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1. Leichen für Leichen

Vertreter von Israels Regierung und Sicherheitsapparat warnten den Islamischen Jihad vor einem Vergeltungsschlag. Die palästinensischen Extremisten hatten zuvor mit Rache für die Zerstörung eines geheimen Grenzunnels gedroht, bei der zwölf ihrer Männer den Tod fanden. Fünf der Toten konnten von Israel geborgen werden. Die Hoffnung ist, die Leichen gegen die toten Körper zweier israelischer Soldaten sowie zwei weitere noch lebende Zivilisten, die im Gazastreifen festgehalten werden, auszutauschen. Sollte es doch zu einem erneuten Krieg kommen, könnte das das Ende des derzeit von der Fatah und der Hamas verfolgten Versöhnungsprozesses bedeuten. Laut bisheriger Vereinbarungen ist geplant, dass die Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde ab 1. Dezember erneut die Kontrolle über den Gazastreifen übernimmt.

Inhuman Trafficking

(...) Hamas believes it holds the bargaining chips in what would be another lopsided, gruesome body exchange. It holds hostage the remains of Lt. Hadar Goldin and St.-Sgt. Oron Shaul, killed during Protective Edge. It also holds three Israeli civilians (...) Despite transparently false declarations that 'Zionists don't negotiate with terrorists,' Israel has carried out numerous lopsided exchanges that have only prolonged the agony faced by the families of Hamas hostages.(...) Perhaps Israel's worst deal was the July 2008 release of Samir Kuntar and four Hezbollah

fighters captured in 2006, plus the bodies of 199 Palestinian, Lebanese or Arab fighters, in exchange for the bodies of IDF reservists Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. Kuntar, who was considered a hero for bludgeoning to death a four-year-old girl in a Nahariya attack, was later killed in an IDF air strike in Syria in 2015. "We intend to return our sons home. There are no free gifts," Netanyahu declared in a brief statement in Migdal Ha'emek last week. Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon lauded Netanyahu's decision, saying "As long as we have soldiers and civilians inside the Gaza Strip, we cannot afford to conduct ourselves as usual." We cannot agree more.
Editorial, JPO, 08.11.17

Don't return bodies for nothing

The Israel Defense Forces has racked up three recent achievements on the southern front: locating an attack tunnel leading into Israel and blowing it up; striking over a dozen terrorists, including senior Islamic Jihad operatives; and (...) holding on to bodies of the terrorists who were in the tunnel at the time of the strike. (...) Israel is shutting down terrorists' operative options in the south, which rested on firing rockets and missiles and on the tunnel threat (...) If in fact the IDF has developed the ability to neutralize the tunnels that lead into Israel. It can cut down on a major part of the threat looming from Gaza, and in conjunction with the Iron Dome missile defense system, which has already proven itself, the capabilities of Hamas and the rest of the terrorist organization in Gaza

to attack Israel is reduced amazingly. This is of the greatest importance, because when Israel increases its abilities to execute precision strikes and destroy terrorist infrastructure while the other side loses its ability to cause harm, the balance between the two sides changes, and those in Gaza will think twice, at least, whether it is worth their while to renew the fighting. Tactically, Israel is holding a trump card for negotiations on returning the bodies of the fallen IDF soldiers killed in Operation Protective Edge that Hamas is still holding. Obviously, it makes no sense to return the bodies of the terrorists killed in the tunnel strike without Hamas giving us something in exchange. (...) The government must take a clear, uncompromising line on this issue (...)

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IHY, 06.11.17

Do not compromise over our sons

(...) For more than three years, we have had to endure shattered hopes and repeated letdowns. (...) Our petition is very simple. (...) Any incident where terrorists manage to breach our borders via an attack tunnel must end in a clear-cut result, especially when there are two Israelis being held in Gaza. (...) Israel is correct in holding on to the bodies of the five terrorists that were found there. These five people spat on international norms, their action was akin launching a war. It could have resulted in a regional conflagration. You cannot accuse Israel of using bodies as pawns because it simply conditioned the handing over of the bodies on having Israel's soldiers returned. (...)

