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1. Dritte Parlamentswahl für März 2020 festgelegt

Nach dem Scheitern der Bemühungen um eine Regierungsbildung entschied die Knesset für ihre Auflösung. Der Termin für Neuwahlen ist für den 2. März kommenden Jahres geplant. Nach den beiden Wahlen im April und September 2019 wird in Israel zum dritten Mal innerhalb eines Jahres gewählt werden. Umfragen geben Blau-Weiß aktuell einen leichten Vorsprung vor dem Likud. Grund für die schwerste Regierungskrise in der Geschichte des Staates ist die Pattsituation zwischen dem rechts-religiösen Lager von Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu und dem Mitte-Links-Lager unter der Führung von Ex-Generalstabschef Benny Gantz. Netanyahu ist seit 2009 durchgängig im Amt und bestand nach der Wahl im September darauf, mit einem gesamten Block rechter und religiöser Parteien in die Koalition mit Blau-Weiß einzutreten. Gantz hatte sich im Vorfeld der Wahlen hingegen zur Bildung einer liberalen, säkularen Koalition verpflichtet. Netanyahu steht massiv unter Druck, nachdem Generalstaatsanwalt Avichai Mendelblit für eine Anklage gegen ihn entschied. Beobachter rechnen mit einem erneut schmutzigen Wahlkampf, der die Gräben in der Gesellschaft weiter vertiefen wird.

Netanyahu versus the Knesset

We are not having a bad dream and we will not soon wake up and find ourselves living in a normal country. (...) If polling were conducted in the halls of the Knesset to see how many members actually wanted to dissolve the Knesset, the results would have been 119 against and one in favor. Only one man, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wants this third election to take place and he is motivated by an illegitimate, personal agenda that completely goes against the interests of the country. Three election cycles in the service of one man, in order to construct a coalition that would provide him with the immunity he seeks from justice.

(...) Perhaps "immunity first" is more than the epitaph of an elected Knesset, perhaps it is the defining message of the past year in Israeli politics. We are entering this third election cycle with children running to bomb shelters in the south, hospital emergency rooms bursting at the seams and a growing budget deficit, but the election campaign will only be about the legal affairs of one citizen: Benjamin Netanyahu. Even annexation of the Jordan Valley, which Netanyahu now claims is an imperative lifeline for the country, after having completely ignored the matter for the past 14 years, will not blur the fact that the elections are about him and his criminal cases. In April, elections were forced on Israelis as part of Netanyahu's efforts to preempt a hearing before indictment. In September, voters were again

summoned to preempt the indictments that were due to be filed. Now, we are forced to hold elections once again, this time in order for Netanyahu to secure his immunity from justice.

Sima Kadmon, YED, 12.12.19

Israel is missing the opportunity of the century

The lack of a functioning, stable government has led us to a historic blunder. (...) We are missing what may very well be the opportunity of the century. With each passing day we are missing the opportunity to benefit from the partnership of the most pro-Israel administration in US history. (...) we are wasting every hour of every day that we could be using to create a better Israel because we are stuck on silly infighting and ego wars. In the few short years of the Trump administration we have scored more diplomatic achievements than ever in the history of our people, short of creating our own state. (...) Even the few dissenting voices on the Left that have tried in vain to convince us that these achievements are actually bad for Israel have trouble convincing themselves. Do they seriously believe that it is bad for Israel that our historical and eternal capital city is finally acknowledged? Is it bad for our country and the region that the Golan Heights is no longer disputed territory by a genocidal dictatorship sponsored by Iran that has killed half a million of its own people? Is it bad for our country that we should have decades-old communities thriving in a small part of our ancestral homeland? THE ANSWER is clear: We are at an unprecedented historical juncture of opportunity, a window that God has opened, and we are foolishly and unnecessarily throwing it away. The biggest culprit in my eyes is Avigdor Liberman. (...) He duped his electorate in the first round by making them believe that he was a son of the bloc, and then he duped his inflated electorate in the second round by making them believe he cares about haredi (ultra-Orthodox) political influence. So easily did they forget that he is second only to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at cutting deals with the haredim. But what boggles the mind even more is Blue and White's intransigence in not agreeing to let Netanyahu be prime minister for a mere five months. The reward for their miscalculation is that he will remain prime minister anyway (...). As we approach the precipice of a third election, the historic window of opportunity for the Jewish people that is the Trump administration is slowly closing. If this is the last year we have of President Trump, our leaders should look long and hard in the mirror and ask themselves where they were when

the Red Sea miraculously opened for us to cross. Tragically, they were busy fighting about who would cross first!

Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, JPO, 13.12.19

The immune system did its job

The fact that Israel has to hold a third election within such a short period of time reflects a grave political crisis. The fact that millions of people will again be exposed to wasteful, inflammatory and uncontrolled advertising campaigns is also far from ideal. And yet, it also carried a reassuring message for everyone who champions healthy democracy. In fact, Israel must go to the polls again because the system of checks and balances that is the foundation of democracy worked. It prevented, in every manner possible, a situation in which a prime minister who has been charged with criminal offenses, who seeks to escape to the "city of refuge" of parliamentary immunity, continues to serve. (...) it would have been wrong to give in to the natural desire "to get it over with" — that is, to establish any sort of government and return to the appearance of proper governance. The establishment of a government is a means, not an end in itself. It is supposed to reflect the wills and the needs of the voters, and it is not supposed to serve as a refuge for a prime minister who has been charged with criminal offenses. Therefore, there is also no call for the lamentation and the cries of "shame" surrounding the failure to form a government. On the contrary: it's a badge of honor for the parliamentary immune system, which disgorged from itself the possibility of collaborating with the forces seeking to sabotage Israel's democratic infrastructure from within. (...) the Knesset dissolved itself after it became clear that its only path forward entailed riding roughshod over fundamental democratic values. (...) all of the political parties that view themselves as guided by the rule of law must join forces and focus on the next election, and tell Netanyahu in the clearest manner possible that his time is up.

Editorial, HAA, 13.12.19

Israel's 3rd Elections: Fateful Wake-Up Call for the People of Israel

A third election round has been announced in Israel for the first time in history due to our inability to form a government. (...) Today's divisive atmosphere in Israel is a sign that we will be unable to find peace among each other if we fail to understand and implement nature's integral laws. (...) Our disunity then receives a negative reaction from the nations of the

world. That reaction is known as anti-Semitism, and its widespread awakening today is because we are in a developmental stage where we need to make a step toward uniting as a single nation (...) the people of Israel have a key role: to spread positive connection among humanity. We were given a method to do so, the same method of connection that Abraham guided us with in ancient Babylon, and which has undergone upgrades over the generations to suit us in our time. (...) our revelation of nature's unifying force spreads among humanity's collective consciousness, inverting our current increasing divisive tendency—where we behave like cancerous cells taking as much as we can for ourselves at society's expense—to a unifying, peaceful and loving tendency that benefits humanity. (...) its materialistic achievements as a startup nation is no sign of success to me. Success for the people of Israel can only be spiritual: that we realize our role to be a conduit of unity for the world. Ever since our ancestors achieved the sublime unified state under Abraham's guidance some 3,800 years ago, our role has remained unchanged. We have since detached from that awareness, but as explained by Kabbalists, the time has come where the need for unity is not only pressing on us within our current borders; it is also expressed worldwide as a growing divisive tendency increasingly tearing societies apart. (...)

Michael Laitman, TOI, 13.12.19

This time, there has to be a clear decision

Another election isn't necessarily a bad thing, but this time we must put trivia aside and discuss the real issues facing us as a society. (...) A smiling democracy is always preferable to a stern rule of one. If the price of democracy is another election, that's not a bad thing, not if we make a decision. For there to be a clear decision, without a fourth or fifth election, it's important that the people be presented with candidates' positions and principles on basic issues, and not pyrotechnics made up of flimsy slogans that insult the voters' intelligence. The matter of the cost of the election is a minor one, because transitional governments save a lot of money. (...) this is an enormously important election. Blue and White leader Benny Gantz can try and sell his sympathy for the haredim and his love for the religious – even messianic – Jews, but that isn't what Blue and White is about. (...) The Israeli Right must overcome its inherent self-destructiveness. This time, the battle is truly for our home. In every election, the Left rubs its hands in glee when right-wingers waste their talent in internecine fighting

instead of taking on the Left. The Declaration of Independence, which David Ben-Gurion read out in one of the biggest moments in Jewish history, talks about the Land of Israel, in which the Jewish people came into being. Israel has always been considered the national home of the Jewish people. The left-wing bloc under Blue and White wants to change the essence of the nation, from a Jewish state to a state of all its citizens. The way they see it, being a free people in our own country means being free of anything Jewish. (...) We must discuss the nation's future path, its achievements and problems, lay out principled stances and bring them to the public for a vote. It is very clear to me that the winner will be whoever focuses on the real questions.

