



**Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 20/19  
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen**

**15.-30. November**

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**1. Generalbundesanwalt erhebt Anklage gegen Netanyahu**

Heftige Reaktionen löste die Entscheidung von Generalbundesanwalt Avihai Mendelblit aus, Benjamin Netanyahu in drei Fällen vor Gericht zu zitieren. Dem Regierungschef wird Betrug, Untreue und Bestechlichkeit vorgeworfen. Zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte des Staates wird gegen einen amtierenden Ministerpräsidenten Anklage erhoben. Mehrere Tausend Israelis solidarisierten sich bei einer vom Likud organisierten Demonstration mit Netanyahu. Allerdings war der Tenor der Mehrheit der Wortmeldungen – sowohl von Politiker\_innen und Rechtsexperten als auch der Presse – Kritik an Netanyahus Beharren, trotz der schwerwiegenden Vergehen, derer er beschuldigt wird, im Amt bleiben zu wollen und zu diesem Behufe auch keinen Halt vor einer brutalen Attacke auf das israelische Rechtssystem zu machen. Netanyahu kann trotz der gegen ihn erhobenen Korruptionsanklage im Amt bleiben. Ein Rücktritt wäre erst mit einem Schuldspruch zwingend. Oppositionspolitiker\_innen forderten den Regierungschef dennoch zum sofortigen Rücktritt auf. Die Anklage kam inmitten eines ungelösten politischen Patts nach der zweiten Parlamentswahl in Israel in diesem Jahr. Sollte es zu einer dritten Wahl kommen, würde Netanyahu erneut antreten wollen. Gegenwind bekommt er erstmals auch aus den eigenen Reihen. Gideon Saar, Netanyahus stärkster Gegner in den Reihen des Likud, beantrag-

te eine Neuwahl des Parteivorsitzes. Saar hielt in der Vergangenheit die Posten des Erziehungs- und Innenministers. Vorläufig hält die Spitze der Partei sowie auch die rechten Koalitionspartner treu zu ihrem Chef. Netanyahu selbst weist unverändert alle Vorwürfe von sich und sprach von einem „Putschversuch gegen den Regierungschef“, von „Verleumdungen“ und „tendenziösen Ermittlungen“.

**Netanyahu, enough**

(...) the past week presented us with one of ugliest political shows in Israeli history. (...) How did we get to a point in which a party that was authorized to run and ended the race as the third biggest party in Israel is considered to be a danger to the existence of the country? What the Likud is doing is not just standard political opposition to a rival's attempt to form a government. This is breaking the rules and playing dirty. This is delegitimizing not only the third largest party in the Knesset but 20% of Israel's citizens as well. (...) This entire campaign is meant to lay the ground for a third election, and just another part of the ongoing "us and them" campaign against Arab society, which comes up every time there's a new election. (...) It is time to put an end to this divisive campaign and instead reach out to those who want to take part in general society and work to integrate them, not push them away. (...) Arab MKs openly spoke about joining a future coalition government and focusing on local domestic challenges

(...) as opposed to the conflict with the Palestinians. The Arab parties have already joined hands on these matters with other parties in the past – including with Likud. A government supported by the Arab parties is not an existential threat to Israel. Arab MKs (...) could be a partner in a future Israeli government, one led by Blue and White – or even by Likud.