Returning our sons is a national imperative, not just a matter for the families. The government of Israel must clarify to our enemies that our security cannot be undermined right beneath our feet and that our values cannot be altered. (...)

Dr. Leah Goldin, IHY, 07.11.17

Israel's swapping bodies for bodies isn't enough

A great asset fell into Israel's hands in last week's destruction of the tunnel being built from Gaza into Israel. Five bodies of Islamic Jihad members are now being kept on the shelves, preserved in plastic bags. They'll be used as bargaining chips in the negotiations for the return of the bodies of Israeli soldiers. (...) Bodies, as we know, don't have an expiration date. Their value is symbolic, and they're of real importance only to the families who have lost their children. But the fact that they're a bargaining chip turns them into a national asset by which each side's prestige will be measured. This is a macabre contest in which we try to figure out who the bodies are more important to. If Israel wants (...) to "win," it will have

to admit that it's in no hurry and the body exchange will be done only on its conditions, even if it has to wait until the end of time. The truth is, there is no human, moral or ethical basis to this wretched commerce. Both sides must return the bodies rather than use them in a battle for prestige. (...)

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 07.11.17

'Don't you dare'

(...) defense officials believe Palestinian Islamic Jihad is preparing a revenge attack for the demolition of its underground tunnel and deaths of its people. (...) Ever since the tunnel was destroyed, some two weeks ago, Israel has been on high alert (...) Now the message to Gaza is "no more." (...) If Islamic Jihad considered a limited retaliation, one that would not lead to an escalation of hostilities, Israel is saying that its reaction will be severe regardless. It will not only target Islamic Jihad but the ruling faction in Gaza: Hamas. This purpose of this message was to pass the dilemma back to Gaza. It was meant for Hamas, which is taking great pains to restrain Islamic Jihad and has thus far managed to stop it from retaliating; and for Islamic Jihad itself (...) If the prevailing assumption of a revenge attack materializes – which will lead to an assured Israeli response – we could find ourselves in a downward spiral that neither side wants.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 13.11.17

As tensions rise on Israel-Gaza border, a flare-up is only a matter of time

(...) Islamic Jihad realized that four of its men who got trapped in the tunnel had been killed, and its attempts to reach the bodies or retrieve them from Israel would be unsuccessful. As soon as the hope to reach the bodies was removed, so was the barrier for carrying out an act of revenge. The second barrier, the internal Palestinian reconciliation, has entered a slowdown to the point of paralysis. (...) It's quite likely that Israel has some idea about the intentions and preparations on the other side, but there could always be a surprise that would claim a heavy price. Israel is therefore still trying to use deterrence: Issuing public warnings, conveying secret messages and boosting its alertness and visible military presence, including a Southern Command drill in the Gaza Strip. (...) The entire set is ready for a flare-up. Israel has no interest in the Palestinian reconciliation agreement, so its response to any attempted attack on communities or soldiers (...) might be perceived as disproportionate. Islamic Jihad's motivation for revenge is clear. Hamas believes that by starting a limited fire, it will spur

American and Egyptian pressure on Israel to hold its fire—and pressure on the Palestinian Authority to resume the reconciliation talks. And when all interests to start a fire come together, the fire will burn.

Alex Fishman, YED, 13.11.17

2. 22 Jahre nach Mord an Yitzhak Rabin

Unter dem Motto „Erinnert Euch, wir sind ein Volk“ versammelten sich zehntausende Israelis in Tel Aviv im Gedenken an den vor 22 Jahren ermordeten Ministerpräsidenten Yitzhak Rabin. Die Kundgebung fand am Ort des damaligen Mordanschlags statt und sollte eine unparteiische Veranstaltung werden. Eingeladen wurden auch Redner aus dem rechten politischen Spektrum. Der jüdische Fanatiker Yigal Amir hatte Rabin am 4. November 1995 nach einer Friedenskundgebung erschossen, um territoriale Zugeständnisse an die Palästinenser zu verhindern. Dem Mord war rechtsextreme Hetze gegen den Regierungschef vorangegangen. Auch dem heutigen Ministerpräsidenten Benjamin Netanyahu wird vorgeworfen, damals zum politischen Klima für den Mord beigetragen zu haben.