Dr. Haim Shine, IHY, 13.12.19

2. Netanyahu will Ministerämter niederlegen, als Regierungschef aber weiter im Amt bleiben

Israels noch amtierender Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu will angesichts der gegen ihn erhobenen Anklage bis Anfang kommenden Jahres mehrere Ministerämter niederlegen. Als Regierungschef kann er weiter im Amt bleiben und müsste erst zurücktreten, wenn die Richter ihn für schuldig befinden. Der 70-Jährige muss sich dem Vorwurf der Untreue, der Bestechlichkeit und des Betrugs stellen. Es geht um den Verdacht des Erkaufs positiver Medienberichterstattung durch die Ermöglichung eines wettbewerbswidrigen Mediendeals, um den Verdacht, einen Wettbewerbsvorteil für die größte Tageszeitung des Landes in Aussicht gestellt zu haben im Gegenzug für positive Berichterstattung und um Luxusgeschenke befreundeter Geschäftsleute, die er im Gegenzug für politische Gefälligkeiten angenommen haben soll. Netanyahu weist jede Schuld von sich und spricht von einem Putschversuch seiner Gegner, allen voran die Justiz. Kritiker werfen ihm vor, er wolle das Verfahren mit aller Macht verhindern und stelle seine persönlichen Interessen über die nationalen. Gegenwind kommt nun zum ersten Mal auch aus den eigenen Reihen. Auf Antrag von Netanياهو's parteiinternen Gegner Gideon Saar, ehemals Bildungs- und Innenminister, will die Likud-Partei am 26. Dezember einen neuen Vorsitzenden wählen.

The new coffins along Netanyahu's route

(...) The attorney general's great sin was that in the Justice Ministry's name, he denounced a Der Sturmer-style propaganda clip, in which Deputy Attorney

General Dina Zilber is portrayed as one who gives money to terrorists and who in general, just like the Jew Suss, spreads her claws and terrifies the entire world. The condemnation of this filth is so searing and painful to the justice minister that he absolutely refuses to take part in it and forbids his ministry to validate it. What crazy days. The face of the Justice Ministry face is the face of Yair Netanyahu. What Israeli civil servants (...) are going through these days will be hard to explain in the future (...). What horrifying, insufferable iniquity. Senior officials who do their job and refuse to stray to appease those in power at any price, some of them right wingers, must hide behind security guards, check their cars carefully, avoid the social-media slime and pray it doesn't reach their frightened children's eyes. Their only sin was doing their job. The despicable incitement campaign against law enforcers Roni Alsheich, Liat Ben-Ari, Shai Nitzan, Dina Zilber and Avichai Mendelblit is one of the most brutal spectacles of our time. Since this is how the politicians treat them, at the initiative of the corruption chief on Balfour Street, every decent Israeli must protect them with his body. (...) before Netanyahu's crimes of incitement, before the awful, bitter taste of the poisonous fruit he cultivated, before the evil he did to Israeli society and its institutions, it's impossible to stand still. This man is so dangerous, and his contemptuous, sleazy servants are even more dangerous. May they be remembered only as a deranged, obscene, insane nightmare in the chronicle of these Israeli days.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 13.12.19

Netanyahu's atonement

Polls ahead of the next election predict an advantage of four-to-five Knesset seats for Kahol Lavan over Likud. These figures (...) reflect (...) many right-wing people's disappointment with Benjamin Netanyahu. He led the way to the next election, the disappointed voters are convinced, to escape his legal predicament (...). Netanyahu has about three months to atone, even in small measure, for his sins toward the country of Israel. He has the power to prove with deeds, not empty declarations, that he is a prime minister of a rightist government. It may not prevent (...) putting him on trial, but it could get him into history. (...) The first deed called for is a government decision to adopt the conclusions of the Edmond Levy committee, which found that Judea and Samaria aren't "occupied territories" and that Israel, even under international law, has the right to rule it. Such a decision would pave the way to apply-

ing Israeli law and justice to the Jordan Valley, the Etzion Bloc, Ma'aleh Adumim, Ariel – and perhaps all of Area C, including the granting of Israeli citizenship to the Arab residents in this region. The media of course will be against it. (...) dozens of petitions will be submitted to the High Court of Justice. (...) These historical steps could have another result, not at all negligible: Likud deserters, encouraged by the actions that would replace all the hollow, false statements, may return home and give the right-wing camp an election victory. It's not beyond reach. Israel Harel, HAA, 13.12.19