Editorial, JPO, 18.11.19

### **From today – open season on Mendelblit**

(...) Netanyahu's cases are not the clearest-cut cases of corruption cases in Israel's political history. Avichai Mendelblit knows that too, and he certainly deserves the criticism leveled at him for the long time it took him to make his decisions. But (...) the delay didn't stem from loyalty to his benefactor Netanyahu, but because of his dread over the decision and his hope that the Israeli voter would do the job for him. (...) The criminal cases, like a medical chart documenting childhood diseases, reflect Netanyahu's evil nature: his chronic miserliness, which bound him to wealthy men who were forced to pay for his way of life; his compulsive desire to win recognition in the form of favorable media coverage; his sense of entitlement, fueled by his family's encouragement, out of the belief that Netanyahu is a kind of modern embodiment of Moses and that they themselves are a family of blue-bloods. (...) His supporters in this alliance of the self-pitying, one that has been in power for 40 years, truly believe that the all-powerful elites in Israel are carrying out a political putsch against him by legal means. (...) The right (...) hesitated a little in the delegitimization of the attorney general. This process is threatening to tear apart Israeli society, which has been dragged into a governmental and civil crisis. (...) So far the right's strategy was to treat him with kid gloves (...). From today on, it's open season. Since the Netanyahu cases came into the world, the country's senior law enforcement officials have been viewed as government opponents. Welcome to the fray, princes of statesmanlike behavior, you who spoke against "radicals from both sides," all of you who didn't see the point or have the courage to take a stand on explosive issues. Today you are joining the leftists, who in the Netanyahu era have become traitors, not to mention the Arabs. Netanyahu's incitement against the latter evokes horrifying historical comparisons. All this happened not because you took a principled stand. It happened because you dared take a stand against the Netanyahu family. How

many dramatic events does it take to get that man out of the Israeli bloodstream? (...)

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 22.11.19

### **A major blow to democracy**

(...) The decision to indict an accomplished prime minister, who has marched Israel into an era of long-term stability and prosperity and has made it into an important player on the world stage creates a difficult and complicated political situation. (...) The Israeli public has been exposed to too many underhanded investigative tactics, and at least with regard to Case 4,000, that alone renders the indictment hollow. It is unfortunate to see that Mendelblit was unimpressed by the persecution of the prime minister and the unwarranted arrests of various associates, which are reminiscent of dark regimes. There is a sense of disdain over the fact that the indictment reeks of a pre-ordained conviction, fueled by attempts to convict Netanyahu in the court of public opinion using various leaks from the investigations, long before the case ever saw the inside of a courtroom. It is also sad to see how law enforcement agencies seek to bolster their power of deterrence through the media. (...) What Mendelblit and his media pundits cannot deny is that there is immediate demand by the public to remove Netanyahu from office. All the public sees is that (...) the attorney general made a negative contribution to the complicated political situation in Israel. The way law enforcement has handled all of this is a major blow to democracy. If the public felt that Netanyahu was guilty of serious and undeniable offenses, I have no doubt there would be a public demand for his resignation and he would have heeded it. But that is not the case. So if anything, what we saw on Thursday was the culmination of long, coordinated political and judicial ploy to topple the prime minister.

Amnon Lord, IHY, 22.11.19

### **Likud officials must go public against Netanyahu**

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has managed to keep his ranks within the right-wing bloc in line, except for the defiance of Likud MK Gideon Sa'ar. It would be true to say that most of Likud's officials and lawmakers were "strong-armed" into issuing generic comments of support Netanyahu or even better, embark on a belligerent media blitz to back him (...). Netanyahu managed to keep his troops in order (...). The prime minister has made great efforts (...) to agitate his supporters (...). The anarchistic banner chosen by the rally organizers - "Against the governmental coup" – managed to

achieve the complete opposite and lionized the ministers and MKs who thought that such a protest, in these turbulent times, crossed the line of civil debate in Israel. (...) Likud lawmakers (...) do not have it easy. Filling up their schedules with events, obligations for "prior arrangements," going abroad or to conventions – all to distance themselves from the no man's land outside Tel Aviv Museum of Art. A rally in support of Netanyahu is a legitimate and appropriate political gambit, and he himself deserves one given his current political and legal status. But a rally against a "government coup" is bordering on an actual coup. (...) The justice system, the state prosecution and the police are justly open to criticism and scrutiny. But this was not a rally looking for justice – it was looking for heads, primarily of those who are bringing Netanyahu to justice. It's all personal. Justice Minister Amir Ohana attacked the state prosecutor not so long ago on the basis that "there is a prosecution within the prosecution." But is the reaction to that statement to create a state within a state? A state with different police, prosecution, courts, and law - where the investigators are judged and not the leaders? "Who is going to protest against their own country?" asked some of the ministers who absented themselves. There is a big difference between what Likud officials say publicly and what they say behind closed doors. (...) The question is when - if at all - will Likud officials find the courage to say such things publicly. Yuval Karni, YED, 27.11.19

