who will benefit from that dubious deal – is making the political and ideological issues superfluous. It also turns the political alternatives to Netanyahu (...) into Netanyahu's political twins. (...) There's something trivial and defeatist in this obsessive inquisition into his lifestyle, repulsive and ostentatious as it may be; it proves, yet again, that the Israeli left doesn't really have anything to offer its voters in the economic, social or diplomatic realms. If the left wants to reap any benefit from this storm and regain power, it must sit down and formulate a new, curative vision for Israeli society and open its heart to those segments that will now be trying to flee the sinking ship. (...)

Ron Cahlili, HAA, 07.08.17

Of Telephones, Submarines and Knowing When to Leave

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is an honest man who has nothing to fear from prosecutorial investigations (...) the democratically elected government of the State of Israel will not be toppled by the unsavory stench of smoked cigars or the sweet taste of pink champagne mixed with pistachio ice cream. (...) But Netanyahu needs to understand that he has been in office for too long. (...) a vibrant democracy cannot tolerate the same leader for more than eight years, no matter how competent and creative she may be. (...) Eight years of Netanyahu was enough. (...) he stretched his watch beyond the reasonable limits of any democracy. As such, Netanyahu needs to decide if it is time for him to gracefully resign or if the order of the day commands him to hold on to

power with an iron grip. (...) Sooner or later Netanyahu will resign, if only because Israel is a democracy. (...) Mr. Netanyahu, for the sake of the nation do it sooner rather than later.

Avi Berkowitz, JPO, 08.08.17

The return to the Zion Square balcony

The truth must be told, although many will read this and rage: Bibi is back on the balcony. As he was then, in October 1995, at Jerusalem's Zion Square. The same hand-waving; the same false comprehensive accusations against imaginary, demonic enemies; the same demagoguery, the same incitement; the same body language and forced smiles; the same sarcasm; the same manipulations. The crowd in Jerusalem was frantic. (...) Netanyahu isn't telling them the truth when he describes the investigations against him as a plot devised by a hidden enemy (...) to replace the government. The Netanyahu cases are being investigated by a police commissioner who he appointed. Only a person who has lost his mind can attribute left-wing views to Roni Alsheikh. The decisions on the cases are being made by an attorney general who he appointed, a man who served under him as cabinet secretary. Whoever ascribes left-wing views to Avichai Mandelblit is living in a fantasy world. The media's influence on their decisions is smaller than the media's influence on Netanyahu's decisions. Neither the Left, which is quietly dying, nor the media concern him. Mandelblit, Alsheikh and the investigators concern him. They are the ones he is directing his arrows at. You won't dare touch me, he's telling them, because the people support me.

Nahum Barnea, YED, 10.08.17

Media Comment: Netanyahu, First Blame Yourself

(...) Netanyahu came out swinging in response to the role of the media in pushing, framing and highlighting the allegations that he has acted criminally in various cases now under police and state prosecutor investigation. (...) Netanyahu should know better. (...) there is a fine line that divides between criticism and sensationalism, and Netanyahu crossed it. (...) Just as Netanyahu should stay calm in his criticism of his detractors, so too the media should not paint the prime minister in unacceptable colors. (...) the real question is not how bad our media is, but rather whether it isn't the prime minister himself who is responsible for failing to protect Israel's citizens from the media's bias? (...) Netanyahu has had ample time to fundamentally change Israel's media market yet has not. (...) Had Netanyahu done his job and eliminated Army Radio and limited Israel Radio, the media scene would have

been much improved. (...) One can only wonder why to this very day Israel's electronic media is controlled by regulatory boards who prefer their own self-serving interests. (...) For the past 10 years, the only real action by our prime minister to uphold media pluralism was his defense of the Israel Hayom newspaper. (...) He defended it only because it supported him. Prime Minister Netanyahu had 10 years to provide the electorate with a free media market. (...) He is eating today the cake that he baked for so long. Prime Minister Netanyahu, stop crying – do something! If you only wanted to, you could.