Bring balance to the square

(...) This year's event, like its predecessors, is not an official state ceremony, no matter how important it may be. It is political by its very nature (...) With time, while the national grief is not the sole provenance of the political Center or Left, mourners from the Right are being pushed aside. So in Israel, where personal and national identities are intertwined, the square is unbalanced. There is nothing wrong with this per se, but the lack of balance leads to a lack of purpose and hope. The key message that should be taken away from this is (...) the need to determine norms of appropriate conduct and to generate genuine hope for the future. (...) the Rabin assassination was a political murder that grew out of a political argument and was the result of long-term hatred and societal rifts (...) we are starting to feel that the important things have been forgotten and the debate has once again reverted back to incitement and schisms. (...) We need a political system that has the public's needs in mind and that will honestly work not only for certain political sectors but also to bring the Jewish democratic Zionist vision to fruition. Having this memorial event is a good thing. Its organizers and participants have the right idea. But in my opinion, the event needs to be adapted and turned into an official state ceremony in order to build a foundation for unity and create a base for hope. (...)

Benny Gantz, IHY, 02.11.17

Remembering Rabin

(...) focusing solely on Rabin's politics will prevent the annual memorial from becoming a national event celebrated by all walks of Israeli society. (...) Nor should Rabin's assassination be used as a means of delegitimizing the entire Right or limiting free speech. A clear distinction must be made between violent actions and speech, even of the most despicable kinds. The former must be forbidden while the latter must be protected as essential to the functioning of any democracy. (...) people need to learn from memorials like the one planned for Saturday night that speech can incite violence. Freedom of speech is a right that should be protected but we also need to ensure that it is not abused. That is why the lessons of Rabin's assassination must not be watered down. (...) He was the victim of a political assassination committed by a man who sought to change national policy not at the ballot box, but with shots from a pistol. (...) On a day commemorating Israel's most shocking political assassination, it is not enough to talk about "unity" and "moderation." A clear position needs to be taken that any form of violence used to achieve a political end is illegitimate. Political decisions must be made through consensus not through bullying or intimidation. (...) we must reaffirm our democratic values, which protect even the most abhorrent forms of speech while at the same time condemn any use of violence to further political ends. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 02.11.17

Rabin: Warrior for equality

(...) Rabin, the general who had instructed IDF soldiers to "break their arms and legs" during the first intifada, later recognized the importance of and worked toward a shared life and the creation of greater equality between Israel's Arab and Jewish citizens. (...) let us not forget that Rabin also sent hundreds of millions of shekels to local Arab municipalities to improve the education system in these areas. For the first time in Israel's history, he appointed an Arab to be the chairman of a government-run company, a development that at the time was anything but a foregone conclusion. More generally, Rabin was prepared to rely on an Arab majority without hesitation, in order to pass the Oslo agreement and thus send an important message: the Arab population in Israel is part of the state's decision-making process. (...) He knew how to navigate public opinion, while staying true to the dictates of his conscience and not

only acting according to the whims of public sentiment. In the last years of his life, this character trait facilitated the integration of and ushered in a new sense of hope among the Arab citizens of Israel. Rabin's revolution thus gives us hope that those who today view Arab citizens as enemies can and will change their outlooks tomorrow. After all, our political involvement and partnership with Jewish society are crucially important for the creation of an infrastructure for coexistence. (...)