Netanyahu's dilemma

(...) Even in this strange era of post-truth, post-factual politics, the fact is that Netanyahu is now on a track leading him to the defendant's chair and which might eventually lead, if he fails to plan his moves properly, to prison as well. (...) Netanyahu is at a crossroads. In a certain sense it's the dilemma of his life. It will determine how he will go down in history. (...) If Netanyahu signs a plea bargain and retires from politics he will even have a good story to tell, and plenty of apostles eager to spread it: "The putsch" succeeded, he can tell his followers. The leftist elites and the media besieged him by means of the judicial system and ousted the right from power. I was defeated, he can tell them. (...) The people are with him, Netanyahu will claim, but "the left" undermined their sovereignty and overthrew us. On the other hand, if he takes the risk to cling to power and run in the next general election, then the worst-case scenario — for him — could come true. There's a chance, proved by the sparse attendance at last week's protest in the plaza of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, just a few thousand people and a single cabinet minister — that in a third election he will discover that his voters have also abandoned him. A loss at the ballot box will lead to the collapse of the main story arc: that the people are with him. He will be left alone, abandoned, weak. His image as "King Bibi," which has dominated our lives for 20 years (...) will vanish, replaced by an inmate in an orange jumpsuit, a false prophet of the Jewish people whose geopolitical observations don't interest anyone. He faces one huge historic dilemma. He should consult with Donald Trump.

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 01.12.19

Netanyahu is not the victim, we are

There is one thing to remember – we are the real victims of the delusional situation in which our country finds itself. Us. Not the defendant Benjamin Net-

anyahu. Do not let the defendant, as accomplished a salesman and public speaker as he is, confuse you. (...) What is on the line is the future of our country's existence against all odds, and the future of our national unity. These are the real victims of what is happening. (...) The victim is not the defendant. We are the victims. We, our future and the future of our children are all at stake here. Because the defendant is prepared to do absolutely anything to prove to us that there is an attempted government coup against him. He is inciting against the rule of law and against the media and calls on his supporters to take to the streets and town squares in violation of the rule of law in the State of Israel. This is unprecedented, incomprehensible, shocking. And the reason for it all is his determination to avoid a court trial where he will have to prove his innocence like any other citizen of Israel. (...) The defendant Netanyahu claims that he is a victim of the media, but please note that he controls the free daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Israel, a paper established especially for him by his friend Sheldon Adelson, who managed to buy a large group of "friendly" reporters, and give Netanyahu full control over its contents. (...) His inciting attacks, quoted and recorded in public over the years, were meant to serve his private and political interests. They contributed to spreading hate and schism among Jews in Israel and created a grave split between us and the Jews in the Diaspora, as well as between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel.

Spreading hate and division among us is in my opinion gravest indictment of all - more serious than any "affair". Houses divided cannot stand, they crumble and collapse. But the defendant Netanyahu is not content with undermining national unity. Now as a sitting prime minister he is leading an unprecedented inflammatory campaign against the judiciary and the police. The immediate result of this incitement is that bodyguards have been provided for State Prosecutor Shai Nitzan and Liat Ben Ari, the Tel Aviv district attorney who holds the economic crimes portfolio and who has led numerous high-level investigations into political and corporate figures. There is an imminent threat to the safety of both. Theodor Herzl, David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin must be spinning in their graves. How far have we strayed from the vision of the ideal a model society described in the Declaration of Independence? (...) It is a campaign orchestrated by Netanyahu solely for the purpose of personal survival. This is a strategic threat to our unity and to the future of our country and our nation. (...)