Yisral Medad, Eli Pollak, JPO, 16.08.17

The Fine Line Between Freedom and Protection

(...) it appears that the police went too (...) when they arrested two activists for posting on Facebook a call to attend a weekly demonstration outside the home of Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit. Arresting a person for a Facebook post is normally reserved for Islamists, white supremacists or other loose cannons who declare their readiness to carry out a murderous attack against innocent civilians. In this case, arrest comes across as a heavy-handed attempt to shut down legitimate protest when used against two political activists whose only crime is a call to demonstrate in a place where permission for public assembly has been rescinded. (...) Protesting next to the private residence of a public servant (...) raises suspicion that the motivation is not freedom of expression and assembly, but harassment and intimidation. (...) Demonstrating outside the homes of public officials and politicians is not a natural extension of freedom of expression and assembly. But the answer is not extreme police behavior. Instead of infringing on the rights of Israeli citizens, police should facilitate political expression by providing alternative venues for demonstrators. The privacy and quiet of residential neighborhoods should be maintained while at the same time upholding basic freedoms that are the foundation of every healthy democracy.

Editorial, JPO, 20.08.17

Stay strong and consistent

(...) Unless he is indicted over corruption charges, Netanyahu (...) remains the only credible leader with the ability to make progress on the international level. Hopefully, he has overcome what were temporary lapses of self-control. The government must close ranks and display a united front, and when a policy has been formulated, all ministers should be bound by cabinet responsibility. Resignation should be mandatory for any minister publicly castigating their own

government. As we have learned from history, we can only rely on ourselves and thus must make every effort to strengthen the IDF and continue building our alliance with the U.S. and other nations that have common interests with us. Above all, we should remind ourselves that today Israel is a superpower -- militarily, economically, and technologically.

Isi Leibler, IHY, 11.08.17

The innocent don't need deals

(...) A state's witness is essentially bribed to testify. They could be offered money, a reduced sentence, or even immunity from prosecution. (...) It now turns out (...) that the warrior for justice and integrity, the white knight of quality of government and the battle against corruption and the man who organized demonstrations outside the home of Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit, is an alleged criminal who signed on as a state's witness. In light of this revelation, his calls on protesters to violate police restrictions, leading to his and his co-organizer's arrest, are understandable. (...) It is peculiar that the prosecution hid the fact that Naftali was a state's witness while making very public the state's witness agreements with businessman Miki Ganor and the prime minister's former chief of staff, Ari Harow, who will be testifying against the prime minister. Likewise, it is unclear how protecting Naftali from prosecution while putting Sara Netanyahu on trial benefits the public. (...)

Dr. Haim Shine, IHY, 24.08.17

2. Kaum Hoffnung für US-Friedensmission

Kein herzlicher Empfang wartete in Ramallah auf den Schwiegersohn von US-Präsident Donald Trump, Jared Kushner, und seinen Partner bei dem Auftrag, den Frieden im Nahen Osten voranzutreiben, Jason Greenblatt. Noch kurz vor Eintreffen der US-Delegation brachte Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas seinen Unmut über die Amerikaner zum Ausdruck, deren Friedensplan ihm nach „über 20 Treffen“ noch immer unklar sei. Trumps Amtsführung sei „das reine Chaos“, so Abbas. Die palästinensische Führung ist enttäuscht, dass sich das Weiße Haus nicht deutlicher gegen die israelische Siedlungspolitik positioniert. Stattdessen forderten die US-Delegierten von den Palästinensern, die monatlichen Zahlungen an die Familien der Sicherheitshäftlinge einzustellen, was die Führung in Ramallah ablehnt. Offenbar knüpft auch Kushner, wie an Journalisten durchsickerte, selbst keine großen Hoffnungen mehr an seine Mission.

What are Trump's Next Steps to Help Forge Peace?

(...) seven months after taking office, the Trump administration does not yet have any new ideas for how to advance the peace process. Its thinking seems to be no different than that of previous administrations: Push for negotiations between the parties, mediate between them and try to hammer out an agreement. (...) there seems to be a growing assessment within the White House that a deal might not even be possible. (...) any step Netanyahu takes will need to be looked at through the prism of the investigations of his conduct. If he breaks Left – like Ehud Olmert and Ariel Sharon respectively did as prime ministers under investigation – he will be perceived as doing so to save himself from indictment. If he turns further Right – as it seems he will – it will be seen as an attempt to shore up his support among right-wing voters ahead of elections. What this means is that real progress will likely not be made in the near future. The criminal cloud over Netanyahu's head will prevent him from taking any real steps toward peace, which Kushner anyhow doesn't appear to have much faith in the chances of achieving. (...) Now would be a good time to invest in grassroot initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for all residents of the West Bank, Israeli and Palestinian (...) measures that will create a better atmosphere for peace and will be conducive to later attempts at reaching a long-term, final-status agreement when and if the political conditions make that possible. (...) A lot can still be achieved. Editorial, JPO, 07.08.17