Nasreen Hadad Haj-Yahya, TOI, 03.11.17

Rabin memorial: A dialogue rather than finger-pointing

(...) Rabin's murder was and still is one of the most significant events (...) in the life of the Hebrew nation. The murder is a bright warning sign, a turning point, which is why it's so important too. The murder isn't proof of any ideological rightness, even if the ones guilty of the murder can be found in the Right. (...) The historical processes should be taught in schools, in youth movements and through the media, but they're not the only thing: It's unthinkable that every curriculum dealing "only" with Judaism's attitude towards murder will be rejected because it fails to mention the religious right and the incitement in a sufficient manner. It's unthinkable that every rally whose participants don't stand and blame the instigators from 20 something years ago and discuss exactly what was written on the coffin (...) is a "sycophantic rally." (...) The main lesson from Rabin's murder is to know how to argue and to remember the damage potential of not knowing how to do that. Those who only want to point fingers aren't dealing with a memorial-day, but with an imaginary righteousness day.

Yoaz Hendel, YED, 03.11.17

Remembering Rabin – A Call for Unity

(...) The ever escalating cycle of hatred and anger between the various factions in Israeli society has become a debilitating disease that goes way beyond political tactics, directly to the heart of our ability to function as a nation. (...) our ability to find common ground is wearing dangerously thin. (...) the battles being waged between secular and religious Israelis on various key issues such as Shabbat, conversion and civil marriage – to name a few – represent opposing core values held by diverse groups within Israeli society. And none of these groups are, or should be, going anywhere. (...) The question still begs an answer as to how such a devastating event could take place. (...) every Israeli – no matter which sector

we belong to – are obligated to address, especially at this time. (...)

Pnina Pfeuffer, HAA, 05.11.17

The boundaries of the dispute

Most of the opposition to the policies of late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was legitimate, but his assassination caused us to forget that. (...) Instead of sanctifying the Oslo approach (...) the Left is also starting to realize that the ongoing attempt to make this day into a kind of cult and a tool in its battle to reshape Israeli society in the image of the Left is causing many people to feel repulsed, both by the anniversary itself and the content of the memorial ceremonies. The day on which we mark Rabin's assassination should be a day on which we reflect on the significance of the murder, talk about the risks of an internecine war and about the meaning of democracy, boundaries to the dispute, methods for decision-making and the advantages in unity. (...) Anyone who keeps commemorating the day Rabin was assassinated as a memorial day for his political legacy and portraying those who oppose that legacy as wanting more political murders (...) in effect keeps half the population from realizing the terrible significance of the murder (...).

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 05.11.17

Setting the record straight on Yitzhak Rabin

One of the foolish remarks Yasser Arafat used to make (...) was that if Yigal Amir hadn't assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, the Oslo process would have continued and reached a good conclusion: a Palestinian state alongside Israel. (...) Israeli policy was not and is not formed based on the decisions of only one person. (...) One person can't be responsible for this convenient reality (...) In order to shape the reality of the enclaves, a whole web of ideologues, generals, lawyers, officials, seekers of improved housing, rabbis, politicians, geographers, historians, contractors and many, many more were needed. Therefore, one person is not enough to block a policy that a determined and fully coordinated web designed. (...) It's impossible to know whether Rabin was a partner to that evil trick, through which, in the guise of a gradual process and for security reasons, Israel preserved Area C as a land reserve for Jews. But he was the one who coined the phrase, "There are no sacred dates," in connection with the implementation of the Oslo Accords. The assassin was so successful because, contrary to the right-wing propaganda, the government headed by Labor had no intention of cutting the umbilical cord by which it was connected to its colonialist methods and goals. The

argument with opponents in Likud was never about the principles, but only about the number and size of Bantustans to be allocated to the Palestinians.
Amira Hass, HAA, 06.11.17