### **Beholden to Whom?**

(...) What has become of us? Why are so many prepared to ignore logic, expertise, evenhandedness and equanimity in the pursuit of the political goals of the right or the left, or the personal agenda of a heroic, charismatic, unique yet now flawed and weakened leader? (...) The judicial structure that Israel's democratic governments through more than seven decades have relied on to be the secular conscience and guide of a state which balances its national and religious responsibilities every day – now it is betraying the people? (...) too many of us have suspended our capacity for critical thought, for nuance and depth. Black and white is for cookies and piano keys, not for understanding politics. We have ignored the possibility that the "facts" conveyed on social media and even in the press are washed and shaped to suit the needs of individuals or ideologies, and these do not always march with the interests of Israel and the Jewish people. To me, these are and must continue

to be paramount. (...) This discussion has increasing relevance to those outside of Israel who find themselves as advocates for and against people and positions that seem to be important to our global Jewish community. But too much of what they share or base their opinions on is a wedge for the right or the left. Too few of them question the sources or even the conclusions of the articles, essays or memes they publish. So this is what I ask all of my friends who love Israel and the Jewish people to do. (...) Build the capacity to democratically convince your peers and your friends of the righteousness of your perspective, and in the fullness of time believe enough in your own words that you won't need to acquire or sustain power by delegitimizing those who don't share your views. You can convince them with truth and the strength of your considered arguments. (...) Work with those who share your love but don't share your particular ideology. Israel will be stronger for it. The Jewish people will be stronger. (...)

Ari Rosenblum, TOI, 28.11.19

### **2. Israel nimmt Kurs auf eine dritte Wahl**

*Sollte bis zum 11. Dezember keine(r) der Knessetabgeordneten die Unterstützung von mindestens 61 Mandatar\_innen zur Regierungsbildung erhalten, wird in Israel binnen eines Jahres zum dritten Mal gewählt werden müssen. Beide Spitzenpolitiker, der amtierende Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu vom Likud als auch Benny Gantz, Chef des Bündnisses Blau-Weiß (Kachol-Lavan), scheiterten infolge der komplizierten parlamentarischen Mehrheitsverhältnisse an der Mission, eine Koalition auf die Beine zu stellen. In einem letzten Versuch, eine dritte Wahl abzuwenden, beauftragte Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin erstmals in der Geschichte Israels die Knesset mit der Suche nach einem mehrheitsfähigen Regierungschef. Unmittelbar darauf verkündete Generalstaatsanwalt Avihai Mendelblit seine Entscheidung, Netanyahu wegen Korruption vor Gericht zu stellen. Im Vorfeld einer möglichen Neuwahl, bei der ein ähnliches Ergebnis zu erwarten wäre wie bei den beiden vorherigen, forderte Netanyahus parteiinterner Rivale Gideon Saar zu einer Abstimmung über den Parteivorsitz auf. Unter seiner Führung wäre ein Zusammengehen des Likud mit Blau-Weiß eher möglich als mit Netanyahu an der Parteispitze. Um Neuwahlen zu verhindern, käme die Abstimmung im Likud dennoch zu spät.*