Jason Greenblatt's Challenge

American envoy Jason Greenblatt has stepped into the shoes of all those who tried to find a solution to the conflicting national aspirations of the Jews and Arabs in the land of Israel. (...) one can hope that Greenblatt will learn the historical lessons of international involvement in the conflict. (...) On the Palestinian side there is the threat of Hamas, which sees all of Palestine as one and the return of all the Palestinian refugees as the only solution to the conflict. Palestinian organizations are also restricted in their ability to forge ties with their Israeli counterparts. The international community can strengthen the capacity of these organizations to influence public discourse. To succeed where others have failed, it would behoove Greenblatt to establish a clear framework and parameters for a final-status agreement and to work out a package deal that will include deterring "sticks" and encouraging "carrots," and to create an international atmosphere that will allow the civil society on both

sides to influence the definition of their respective interests and national positions.

Shaul Arieli, HAA, 15.08.17

A test of will

(...) There is no reason to doubt the integrity of Trump's intentions, although he is clearly also motivated by a desire to present an achievement in the international arena. It would be hard to point to any such achievement in the past six months since Trump took office. (...) This current "peace team" will find it hard to make progress for a number of reasons. The Arab world is preoccupied with Iran and terrorism, and they are less concerned with the Palestinian issue. Syria continues to bleed, the Palestinians themselves are divided between Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and the tensions between the two are on the rise. Moreover, even if Israel was to offer the most generous settlement possible, there is no chance the 82-year old Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas would sign such an agreement. (...) It should be noted that the Palestinians are also skeptical of Kushner and Greenblatt as a result of their Jewishness. (...)

Arye Mekel, IHY, 15.08.17

The pressure is off

Quietly, without anyone really noticing, the international diplomatic pressure on Israel has all but disappeared. (...) No one is pushing Israel anymore. Not to impose a moratorium on settlement construction, not to make any concessions, not even to reignite the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. (...) True, officially Greenblatt and Kushner focus on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, but the reality is that they have far more urgent issues on their plates, such as Iran and North Korea's nuclear ambitions and the war on Islamic State, and these issues take precedence over construction in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood or the whims of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. This is a healthier, more proportionate and even obvious approach, and is certainly better than the obsessive preoccupation of the previous U.S. administration with all things settlement enterprise. (...)

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 27.08.17

Crossing the Rubicon

(...) If anyone ever took the time to listen to the parties themselves, and examine the cultural context in which these words are spoken, they would immediately understand that the single most critical litmus

test for determining a negotiating partner's real intentions is not what they say to visiting diplomats and journalists in English, but what they say among themselves in their own language, and in particular, what they teach their children. (...) Most Americans, including many so-called "experts" in the field, have no idea of the cultural context with which they are dealing when they set out to solve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. (...) For decades, too many Western leaders and diplomats have tried to impose a solution that looks ideal when viewed through Western lenses. These statesmen, however, do not have to be there on the ground when the maximalist offers are walked away from, and the inevitable violence ensues. (...) Sarah N. Stern, IHY, 27.08.17