3. Israel und Saudi-Arabien nähern sich einander an

Israel und Saudi-Arabien unterhalten noch keine diplomatischen Beziehungen. Verbunden durch den gemeinsamen Feind könnte jedoch eine Kooperation zustande kommen. Generalstabschef Gadi Eizenkot erklärte gegenüber saudi-arabischen Reportern, dass sein Land „zum Erfahrungsaustausch mit den moderaten arabischen Staaten“ bereit sei. Damit meinte er offenbar auch geheimdienstliche Informationen. Ziel sei, eine Vormacht des Iran im Nahen Osten zu unterbinden. Iran und Saudi-Arabien befinden sich in einem Machtwettkampf auf fremdem Territorium, darunter Syrien und Libanon. Die beiden nördlichen Nachbarn Israels sind insofern von Interesse für Jerusalem, weil von dort aus die wiederum aus dem Iran finanzierte Hisbollah-Miliz angreifen könnte. Anfang November trat Libanons Ministerpräsident Saad al-Hariri während eines Besuchs in Saudi-Arabien überraschend zurück. Spekulationen über den Grund für den Rücktritt reichten von der Angst vor einem Attentat bis hin zu einem Diktat des saudischen Königshauses, das mit der Beteiligung von Hisbollah-Mitgliedern an der Regierung al-Hariris mehr als unzufrieden war. Israel führte zuletzt im Sommer 2006 einen Krieg gegen die Hisbollah.

What the political turmoil in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon means for Israel

(...) Crown Prince Mohammed has, since becoming defense minister in 2015, been behind an aggressive Saudi bid to reassert dominance in the region in the face of an increasingly assertive Iran. (...) Pulling Hariri out of Lebanon is a piece with a broader strategy of keeping Iran teetering. As he guides Saudi Arabia into bolder confrontations with Iran in the region, the crown prince may feel he needs to consolidate his power at home. (...) Saudi Arabia confronting Iran — good for Israel (...)? The Israeli government seems to think so. (...) Nimrod Novik, a former Israeli peace negotiator, said Saudi Arabia's sudden summoning of Abbas was another positive sign signaling Crown Prince Mohammed's moderating tilt. (...) Let's not get carried away. There are lots of risks for Israel in the recent upheaval. (...) whatever Netanyahu says, a temporary tactical alliance does not mean

long-term peace benefits (...) the Saudis may be coordinating with Israel behind the scenes, but there are not yet incentives to make the relationship open. (...) Ron Kampeas, TOI, 08.11.17

Will changes in Riyadh lead to new era in Israel-Saudi relations?

(...) Saudi Arabia is undergoing a quick process of change. (...) Both Israel and Saudi Arabia watched the American administration's willingness to strike a deal with Iran, which fails to put a complete lid on its nuclear option, with a lot of concern. (...) Even if they aren't voicing it clearly, Israel and Saudi Arabia are also concerned about Washington's tendency to continue the gradual process of retreating from the Middle East. (...) Furthermore, they suspect that Iran is developing a land corridor beyond the Mediterranean Sea, with the help of its allies—mostly Shiites—who control part of this axis. Lebanon is an integral part of the Iranian plan, and Hezbollah is an essential tool in its implementation. Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri's resignation should be interpreted against this background. Preventing the creation of an Iranian corridor is a heavy strategic mission, which will be hard to accomplish without American involvement. (...) The Iranian danger alone likely won't be enough to openly bring Saudi Arabia and Israel closer together. Mohammad bin Salman is working on fortifying his inheritance, and it's unlikely that he wants to expose himself to Arab criticism, especially Iranian, over his "betrayal of the Palestinian people." A positive Israeli response to the American initiative, once it is formed, might convince him to take the risk.