Yuval Diskin, YED, 02.12.19

Remove Netanyahu right now on grounds of temporary incapacity

(...) Unlike Olmert's legal situation when the High Court issued its ruling a decade ago, Netanyahu is no longer a suspect, but rather – has been charged publicly. (...) the crimes Netanyahu has been charged with were allegedly committed while he was serving as Prime Minister and connected to that office; hence his continued service leaves him precisely in the same position where the alleged offenses were committed. (...) there is another crucial point: the fact that the Prime Minister, directly from his seat as prime minister, as well as through his close circle of associates, is waging a campaign against the law enforcement agencies and against the witnesses testifying against him. This in and of itself – should lead to the conclusion that Netanyahu's remaining in his post, undermines (...) the possibility of a proper legal process in his case. In the final analysis, the Prime Minister is subject to the rules of public law, and to the ban on acting under a conflict of interest. The conflict of interest between Netanyahu the accused and Netanyahu the head of the executive branch, who bears responsibility for the law-enforcement agencies, is extreme and exceptionally intense "right now." This situation makes it impossible for the Prime Minister to perform his duties under the law and requires that he announce his temporary incapacity or be compelled to do so. Later, as the legal process advances, the temporary incapacity could, if the conflict is not resolved, become permanent. (...)

Prof. Yuval Shany, TOI, 05.11.19

Indictment, Impeachment and Immorality

(...) On the face of it, the indictment of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, and the impeachment process against Donald Trump, the President of the USA, are all about politics. But beneath their political spins and their constant lies, we can discern a deep and abiding immorality, which is evident every day in their behavior, their rhetoric and their corrupt practices, along with the spin tactics of their colleagues and friends.

One has to wonder how all those millions of "religious" Orthodox Jews and Evangelical Christians in America and Israel support these two "leaders" who act unethically by lying, taking bribes, and obstructing justice all the time. What happened to these "Torah True" Jews and "Bible believing" Christians? How have they gone so far astray morally? (...)

the prophet Isaiah were here today, this is what he would tell us courageously and honestly about our leaders in America and Israel: Your rulers are rogues and cronies of thieves, every one avid for presents and greedy for gifts; They do not judge the case of the orphan, And the widow's cause never reaches them. (...) Even though I am Jewish, I have some good news for you. It is the beginning of the end for both Netanyahu and Trump. Support for Netanyahu and his endless machinations for personal survival are diminishing all the time. (...) The rule of law will prevail. The courts will rule against these corrupt "leaders". Basic moral values will prevail. (...) There are major efforts in America and Israel to organize and recruit new voters to be part of the sane majority. The majority of the people will eventually come to their senses and they will realise that immoral leaders corrupt not only themselves and their families but also their societies. At the end of the day, values will prevail over politics. (...)
Ron Kronish, TOI, 10.12.19

3. Kein Grund zum Feiern: 25 Jahre Frieden mit Jordanien

Offizielle Jubiläumsfeiern gab es weder in Israel noch in Jordanien anlässlich der 25 Jahre nach Unterzeichnung des Friedensabkommens. Aus den großen Plänen, die die beiden Nachbarstaaten damals hegten, wie die Errichtung eines gemeinsamen Flughafens, ist nichts geworden. Auch der Plan für einen Kanal vom Roten zum Toten Meer liegt auf Eis. Um die bilateralen Beziehungen steht es schlecht. König Abdullah II., Sohn Husseins, der einst den Vertrag unterzeichnete, weigert sich, Regierungschef Netanyahu zu treffen. Jordaniens Monarch kritisiert Israels andauernde Besatzung im Westjordanland, Ostjerusalems und dort vor allem des Tempelbergs, der von einer jordanischen Stiftung verwaltet wird. Umgekehrt zürnt die israelische Regierung Abdullah für die Aufkündigung der auf zunächst zehn Jahre angelegten Einigung über die beiden Enklaven Naharayim und Tzofar, die Israel weiter landwirtschaftlich nutzte. In Israel ging man davon aus, dass der Pachtvertrag automatisch verlängert werden würde. Besonders schmerzlich trifft die Entscheidung des Königs die israelischen Bauern, die das fragliche Gebiet bislang bewirtschafteten.

Is the peace treaty with Jordan in jeopardy?