3. Israel gegen Al Jazeera

Mit einem Fünf-Punkte-Plan will Israels Kommunikationsminister Ayoob Kara den katarischen TV-Sender Al Jazeera vertreiben. Als erstes soll der Sender in Israel nicht mehr über Kabel und Satellit empfangen werden können. Außerdem droht den rund 30 Mitarbeitern der Entzug ihrer israelischen Presseausweise. Sicherheit ginge vor Meinungs- und Informationsfreiheit, begründete der Minister. Demokratie habe Grenzen. Hinter Karas Initiative steckt Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu, der dem Sender eine einseitige Berichterstattung, vor allem über die jüngste Krise am Tempelberg sowie antiisraelische Hetze zum Vorwurf machte. Rückendeckung für Al Jazeera kam hingegen vom Korrespondentenverband „Foreign Press Association“ (fpa), in dem fast 30 Mitarbeiter des Senders organisiert sind. Die geplanten Maßnahmen der israelischen Regierung „sind sicher ein Anlass zur Sorge“, hieß es in einer Mitteilung des Journalistenverbands, der ankündigte, die „Entscheidung der Regierung zu prüfen und dann das weitere Vorgehen zu überdenken“. Die Entscheidung des Kommunikationsministers, der sogar eine Gesetzesreform in Aussicht stellte, um den Sender zu verbieten, bezeichnete der Verband als „rutschigen Abhang“.

Between blood and democracy

Al Jazeera's coverage of the murdered Israeli police officers on the Temple Mount, the ensuing metal detector controversy and the consequent Arab riots was another chapter in the ongoing, lethal war against Israel waged by the network as a Qatari propaganda machine on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. Al Jazeera's activity in recent weeks has again raised

the need to shut down its Israel office and expel its representatives. The network played a central role, first in sparking the events and later in exacerbating them. It propagated political and religious incitement, idealized shahids (martyrs) and terrorism. (...) In Arabic, the network's inflammatory messages are intended to escalate violence against neighboring regimes, on behalf of Islamic terror in all its forms while offering a wink and a nod toward Iran. (...) The need to (...) close the network raises ethical questions about democracy and freedom of the press, freedom of expression, the public's right to know, pluralism and more. (...) in a world of cellular phones, how will shutting the network down help? Banishing Al Jazeera, its reporters, high-budget offices, and the equipment it uses to impact morale and mobilize violence in service of the enemy will hamper the destructive efforts of the Islamists and Palestinian terrorists. The damage in allowing Al Jazeera to continue its hostile broadcasts outweighs the potential damage to Israel's image by shutting it down. Because this issue pits blood against democracy, the latter must be allowed to defend itself.

Dr. Reuven Berko, IHY, 02.08.17

Al Jazeera is a weapon

The plan to close Al Jazeera's offices in Israel (...) is a welcome step. (...) Al Jazeera is not a media outlet, it is a weapon wielded by the emir of Qatar. (...) Israel, a democratic society, is already on an uneven playing field in the face of the most repugnant tyrants and human rights violators. While we hold our liberties dear and work to uphold them even when our existence is threatened, the Islamist extremists do not recognize any right other than their "right" to spread destruction and murder. (...) But Israeli leniency and generosity toward those who wish us harm must also have their limits. It is unfathomable to allow television networks that serve countries and bodies trying to eradicate or harm the Jewish state to continue working in Israel. (...) An increasing number of democracies will find themselves under attack by television stations and will need to think of ways to cope. Currently, the free world is ill-equipped to defend itself from this phenomenon. Moreover, much of the free world does not even recognize the threat. (...) The majority of Arab countries also understand that Israel's actions against Al Jazeera are justified and appropriate. (...) Now is a propitious time to set new rules and put an end to our enemies' freedom of propaganda and incitement. (...) If the law needs to be changed, then lawmakers need to get to work so that

these vile broadcasts can be taken off the air and Israeli citizens can be protected.

Ariel Bolstein, IHY, 08.08.17

Qatar's Al Jazeera echoes terrorism

When I accepted a job as Cairo bureau chief for the Qatari-owned Al Jazeera English television news channel in September 2013 I demanded and was assured that my team would remain independent from the network's Arabic channels. Those assurances went out the window as management breached its contract, dubbing our English material into Arabic reports behind our backs and rebroadcasting them on the network's Arabic Mubasher – a channel that an Egyptian court had shut for its “national security threat and bias to the Muslim Brotherhood,” a group once banned as a terrorist organization. (...) I believe Al Jazeera's irresponsible approach to newsgathering contributed to the killing and jailing of the network's journalists by repressive governments and extremist groups. Farag Fathi, the Al Jazeera lawyer defending my two colleagues, quit in court a month before the verdict in 2014 and objected to what he called the network's treachery. (...). Egypt should free journalists like Ismael Iskandarani, photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, known as Shawkan, among others unjustly jailed. Qatar's Al Jazeera, now banned in numerous nations, can survive calls for its closure only by giving a voice to voiceless Qataris yearning for democracy and refraining from conspiring with groups designated as terrorists such as Hamas, the Brotherhood and Al Nusra Front, the former al-Qaida affiliate in Syria.