Dr. Oded Eran, YED, 10.11.17

A war of no choice on behalf of the Saudis

(...) This is not a kingdom that has corruption: Saudi Arabia, under the obliging administration of the royal family, is corruption that has a kingdom. Saudi Arabia endeavors to become a regional power with teeth, both domestic and foreign. (...) At a time when the Palestinians are being criticized, sometimes justifiably, for undemocratic actions, the Israelis are embracing the mother of all injustice. (...) Saudi oil has become a tool for repressing progressive culture, for blocking advancement of the status of women and above all for supporting fundamentalist tendencies (...). And all with the blessing and embrace of the developed West. (...) Netanyahu hastened to call Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri's resignation a "wake-up call" to take action against Iranian aggression. Now it turns out the belligerent ones are actually

his Saudi allies, who are imprisoning the prime minister of a foreign country, in violation of international diplomatic protocol. (...) Odeh Bisharat, HAA, 13.11.17

A princely agent of change

(...) Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is the perfect example of an establishment agent of change. (...) Up until now, Saudi Arabia has been a symbol of the preservation of the status quo, for the sake of ensuring the continued rule of the House of Saud, combining the relatively weak rule of a succession of his descendants (...) with enormous capital that allows the royal family to bribe regular citizens and keep them from embarking on their own Arab Spring (...) King Salman, is over 80 and unwell, and the 32-year-old prince may soon become king, and may remain on the throne for an entire generation. He is in a hurry. A series of processes recently implemented in Saudi Arabia have been attributed to Mohammed: the war the Saudis are fighting in Yemen, the harsher attitude toward Iran, the decision to allow women to drive, the recent arrests of ministers, politicians and the wealthy on suspicion of corruption, the summoning of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri to submit his resignation in Saudi Arabia, as well as Saudi pressure on Fatah and Hamas to work toward reconciliation and the decision to be open to the American peace plan set to be presented in December. But the jury is still out. (...) Mohammed may still end up losing his position for one reason or another, and someone else may be appointed crown prince. But it seems his chances of being the agent of change that transforms Saudi Arabia are improving day by day.

Yossi Beilin, IHY, 14.11.17

The Owl: Another Political Love Affair?

(...) the Middle Eastern web of interests and the Israeli-Iranian cold war align the interests of the Jewish State and the Royal House of Saud. Both are enemies of Iran, and in the regional game of thrones, the enemy of my enemy can sometimes be my friend. Cooperation with Saudi Arabia and its new ambitious crown prince, Mohammad bin Salman, is therefore expedient – yet Israel has to take special care to avoid past mistakes. (...) The greatest danger for Israel here is the temptation to overreach with this alliance. (...) Saudi Arabia and Lebanon are on the brink of hostilities, but the Saudi Army probably cannot strike Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel, however, can do such a thing, and the Saudis would love to see Netanyahu pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for them.

(...) Most probably, Riyadh hopes to provoke Hezbollah to attack Israel, tempting the Jewish state to counterattack in response. However, when things go wrong in Lebanon, as happens all too often, the Saudis will wash their hands of the whole affair, which was secret to begin with, and even condemn Israel for its "aggression." (...)

Danny Orbach, JPO, 15.11.17

Saudi Arabia: Israel's dream state

(...) Israel has no better ally than Saudi Arabia. It fights Hezbollah and overthrew the Lebanese prime minister who had lived in peace with that organization for a year. There is no other country in the world, including the United States, that acts with such resolve against Iran. (...) Saudi Arabia has warned Hamas against renewing its ties with Tehran (...). Saudi Arabia is the dream of the Jewish state. Its behavior toward Iran makes mincemeat out of the axiom behind Israel's security strategy, namely that all Arab states seek to destroy it, but in return Saudi Arabia reinforces Iran's status as the ultimate enemy. One might expect that such an alliance with an Arab power that sees eye-to-eye with Israel regarding its greatest enemy would demand some serious consideration of Saudi interests in the Israeli-Palestinian arena; for example, to revive the Saudi peace initiative, which calls for Arab normalization with Israel in return for withdrawing from the territories. No harm would be done if Israel made a gesture toward the kingdom and offered to begin negotiating with the Palestinians on the basis of that initiative, and even invite Riyadh to mediate. (...) an opportunity now lies before Israel. But Israel has learned the Palestinian lesson well; it never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 15.11.17