### **Likud and Blue and White are more frenemies than rivals**

The Blue and White party and the ruling Likud have similar positions, views and objectives. Rarely in Israeli political history have the two largest Knesset factions been so similar on so many key issues. Being both centrists, they are more akin to sister parties than adversaries, and their differences are detectable only through a microscope. (...) The vision of Blue and White could easily be passed off as Likud's, if you only tweak it a little bit. (...) Both parties are content with a Jewish presence in the West Bank, alongside a Palestinian one. The question is why then, do the two parties not enter a unity government? What are they waiting for? Avoiding another election campaign is in the hands of the leaders of both parties. But, the unity government must be built on the basis of Likud and Blue and White, and their similar positions. There is no need to add parties whose ideologies differ. With Netanyahu's expected indictment on corruption charges looming, his time as the country's prime minister is limited. Despite a law that allows him to remain in office until all legal avenues in his cases have been exhausted, Israeli political reality will force him out. Never was a serving prime minister a defendant in court. With time running out, the public implores its leaders, Gantz and Netanyahu, to not allow this opportunity to slip by. Don't be so narcissistic, so blindsighted by personal interests. Save us from another unwanted election that will likely yield the same results yet again.

Sever Plocker, YED, 17.11.19

### **A genuine state of emergency**

(...) Netanyahu assailed Gantz for his intention to form a minority government supported by the Arab parties. In the best tradition of his dubious governing tactics, Netanyahu incited against the Arab Knesset members. "We're facing a state of emergency unlike anything in Israel's history," the prime minister said of the possibility that a ruling coalition would be formed with parties that were democratically elected and represent 20 percent of Israel's citizens, as if it were a suspected bomb on a bus. "Elections are a disaster, but forming a government dependent on the Arab parties is a bigger disaster," he added. (...) It's hard to exaggerate the gravity of such statements by Netanyahu, who, by virtue of his job, is supposed to serve all Israelis, including the country's Arab citizens. Netanyahu is appealing to the lowest common denominator, inflaming the Jewish community against the Arab community and inciting

the entire Israeli public. (...) This man, about whom history will have its say with regard to the damage he has done to the fabric of Israeli society, must be replaced by a sane leadership. A leadership to whom it's clear that its job is to improve Israeli society, not infect it with malice aforethought with a metastasizing disease of hatred. The appropriate response to the gutter politics of this national inciter, who, as the years passed, has merely expanded his circle of incitement, is to form a government together with the Arab parties' Joint List, or alternatively one supported by it from the outside, in defiance of the man who seeks to turn Israel's Arab citizens into enemies. We must hope enough decent lawmakers will be found to support such a move, and that they'll join together to put an end to Netanyahu's era of hatred. (...) Israel is genuinely in a state of emergency. It is headed by a national inciter who is unraveling its society solely to shore up his reign and remain in power.

Editorial, HAA, 18.11.19

### **There is no good option outside the voting booth**

A minority government is not a realistic option. Some commentators adore the idea, which depends entirely on Avigdor Lieberman's position. But given his views on Arabs, optimism is not in order. A unity government is a worn-out concept which everybody exploits in a different way. The optimal unity government would be one between Kahol Lavan and Likud. The two parties would agree on a rotation and on basic guidelines and would together reach out to other parties to join the coalition. But when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calls for unity, he means a unity government in which Kahol Lavan is forced to share power with all the elements inside his 55-seat bloc. It would be a Bibi-ist dictatorship. The man who lost the election hopes to win in building a government. (...) Elections are around the corner (...). Kahol Lavan arm in arm with the Zionist left wing would be a basis for change, but the change can only come through new elections that diminish the power of the right. Kahol Lavan and the other parties will emerge stronger and the Arabs will digest that they're just a step away from partnership in government, by merit and not by compassion. All these values could find expression in elections. (...) The appeal to the public to support an alternative should be clear. What's needed is a functional, decent government that runs the country while preserving the civil and judicial system. That is necessary in order to protect Israeli democracy, which is

under attack by Netanyahu's envoys – ministers who never did understand loyalty to oneself and to one's conscience rather than to the leader. The social networks brim with lies, smears and political gambits, most in keeping with the "school" of the outgoing prime minister, who perfected incitement and turned it into a repulsive show of victimhood by the person in power. Replacing governments is part and parcel of Israel; that is the way forward, the way to the values and future of the country of all of us.  
Uzi Baram, HAA, 19.11.19