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the annexation of the Jordan Valley. (...) Netanyahu

explained this decision as a security measure that would create a stronger defense on the eastern border. (...) King Abdullah II replied to Netanyahu's annexation intention, stating that the relationship between Jordan and Israel is at an "all-time low." (...) "If we do not solve the Israeli-Palestinian issue, Israel cannot be part of the Middle East." (...) In light of the king's hostile remarks toward Israel, Israel's Western allies must make a strong stance against the threat that Jordan could pose. Israel and the US must force Jordan to maintain its peace agreement to avoid further regional instability. (...) The Palestinian issue has proved to be a thorn in the side of relations between the two nations. (...) The willingness of Jordan to stand alone among many Arab nations in honoring a peace treaty and working with Israel toward greater economic and security cooperation has contributed immensely to regional stability. The two nations have worked hand-in-hand to stem terrorist threats, and Jordan has been an instrumental player in mediating between the Palestinians and Israelis. However, indicating the recent souring of relations, Jordan has reclaimed some lands it leased to Israel as part of the 1994 peace treaty. This dramatic diplomatic signal was intended to show Israel that the alliance is not guaranteed and can be abandoned at any moment. It was a land-based rebuttal to show Israel that the land is what matters to the Jordanians. (...) While Amman is showing that it has power in this relationship, further escalation of tensions between the two countries could plunge the whole region, already in a tenuous position, into a state of open warfare. (...) Jordan should realize this, as it has recently signed a major, 15-year, 10-billion-dollar natural gas deal with Israel. Severing ties with Jerusalem would not only affect the region but would have a direct effect on Jordan's economy. Israel and the United States can, and should, collectively use strong economic levers to deter Jordan from jeopardizing cooperation, security and peace in the region. (...)

Amin Farhad, JPO, 11.12.19

Preserving the peace with Jordan

(...) The dimensions of Netanyahu's achievement are clear when you compare Israel's constructive, mutually beneficial ties with states with which it lacks formal peace treaties to its ties with Jordan. (...) Netanyahu explained that the basis of Israel's peaceful relations with Egypt and Jordan is not emotional. The Egyptians and Jordanians haven't embraced Israel as a neighbor and friend. Rather, Israel's peace treaties are the products of its deter-

rent power. In his words, "As long as we are stronger – they are with us. If we become weaker, then the peace agreements will hang by a thread." (...) The most important advantage Israel gains from its ties with Jordan is a long peaceful eastern frontier. But that peaceful border, which is a function of Israel's control of the Jordan Valley on the one hand and to Jordan's actions to secure its border with Israel on the other, predates the peace treaty by more than 20 years. Moreover, given the downward trajectory of bilateral ties, it's hard to know how long Jordan will remain committed to securing the border. From week to week, Jordan's growing hostility towards Israel becomes more difficult to countenance or explain away. (...) Israel wants to preserve peace with Jordan. Peace goes through the Hashemite monarchy, which itself is under constant threat from the Jordanian public. (...) Out of genuine concern for the welfare of the regime, Israel is turning the other cheek in the face of repeated abuse and humiliation to help Abdullah and the Hashemite Kingdom survive. While the rationale for Israel's obsequious behavior is clear, the time has come to consider whether it makes sense to continue on this road, or if there are better ways to maintain our ties and perhaps better advance our interests with Jordan. (...) Israel agreed to supply Jordan with natural gas nearly at cost. Israel may need to reassess the price given Turkish and Hezbollah threats to its offshore gas fields. Security is expensive. Whereas the Jordanians automatically support every Palestinian provocation, in recent years the Saudis have soured on the Palestinians and have supported Israel against them repeatedly. Given this new state of affairs, it makes sense for Israel to revisit the privileged position Jordanian officials enjoy on the Temple Mount. (...) By all accounts, the peace with Jordan, and the survival of the Hashemite monarchy are among Israel's key strategic interests. But (...) peace is not a function of Israel's popularity among the Jordanians. It is predicated on Israel's deterrent power. Jordan's actions over the past several weeks reinforce what has been clear for some time. In its rush to protect Abdullah and the peace, Israel has forgotten to deter Abdullah to preserve the peace. The time has come for Israel to correct its behavior.

Caroline B. Glick, IHY, 06.12.19

Israel's campaign to destabilize Jordan

(...) Both countries have grievances, and both could do more to improve relations, but the power-balance is asymmetrical, and Israel bears much of the responsibility. (...) The relationship between the two

countries rests today almost entirely on one leg: tight security cooperation. (...) For both countries, security is a chief interest, and it is important to emphasize that all the Jordanian officials with whom we spoke made a point of depicting the security cooperation with Israel as "excellent." But for Jordan, national security is more than counterterrorism, shared intelligence and other types of military coordination. It's economic stability, domestic social coherence, and some form of trajectory toward resolving the Palestinian problem through a two-state solution. (...) But even short of resuscitating the dormant Israeli-Palestinian peace process, much can be done to improve Israel's relations with Jordan. (...) Jordanians officials are desperate for Israel to help Jordan's economy. (...) Unemployment in Jordan is around 20 percent. In Israel it's in the lower single digits. Burdened by a flow of refugees from Syria, increasingly reliant on foreign aid and entirely dependent on imported energy, Jordan is desperately searching for a horizon of economic prosperity. Jordanian hopes for joint infrastructure projects with Israel such as the shared canal between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, or a shared airport in the south, were dashed. Even when it comes to relatively small endeavors, they say, Israel is not forthcoming.