4. Medienquerschnitt

Syriens Drusen

The border conundrum

(...) this is actually the final battle in the war next door (...) As of today, Assad has already restored control (...) over nearly 90% of the country, and Moscow and Tehran are still working on the rest. (...) It is only along the Israeli border that battles are still raging between rebels and Syrian regime forces, with the Druze population on the Syrian Golan Heights supporting Assad. (...) government officials have done little to conceal the assistance Israel provides to the local population on the other side of the border, even

boasting on occasion of the influence Israel wields with the rebels operating in that area. (...) Because the Golan Druze are taking part in this war, alongside the Assad regime, the fire has reached their villages as well. The Druze in Syria support Assad, albeit not with the utmost enthusiasm. (...) Past experience in Lebanon teaches us that upon the war's conclusion, the local population, which received support from Israel, will look to "return home" to the Syrian regime and its institutions, where its long-term interests lie. From this vantage point, the challenge facing Israel is clear: protecting at all costs its deep bond with the Druze population in Israel, which is fearful over the fate of their brethren on the Syrian side of the border, while also preserving the calm along the Israeli-Syrian border in the future.

Prof. Eyal Zisser, IHY, 05.11.17

Israel's Syrian minefield

(...) Israel will not allow the capture of the Druze village of Khader on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights. This isn't only a declaration of unequivocal support for the Druze community, but also a threat against the radical militias, especially the Al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front, not to dare attack the village. It's a message that turns Israel into an active partner in the Syrian arena because it may be forced to carry out its threat if the militias attack the village. (...)

There's a big difference between military intervention and Israel's willingness to send food and help Syrians, including Druze, treat the wounded. Military intervention could put the residents of the Israeli side of the Golan in danger of a Syrian response. (...) A warning, and even an Israeli operation, could have been acceptable had Israel been ready to defend Syrians from the regime's brutality and attacks on civilian areas; the number of victims is estimated at over half a million. (...) Presenting Israeli support for the Druze as based on the community's "blood alliance" with Israel is surprising. Where was the Israeli army when Druze were massacred near the city of Idlib about two years ago? We can also assume that the Druze in the Syrian Golan couldn't have expected an Israeli umbrella had they not been considered a forward base against the spread of Iranian forces, or Hezbollah, in Syria. Israel is obligated to guarantee the welfare and security of all the country's citizens — Druze, Arabs and Jews — against an external threat. But it must not insert itself in a stormy front that could generate new and uncontrollable threats against it.

Editorial, HAA, 08.11.17

#Me Too

Treat the root of the problem

(...) The awareness triggered by the #MeToo campaign has given hundreds of women – and men – the legitimacy to talk about their traumatic experiences and ask for help. (...) The ground is moving beneath our feet. A change is happening right before our eyes, and it is nothing short of a revolution. (...) We have helped many victims break the silence (...) The majority has understood that we have a social problem that must be addressed. (...) The goal is for all of us, men and women alike, to accept responsibility for creating a different society. It's time we take an honest look at how we educate our boys, teens and men. (...) How can we educate and instill the correct values, shaping men who do not exploit, harm, conquer, demand or force themselves on women? (...) I urge the men in our society to speak up. You let the macho, harassing men silence you for too many years. (...) Today, we all recognize sexual harassment for what it is. Now it is time to empower the right kind of masculinity, the kind that respects women, for all our sakes.

Shani Aloni, IHY, 14.11.17

100 Jahre Balfour-Deklaration

The barren efforts to revoke the Balfour Declaration

(...) Shamelessly, but with premeditation, the Palestinian Authority asked British Prime Minister Theresa May to apologize for the Balfour Declaration, which marks its 100th anniversary Thursday. Both Yasser Arafat and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas understood that minimizing the historical connection between the Jews and the Land of Israel serves the Palestinians in the conflict between the two peoples. (...) There is no practical value to the demonstrations against the Declaration the Palestinians have sponsored in Ramallah. They are only a matter of symbolism and principle. (...) It was not because of the Balfour Declaration that Israel was born, but it was the first step in fulfilling Theodor Herzl's dream to receive a charter, based on the "Law of Nations," recognizing a Jewish state. That's why it's so important for Israel's enemies to eliminate it – even on its 100th anniversary.