### **Wake up, MKs**

To all 120 members of Knesset: This is a wake up call. Get your act together and don't let there be a third election in less than a year. (...) The citizens of any democratic country are what grant its institutions legitimacy. The less trust they have in you, the fewer of them taking part or an interest in the democratic process, the less legitimate our government and Knesset will seem. Some of you don't connect to lofty ideals about democracy and being the voice of the people - that much has been made clear in the past year - so here are some practical and concrete reasons not to let a third election happen. Israel has a massive, yawning budget deficit that needs to be dealt with by passing an actual state government, instead of the piecemeal funding transfers the Knesset Finance Committee has had to deal with every week. Meanwhile, the expansion of the medicine basket, the selection of medications provided by our socialized medicine system, has been delayed, keeping people from receiving life-saving treatments. Social services are falling apart, without enough funding to keep battered women's shelters, homes for teenage runaways and more from staying open and putting our weakest citizens at risk. Reforms in the education system can't be renewed (...). On top of the domestic issues that political paralysis has exacerbated, we have the security situation. Iran is growing emboldened, launching attacks at us from over the Syrian border. Hezbollah is as strong as ever. Terrorists in Gaza have rained hundreds of rockets down on us in the past year, along with other flaming projectiles over the border fence. (...) Now is the time for MKs to do what it takes to turn the situation around. Many parties will have to make compromises for a new government to be formed. We get it, you stood your ground for the past seven months. Keeping promises to voters is commendable, but not at the expense of keeping the whole country in limbo for four more months until another election. Find the places where you can be

flexible. Show that you are negotiating in good faith, and the other side ought to respond in kind. (...) Your country needs you to do better than you have been doing since April. Form a government and prevent a third election.  
Editorial, JPO, 22.11.19

### **Third elections are on the horizon**

(...) Israel is, in all likelihood, heading for a third general election, which will most likely be held in March 2020. Unlike the Left, which probably would have deposed its leader the second the attorney general finished his statement, the Likud rallied around Netanyahu, as it seeks to protect him from the external dark forces that are persecuting him. For this reason, anyone who challenges Netanyahu for Likud's leadership is bound to lose (...). Likud will have no choice but to put forth another leader ahead of the third elections. The Left and other opposition parties predictably called for Netanyahu to resign and promises a flurry of High Court of Justice petitions of he fails to comply. These calls do not permeate the right-wing bloc so Netanyahu can rest easy – no one there will try to impeach him. This means that his political survival is his to rule on, as the law leaves it to up him to decide whether to vacate his seat at this time. Much of what will happen next depends of how the rightist MKs apply their influence with regards to Netanyahu's immunity. (...) Netanyahu has been careful to keep the channels of communications with Yisrael Beytenu's leader open. Everyone knows that there is no love lost between Lieberman and Netanyahu, but Lieberman's low opinion of the judiciary is also a matter of record, so there is really no telling how he could vote on the matter. Meanwhile, Netanyahu launched what appeared to be his next election campaign. This one will likely focus heavily on the ill deeds of law enforcement agencies. Until now the protest over what some perceive as judicial bias was relegated to sporadic statements, harsh criticism on social media, and the occasional demonstration, but that is all about to change. This protest now has a leader, and it will most likely dominate the daily agenda until the next elections are over.

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 22.11.19

### **3. US-Außenministerium erklärt Siedlungen als nicht völkerrechtswidrig**

*Auf Zustimmung in Jerusalem und heftige internationale Kritik stieß die Kehrtwende der USA bei der Bewertung der israelischen Siedlungspolitik in den*