Mohamed Fahmy, JPO, 19.08.17

It's Fun to Hate Al Jazeera

(...) Al Jazeera's real effectiveness isn't measured by its ratings (...), but by the extent that most Arab leaders, and now Israel too, detest and fear it. (...) Al Jazeera exposed details of the war in Afghanistan when the Western media wasn't allowed in, and it showed the rampaging of the coalition forces in Iraq when Western journalists were forced to stay close to American troops. (...) it reported on the suicide of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia at the end of 2010. While the West was still treating the incident as a local criminal matter, Al Jazeera framed it as a pan-Arab issue. The network created a new Arab dialogue that also produced the ideas of the Arab Spring. Yes, Al Jazeera generated a revolution in the media after generations in which Arab media outlets accompanied Arab leaders at ribbon-cuttings and heartrending

speeches, sometimes without sound, for fear something improper might slip out of the leader's mouth. That's apparently what the Arab liberal longs for. Al Jazeera uncovered corruption in Saudi Arabia (...) Al Jazeera is almost the only network that still reports on what's happening in Gaza. True, Al Jazeera isn't objective, it's funded by the family of the emir of Qatar, and it doesn't criticize the corruption and evils of the emirate. Until recently, something similar could be said about the right-wing daily Israel Hayom, and Fox News doesn't criticize its lords and masters. (...) It's too easy, very cowardly and as mendacious as it gets to join the Arab and Israeli tradition of tarring and feathering Al Jazeera as the enemy of the world. (...) Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 22.08.17

4. Iran in Syrien

Mit dem näher rückenden Ende des Bürgerkriegs in Syrien stellt sich verstärkt die Frage nach der künftigen Machtverteilung bei Israels Nachbarn im Norden. Seite an Seite mit Präsident Bashar Assad kämpften zigtausende iranische Soldaten. Teherans offenkundiges Interesse ist es nun, Syrien als potentielle Angriffsbasis gegen Israel zu bewahren. Für Israel ist schon der lange Arm des Iran, der in Form der schiitischen Terrororganisation Hisbollah bis in den Libanon reicht, ein Sicherheitsproblem. Die jüngste Reise von Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu nach Russland hatte das zentrale Ziel, eine zusätzliche Front mit dem iranischen Staat, der als gefährlichster Feind Israels gilt, zu verhindern. Erschwerend für Netanyahus Mission ist die Tatsache, dass Russland und Iran in Syrien Verbündete waren. Nicht nur Teheran sondern auch Moskau schickte Truppen, um Assad im Kampf gegen die islamistischen Rebellen den Rücken zu stärken.

Objective: Make Putin stop Iran

(...) the Russians did as they pleased in Syria and managed to quell the rebellion against the regime in Damascus, while Israel maintained full operational freedom (...) to strike Iranian weapons convoys bound for Hezbollah. Israel's problem (...) has never been with Russia's presence in Syria, but rather with the presence of Iran and Hezbollah, Moscow's partners in the campaign to salvage the Assad regime. (...) The Russians don't seem to understand this position. They are willing to push the Iranians further from the Israeli border but they need the Iranians there to ensure continued stability in Syria. Therefore, the task awaiting Netanyahu in his upcoming meeting with Putin is to make him understand Israel's position.

This task is especially important in light of Washington's unwillingness to play any kind of role in shaping Syria's future.