Dan Margalit, HAA, 01.11.17

Balfour and Hitler

(...) It is ironic that the Balfour Declaration has also become the subject of one of the most important observances on the PA calendar. (...) The Palestinian ideology of rejectionism is founded upon the transparent fiction that a Palestinian nation existed for thousands of years and that there never had been a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. According to the PA's delusional narrative, Britain's support for Zionism was the beginning of Jewish history in the land. The PA would have the world believe that the Balfour Declaration was a precursor of Hitler's attempt to answer "the Jewish question." (...) The truly horrible historic crime is the Palestinians' ongoing repetition of their deluded denial of Israel's existence and their refusal to make peace.

Editorial, JPO, 04.11.17

Gabbay und die Arbeitspartei

Israel's opposition leader is more like a Likudnik

Labor Party chief Avi Gabbay is a man of the right. (...) the opposition to the right-wing government is in trouble. (...) The Israel of Benjamin Netanyahu continues to sacrifice civic and liberal principles (...) on the altar of Jewish ultranationalism. This is done for the sake of preserving Jews' privileged rights regardless of demographics or borders, while trampling on democracy. The left never forgot what it is to be Jewish – it's the right that's undermining the project called Israel. Gabbay's statements seem to indicate that he hasn't grasped the problems with Netanyahu's incitement against the left. Gabbay proudly presents his Jewish values (...) like an illegal migrant requested to show his documents to the immigration authorities. He does this instead of standing tall as a proud Israeli, sending to hell anyone who appoints himself chief of the identity police. Gabbay's Jewish values (...) aren't in question, so they can't be the answer. The political opposition desperately needs a leader who refuses to talk in Netanyahu-speak, a leader who reformulates an old-new language that's worthy of a sovereign people, free in its own land. A people whose country has recognized borders, sure of its Israeli identity. The opposition doesn't need a language of an ethnic or a religious community cowering out of fear of assimilating or withering away. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 15.11.17

No true leftists on either side

The Israeli right, in all its forms, wants exclusively Jewish control over all of the Land of Israel. To the

Palestinians who live in this space, it promises residency – temporary, of course, on condition that they keep their heads down, accept their designated status and behave accordingly. The Palestinian right, in all its forms, wants exclusive Muslim-Arab control of all of Palestine. To the Jews who live in this space, it promises, in the best case, the status of a protected people, on condition that they accept their inferior standing (...) and behave accordingly. In the worst case, it promises to ship them overseas, to their "countries of origin." There is also an "Israeli center," denoting the jumble of movements and parties that includes Lapid's Yesh Atid, Kahlon's Kulanu and all those who dwell in the camp that goes by the name of the Zionist Union, so hastily created by the Labor Party, which has just brought in a new guy, Avi Gabbay, and put him in charge of this camp. (...) And there is also a "Palestinian center." (...) The Palestinian center is trailing after the Caesar-like rule of Yasser Arafat, who brought with him all the corruption of the Arab world and planted it in the fields of Palestine. (...) The ruling Palestinian center is also chasing after the populist right of Hamas and vying for the title of who is more "nationalist." This is the time to admit, sadly, that both the Palestinian right and Israeli right currently have the upper hand. (...) And where is the left in all of this? (...) In a mixed and multinational state, a real left must transcend ethnic and national borders. Such is not the case with the "left" in Israel. The two Israeli movements, Meretz and Hadash, which purport to represent a leftist outlook, have proved unable to cross ethnic boundaries. Meretz continually proclaims that it is a Zionist party, while Hadash proclaims its Palestinian nationalism. (...) If these two "leftist movements" cannot bridge the gaps between them and offer a sane alternative to the entire population, then the two peoples in conflict here are surely doomed to more terrible times ahead. (...)

Salman Masalha, HAA, 01.11.17

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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