noch besetzten Gebieten des Westjordanlandes. US-Außenminister Mike Pompeo verkündete, dass die USA den israelischen Siedlungsbau nicht mehr kategorisch als völkerrechtswidrig betrachten. Die Vereinten Nationen reagierten mit Bedauern, die EU distanzierte sich von der neuen Haltung der USA. Auch bei den Palästinensern und in der arabischen Welt löste die Entscheidung scharfe Kritik aus. Nabil Abu Rudeineh, Sprecher von Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas, sagte, die USA trügen die volle Verantwortung für die "Auswirkungen dieses gefährlichen Schritts". Die Amerikaner setzen sich einmal mehr vom internationalen Nahost-Kurs ab. UN und EU-Staaten kritisierten zuvor die Entscheidung in Washington, den israelischen Anspruch auf die besetzten Golanhöhen sowie zuvor Jerusalem als Israels Hauptstadt anzuerkennen. Pompeo sagte, nach eingehender Prüfung der Rechtspositionen sei man zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass es den Friedensprozess nicht vorangebracht habe, die Siedlungen illegal zu nennen. Israels Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu begrüßte den Schritt und sprach von der Korrektur einer "historischen Fehlentscheidung". Er hatte sich im Wahlkampf vor der Parlamentswahl im September für die Annektierung von Teilen des Westjordanlandes ausgesprochen. Die Entscheidung der USA beschert Netanyahu, der um sein politisches Überleben kämpft, willkommene Unterstützung aus dem Weißen Haus. Pompeo beteuerte, der Zeitpunkt der Verkündung habe keinerlei Zusammenhang mit innenpolitischen Vorgängen in Israel.

### **A long awaited correction**

The Department of State (...) has corrected US Middle East policy in an important way. The past legal determination that Israelis deciding to reside in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (...) are doing so in violation of international law has always been deeply flawed. It failed to recognize that the case of Israeli settlement construction was unique and was not what the drafters of international law had in mind when they first addressed this question. The original basis for judging the question of Israeli settlements was the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention that was designed to protect occupied populations. (...) its authors had in mind heinous crimes committed by Nazi Germany that were raised during the Nuremberg trials. These included forcible evictions of Jewish populations for purposes of mass extermination in death camps in places like Poland. This plainly was not the case of Israeli settlements and it is utterly vile to even suggest that Israeli settlements

should be thought of in this context. (...) It must be recalled that the last sovereign over the territory of the West Bank was the Ottoman Empire; it renounced its legal rights to the land after the First World War. That set the stage for the League of Nations in 1922 explicitly supporting the "close settlement" of Jews in the territory of the British Mandate. Those historical rights of the Jewish people were preserved by Article 80 of the UN Charter. True, Jordan seized the West Bank as a result of the first Arab-Israeli War that ended in 1949. And while Jordan annexed the territory, even the Arab states refused to recognize its sovereignty there. In other words, there was no recognized sovereign over the West Bank prior to Israel's entry into the area. A vacuum of sovereignty had been created that had to be taken into account when looking at the legality of Israeli settlements. Finally, Israel reminded the international community that when it captured the West Bank in 1967 that it acted in the framework of a war of self-defense. (...) The unique conditions of the case of Israeli settlements influenced the whole issue of how they should be judged, but now with the formulation of a new American position their legality is on the way to being finally accepted. Dore Gold, IHY, 18.11.19

### **It's open season on land theft**

The key sentence in U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's statement, which cloaked the West Bank settlement project in legality, is in the words "the conclusion that we will no longer recognize Israeli settlements as per se inconsistent with international law is based on the unique facts, history and circumstances presented by the establishment of civilian settlements in the West Bank." (...) The meaning of this policy is that any country, be it Russia, China, Iran or even the United States itself, can create "unique facts" and new "circumstances" in any area it wants, and if they hold that area long enough, they can enjoy legal status there. (...) Pompeo does not weigh in on the legality of specific settlements – he leaves that to the Israeli courts. He "makes do" with a sweeping statement regarding all of them, and this give the Israeli justice system permission to choose between the American interpretation and any other interpretation while neutralizing legal and public debate over the claim that Israel could be penalized if it continues to create more settlements or doesn't uproot them. But how can the Israeli justice system determine the legality of some of the settlements if all of them are legal in terms of international law? Today a legal objection still limits the establishment