Prof. Eyal Zisser, IHY, 23.08.17

Iran, not so far away

(...) it appears that the coalition of President Bashar al-Assad, Hezbollah, Iran and Russia has won. If this victory would lead solely to the stability of Assad's regime, Israel should have been able to accept this. The problem is that Iran demands compensation for the many resources it invested in the war. (...) In concrete terms, the Iranians want to establish a second Hezbollah, a force of Shiite militias that will be deployed on the Golan Heights along the border with Israel, and which will get its instructions from Tehran. When such a situation occurs, any confrontation with Hezbollah will lead to a wider confrontation that will include the Syrian arena. Moreover, Assad, who, weakened, finds himself grateful to Iran, will be committed to helping in this endeavor. As such, a confrontation with Hezbollah could quickly lead to a full-scale war between Israel and Syria. Israel's response to this dangerous possibility is limited. (...) Israel must make it clear to Russia that the IDF will take action to prevent Iran from building any kind of military force of its own near the Golan Heights border. (...) Israel will have to explain to both its allies and its enemies that if Hezbollah starts a military campaign against us, it will not be fought only against Hezbollah alone, but as an all-out war between the countries of Israel and Lebanon. This approach is both just and wise: it is just because the Lebanese president has openly claimed that Hezbollah is part of Lebanon's defensive force. And it is wise because no one, certainly not Saudi Arabia, Europe and the US, but even Syria or Iran, would want Lebanon to be destroyed. (...) it would benefit Israel to exploit the hatred of those living in the Syrian Golan against Iran and Hezbollah. Israel can and should discreetly strengthen its ties with these people far beyond the aid it gives to Syrians wounded in the country's civil war. (...) in light of the changing reality, the need to cultivate true allies who are close to the Golan Heights border is growing fast. For the first time in many years, Israel is in danger of facing a detrimental regional development, and it is therefore warranted to dedicate all the attention and efforts required to properly address this situation.

Giora Eiland, YED, 24.08.17

Netanyahu's dangerous failure

Ever since the civil war erupted in Syria, Israel has treated the domestic situation there cautiously and wisely. (...) Recently, things have taken a significant turn for the worse. (...) The Russian-American accord leaves an impressive Iranian military presence in Syria. Not only does Hezbollah remain there as an experienced fighting force. So do two other Shi'ite militias, trained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Those are the ones recently referred to by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, when he mentioned that in the next confrontation with Israel his organization would not stand alone. (...) The Russian-American accord on Syria is a strategic blow for Israel, one with a high price tag. (...) The administration in Washington (...) has turned its back on Israel and sacrificed its vital interests on the altar of rapprochement with Russia. (...) Russia has taken an unequivocal strategic decision to prefer Iranian interests in Syria over Israeli ones. This is a diplomatic rout for Netanyahu, which could have grave implications. (...) Israel may have to embark on a military operation in Syria. (...) Ephraim Sneh, HAA, 29.08.17

5. Medienquerschnitt

Todesstrafe für Terroristen

Death penalty in Israel will bring occupation to the center of world attention

(...) capital punishment in Israel (...) was abolished in the first years of the state, with the memory of the execution of the underground (...) still fresh. That was a moment of celebration (...). On that day I was proud of my country, the country for which I had shed my blood. (...) Rational analysis shows that imposing the death penalty is a huge mistake. Executing a person whose people see him as a patriot causes anger and hunger for revenge. For every person who is executed, 10 others come to take his place. (...) From the moment the verdict is delivered, the entire world (...) becomes part of the event. (...) The closer the execution date comes, the greater the pressure will be. Calls will increase worldwide to boycott Israel. (...) How will the condemned man be executed? Hanging? Decapitation? And if decapitation, by hand or guillotine? Shooting? Lethal injection? Electrocution? And who will carry out the execution? Will someone be hired? A volunteer? A firing squad? (...) No matter how you look at it, the death penalty is barbaric and stupid (...)

Uri Avnery, HAA, 07.08.17

How Israel Tolerates the Intolerable by Allowing Terrorists to Live

(...) On a warm Friday night (...), 19-year-old Omar Abed walked three kilometers from his home with a Koran, a water-bottle and a knife. After jumping a protective fence, the young man entered at random the home of the Saloman family, stabbing to death a father and his two children as they sat around their Shabbat table celebrating the birth of a grandchild. (...) the butcher of Halamish will (...) have within his heart the lingering hope that he will be released once Hamas kidnaps the next Israeli soldier and negotiates another lopsided prisoner exchange. (...) Israel should have a death penalty for terrorists.

Terrorists must know – without a shadow of a doubt – that when they stab, ax and pummel innocent men, women and children to death they will never survive to celebrate their gruesome records in the streets of Gaza City. (...) Israel ought to finally make the critical point, as summed up by the prime minister: those who bring endless grief to innocent families should smile no more.