of settlements on land that is not under private Palestinian ownership, but if the settlement project as a whole is legal in the view of the United States, only Israeli law will determine what is legal and what is not, and the law can be molded like putty. Moreover, in not expressing an opinion regarding specific settlements (...), Pompeo also erases the term “settlement blocs” from the diplomatic lexicon. Because if all the settlements are consistent with international law, there is no basis to differentiate between consensus blocs and those beyond the consensus. That is, even the theoretical distinction that created consensus on possible lines of withdrawal from the West Bank, and in the past served as a basis for negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, has been erased from the map. It’s open season on land theft for everyone. (...) with the settlements removed from the purview of international law, the American government has turned the occupation into an internal Israeli affair in which the United States (...) has no reason to interfere. (...) Trump has only one more move before he reaches the bottom of the barrel of gifts for Netanyahu – to announce that there is no occupation and there never was one. (...)

Zvi Bar’el, HAA, 20.11.19

#### **Pompeo announcement: Peace or propaganda?**

(...) There is no way this will advance peace, nor was it intended to. (...) It’s a scam run by three Orthodox Jews in the real estate business with close ties to the settler movement: Friedman and Jason Greenblatt, who were lawyers for the Trump Organization, and first son-in-law Jared Kushner. (...) Pompeo had been preparing this decision for months, he said, so why announce it now? It certainly wasn’t, as Pompeo would have us believe, to “increase the likelihood” of Israeli-Palestinian peace. More likely it is, notwithstanding Pompeo’s denial, to help Netanyahu save his political career and stay out of jail in several corruption cases. (...) Trump’s settlement decision was a slap at the Palestinians, who he has dissed repeatedly by cutting aid for their government and for refugees. (...) The new policy most likely was aimed at a critical Trump political base, Evangelical Christians. (...) Evangelicals groups like Christians United for Israel and Friends of Zion are longtime critics of European anti-settlement policies like last week’s ruling by the European Court of Justice that products from the West Bank must be labeled as such and not as produced from Israel. They’ve been pressing the administration to strike back, which it did this week.

(...) The majority of American Jews support the two-state solution, oppose settlement expansion and fear annexation would take Israel down the road toward a binational state or apartheid, and away from one that is both Jewish and democratic. That would likely further widen the growing chasm between most American Jews and Israel and make peace between Israel and the Palestinians even more remote. (...)

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO, 21.11.19

#### **So Pompeo said it**

(...) The Trump-Pompeo declaration is worth about as much as the statement that the Earth is flat. Trump-Pompeo can push on the Earth from both sides, rest their chins on it until their faces turn as red as a ripe strawberry – and the ball will remain round. (...) But the declaration brings back into our consciousness the question, which in the past was asked many times in the Supreme Court: What is the source of the legal authority by which the State of Israel imposes a military government on some two and a half million people, who have been born and died, who are being born and dying for the 52 years in the occupied territories? (...) International law is the source of the authority of the military commander. Not a divine promise, not a messianic vision, but the law of nations, which wanted the Geneva Convention to protect the occupied population, who are called in the convention “protected persons,” because the authors knew how vulnerable and weak the residents of the occupied territories were (...). International law does not permit the occupier to confiscate thousands of acres of land that are not privately owned, and build cities and communities populated by the occupiers who enjoy all the civil rights of the occupying nation (...). The main point is that international law views all the military arrangements in the occupied territory as a temporary situation, which is supposed to end a short time after the end of the situation of belligerency. (...) At least twice in my cases, the Supreme Court was required to discuss the legality of the settlements on state-owned land, and twice it evaded deciding based on the claim that this question was not justiciable. The most imperialist Supreme Court, which ruled that everything is justiciable, retreated bashfully from deciding on the question of the legal status of the settlements. (...) I smack my forehead and wonder if the time hasn’t come to go back to the Supreme Court and ask if the settlements are legal. I have been waiting in line for 52

and a half years. I deserve an answer from the authorized agent of the law.  
Avigdor Feldman, HAA, 22.11.19