Shmuley Boteach, JPO, 08.08.17

Zeitbombe Gaza

We need to talk about the Gaza Strip

(...) It is hard to imagine what it must be like for a parent in Gaza trying to raise children with four hours of electricity a day: without a working fridge, oven, or air conditioning; or for that matter in a place where 96% of water is polluted. (...) Gaza's infrastructure is deteriorating whilst its population reached two million this year and is set to reach 3.2 million by 2030. A baby is born in the Gaza Strip every nine minutes. That's 60,000 births each year. Not for nothing is Gaza described as a pressure cooker. Yet there is very little discussion about Gaza in Israel. The only time we seem to pay attention, is when they fire rockets at us. (...) the suffering in Gaza is our problem. First, Gaza is overwhelmingly dependent on Israel for water, electricity and access. This is a consequence of occupying the Gaza Strip for 40 years. Even in situations of armed conflict Israel has a responsibility to prevent harm to civilians. (...) there is no barrier to nature. (...) when Gazans suffer, we end up with shit on our plate, whether we like it or not. (...) Gaza presents a sharp policy dilemma. The humanitarian logic is to supply Gaza's civilians with whatever they need. The political logic is to make life as hard as possible for Hamas. (...) now, during a period of quiet, is the time to act to improve the situation. Otherwise we send the message that we only understand force. (...)

If we don't want to find ourselves back in the bomb shelters, we need to demand our leaders take action to prevent another Gaza War. In short, we need to talk about the Gaza Strip, and not just when they are firing rockets at us.

Toby Green, TOI, 06.08.17

Terror in Charlottesville

Condemning Charlottesville

There is no denying that near the top of the list of those people the racists hate are Jews. (...) A terrorist driving a car into a crowd is a headline one would expect to see emanating from our region, but when it happens in the US, it's time to sit up and take notice. And when the driver allegedly subscribes to the hateful beliefs of white supremacists, the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi elements that present a threat to Jews, Muslims, blacks and every minority that calls the US their home, it starts to become personal. (...) The sight of racist goons wielding their hate-filled agenda conjures up images of an America many hoped was in the past, where minorities lived in fear and faced discrimination at all turns. It demands unequivocal condemnation – from the top. (...) President Donald Trump failed miserably. (...) Trump's mealy-mouthed remarks failed to identify the root cause of the violence or to express the moral outrage over the warped ideology of the white nationalists. (...) Trump's Achilles heel seems to be the inability to acknowledge the monster of white supremacy. Until he does, America will be paralyzed in a morally ambiguous muck that threatens to rip apart the fibers upon which the country was established. As Jews, and as human beings, it's a cause for dire concern. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 13.08.17

Netanyahu's Charlottesville response proves he's lost any semblance of a moral compass

(...) The neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville was a murderous demonstration of hatred against Jews and African-Americans more extreme than we have seen in many years. (...) The first person in the world, outside of the United States, who is expected to react to such an event is the prime minister of Israel – the state of the Jewish people. But Benjamin Netanyahu was silent. (...) No, this is not "diplomatic caution" – it's simple carelessness. (...) The man has lost any semblance of a moral compass. He uses the remembrance of the Holocaust only when he can reap political benefit from it. Netanyahu may have jumped ship, but Israel must never lose its compass. We must set

a clear boundary against anti-Semitism and protect the Jewish people wherever they may be. (...) anti-Semitic marches that proceed unimpeded, with no condemnation from Israel, jeopardize us. Our silence enables the situation to worsen. It is our historic duty to react to this, and our duty for the future. (...)
Stav Shaffir, HAA, 18.08.17

Feldzug gegen die Prostitution

Moving Israel to the forefront of women's rights

(...) the sale of women's bodies as sexual merchandise is unacceptable and carries devastating consequences for women, men, children, and society as a whole. (...) women in prostitution (...) are victims of terrible circumstances, and it is, therefore, our moral duty as a society to offer assistance and rehabilitation. (...) prostitution truly is (...) an industry that captures minors at a terribly young age, without family ties or a safe haven to turn to. (...) women degenerate into prostitution as a survival option, from backgrounds of domestic violence, rape and childhood sexual abuse. (...) It is an industry sustained through violence and exploitation, and in most cases massive drug and narcotic use to blur the pain and suffering. (...) Those who insist that engaging in prostitution is a women's choice are lying to themselves. (...) a state restricts a person's freedom of choice to harm himself or others in many other areas – hard drug consumption, drunk driving, different types of gambling or polygamous marriage. This is the role of the state, to reject behavior which causes harm. In this case, the well-being of the vast majority outweighs the limitation placed on a small minority. (...) the eradication of prostitution is not attainable in the short term, but what we seek to achieve is a significant decline in demand (...) But more importantly, institutionalization is completely unacceptable, because it poses the sex industry as a legitimate norm. (...) It's time to make clear that in the 21st century there is no place for an industry which sells women's bodies as sexual objects.

Aliza Lavie, TOI, 08.08.17

Trump gegen Nordkorea

Trump and Israel must not conflate North Korea nuclear threat with Iran

(...) conflating Pyongyang and Tehran is troublesome for an obvious reason: (...) North Korea has nuclear retaliatory capabilities when its survival is threatened; Iran does not. (...) Nuclear war is insane, so best to avoid writing checks that you cannot and should not

cash. (...) Iran's skepticism is increasingly shared globally. Europe, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea – essentially every country not named Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE – is watching in horror as America threatens to kill another popular nuclear deal. (...) advocating a military confrontation with North Korea over its bomb as a way of deterring Iran from building one highlights the very reason why nuclear deals with both countries are so important. (...) Deterring the proliferation of nuclear weapons is a noble goal – one that America and Israel ostensibly share. How to go about doing so is another story. Short of being the change it seeks in the world and relinquishing its own nuclear weapons, Tel Aviv can still support Washington's non-proliferation efforts elsewhere. Doing so, however, will require correcting its perceptions and right-sizing its expectations. Most American officials agree that war should be a last resort, if an option at all. Israel can enhance its own security by following America's lead rather than trying to wag the dog.
Reza Marashi, HAA, 17.08.17

Weniger US-Militärhilfe an Kairo

Egypt caught off guard

Egypt was caught off guard by the United States' decision this week to freeze \$300 million in financial and military aid to the country. (...) The regime in Egypt faces a difficult struggle against an array of radical Islamic organizations that threaten that country's security and stability, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic State proxies that operate in the Sinai Peninsula and neighboring Libya as well as smaller Islamic terrorist groups. (...) Since the Arab Spring in 2011, Egypt has been subject to a financial crisis and ongoing terror attacks that make it difficult for that country to rehabilitate its economy. (...) In a chaotic Middle East, Egypt is a vital ally to the U.S. and its moderate Sunni allies. Maintaining the 1979 peace deal with Egypt and the security ties forged with it in recent years are a vital strategic interest for Israel. Israel must therefore work to find a solution to the issues under dispute between the U.S. and Egypt so that they do not harm the stability of the regime in Cairo and ensure Egypt remains a fundamental component in the moderate Sunni coalition in the Middle East in light of all the threats the region faces, which in large part stem from Iran and the Shiite axis following Islamic State's defeat in Iraq and Syria.

Dr. Shaul Shay, IHY, 29.08.17

Leibesvisite an der Klagemauer

Justice in your gates: Time to end intimidation of women at the Western Wall

(...) This is another in a long string of provocations and intimidations sanctioned by the rabbi of the Kotel, intended to keep women and liberal Jews from participating in organized prayer services at the Western Wall. (...) these women are studying to be rabbis. Only a few years from now, they will be the proverbial "judges in the gates" of congregations, Hillels, or Jewish communal organizations. But were they treated as leaders? They weren't even treated as human beings. (...) Justice isn't about what you want or what's convenient. (...) It is about upholding the dignity and the rights of every human being, regardless of who they are and whether we agree with them. Violating women's bodies in order to maintain male hegemony over a holy site (...) is not only a sickening irony, but the absolute antithesis of the Jewish value of justice. Leadership is about the responsible use of power, and using that power to violate or intimidate is the very definition of abuse. Such behavior cannot be tolerated at the gates of the Western Wall plaza, or in the Jewish state, or anywhere in our society. (...)
Micah Streiffer, TOI, 24.08.17

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