#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### Dutzende Luftangriffe auf Syrien

###### Israel sends rare message to Tehran, Damascus and Moscow

The IDF airstrikes in Syria earlier this week were a direct response to the four Iranian-made heavy rockets fired at Israel (...). The rockets (...) were fired within about 80km from the border with Israel (...). The rockets were indubitably targeted at Israeli population centers (...). All these details are important in order to understand why the Israel Air Force struck in Syria on such an unusually large scale. (...). The attack was intended to serve as a warning for three groups: The Iranians and their proxies operating in Syria; Syrian President Bashar Assad and his army – who grant complete freedom of action and air defense to Iran's Quds Force extra-territorial operations; and a message to the Kremlin, who do not meet their commitment to Israel to ward off the Iranians and their proxies from the Israeli border. (...) Israel also wants to send a message that it aims to keep the conflict solely to military targets and not expand it to civilian areas and targets. Rocket fire is considered a red line that should not be crossed in Israel's perspective (...). The message for the regime in Damascus has been simple and consistent since the Israeli strikes began as part of the "in-between wars" campaign to prevent Iran from establishing itself in Syria and thwarting its program to improve missile and rocket accuracy in Lebanon and Syria. (...) There is also a threat attached to this message - Israel will gradually destroy the military capabilities of the Syrian army and will extend the strikes to the regime's assets and symbols. (...) As for the Russians, Israel sends them two messages: Pointing out to them not following through on their promise to keep Soleimani's men and their emissaries away from the border and demanding that they must follow through on this commitment, otherwise the IDF itself will be forced to carry out the task. But the main message behind Wednesday's attack was telling the Russians that until the Iranians and their henchmen cease from their attempt to establish a ground front against Israel from Syria's territory - the Kremlin will not be able to achieve a ceasefire in the civil war in Syria.

(...) When Israel attacks, Syria draws farther away from stabilization (...).  
Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 23.11.19

##### Erneuter heftiger Schlagabtausch mit Dschihadisten im Gazastreifen

###### IDF policy on Gaza could give rise to a more powerful enemy

(...) it is possible that the regime in Gaza hasn't been forced into calm, but is merely recalculating its current course. (...) It's also possible that the calm in Gaza is the result of Hamas pacifying the Strip's various factions, in order to restructure its inner workings after the elimination of Abu al-Ata, who openly defied Hamas' authority. Hamas sees itself as a proper army after all, and not as a military branch of a terrorist organization. To illustrate this point, Mohammed Deif, who was once merely the head of the organization's military wing Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, is now referred to as its chief of staff in Hamas' statements to the local media. (...) there are a few (...) encouraging signs that things may have changed. In the last two weeks, Hamas' hammer of peace came down hard on any protesters who disobeyed their orders and tried to enter Israel or attack IDF soldiers. Hamas also prevented the destructive incendiary balloon attacks, preventing the burning of Israeli fields near the border; those who disobeyed the leadership's instructions were promptly arrested. Hamas is also feeling amicable towards the Palestinian Authority, which persuaded Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to agree to democratic elections to the Gaza Strip parliament (...). It seems though, that the IDF is not content with a mere military achievement and is pushing for the political echelon to perpetuate the current state in Gaza with civil doctrines that would essentially solidify Hamas' rule over the Strip. Being content with a military achievement is one thing, but playing with potentially incendiary political games is not the prerogative of the IDF. (...) Hamas' goal is to take over the Palestinian Authority, either by force or by elections, before it deals with the "Zionist entity" on the other side of the border. In order to achieve this goal, Hamas needs a long truce in order to further entrench itself in the Strip. (...)

Alex Fishman, YED, 27.11.19



HAA = Haaretz  
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
IHY = Israel HaYom  
TOI = Times of Israel  
GLO = Globes

Veröffentlicht im: *Dezember 2019*

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