Jordan has asked, to no avail, that Israel allow it to increase its exports to the Palestinian market from \$100 million to \$400 million annually (...). But Jordan's chief concern regarding Israel's attitude is political. (...) Not surprisingly, Jordan's nightmare scenario is the specter of Israeli West Bank annexation. Jordanians fear such a move would lead to a mass migration of Palestinians – whether forced or unforced by Israel. Netanyahu's recent statements of intent to annex the Jordan Valley as a first step toward full annexation are viewed in the Hashemite Kingdom as an existential threat. That is both because of their possible future impact on the demography of Jordan (...) and because of their devastating impact on Jordanian Palestinians, who view annexation as a death blow to their aspirations for a national homeland. (...)

Ori Nir, HAA, 10.12.19

4. Medienquerschnitt

Neue Siedlung in Hebron

Bennett's dreams are the stuff of nightmares

Defense Minister Naftali Bennett is acting like someone who believes his appointment was not merely an empty gesture, one aimed at filling a crack in the "right-wing bloc" that, for a moment, threatened Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's strategy for entrenching his rule. At the rate he's been making declarations during his three weeks in the post, by the next election Bennett may bomb Tehran, or at least declare that he will. (...) Bennett has now turned to advancing projects for the settlers in the wholesale market area in Hebron. After more than two decades of right-wing settler hallucinations about establishing "territorial contiguity from the Cave of the Patriarchs to the Avraham Avinu neighborhood," Bennett is exploiting his five minutes in the Defense Ministry to ignore a years-long dispute and give his approval to the desired planning process. He's acting as if he isn't defense minister in a transitional government that's operating essentially with no Knesset, at a time when Israel is at a governmental impasse from which it is unclear how or if it will emerge. The army objects to Bennett's moves, which are perceived as a blatant promotion of settler interests. (...) The settlers – through the IDF and the government – had already undermined commercial activity in the Hebron market when they surrounded the area with Jewish neighborhoods. That's how it is in Hebron, where the needs of 800 settlers paralyze and disrupt the routine of a quarter-million Palestinians. Still, Bennett's declarations, which have turned the Defense Ministry into a headquarters for the next election campaign, provide a glimpse into everything a right-wing-settler "bloc" government is dreaming of. When the partner is a prime minister who can be squeezed and who trades in security assets and the state's future for coalition-building purposes, these dreams are liable to become a nightmarish reality. Editorial, HAA, 03.12.19

Abschreckung mit Raketen

Israel's real military deterrence is its missiles

A superpower's deterrence rests on the traditional three pillars of any military: sea - underwater arsenal such as submarines, air - aerial capabilities such as drones and warplanes, and land - infantry weapons such as long-range missiles that have the ability to

carry powerful warheads long distances. This is nothing less than an insurance policy meant to ensure your enemy's destruction before your own. (...) Israel is keeping its insurance policy very close to the chest - with both hands. (...) On December 6, the Defense Ministry announced "an experimental launch of a rocket fueled propulsion system." These experiments are part of routine trials to test or maintain new and various developments, but their deterrence factor is unquestionable. (...) The entire world assumes that Israel has the capability to manufacture intercontinental rockets (...). Over the years, there have been differing reports about a specific missile that can travel 4,000-7,000 km (...), those all using reports a Biblical moniker - "Project Jericho. The name was attributed to a supposed missile model Israel has created in the 60s with the help of the Dassault Aviation company that manufactured Israel's ordnance at the time. According to more recent reports, Israel is actually one of the only few countries who is capable of manufacturing intercontinental missiles, using a government-owned security company known as Tomer. The Iranian equivalent to the supposed Jericho Project, and currently the biggest threat to Israel, are the ballistic missiles known as Shahab-3C and 3D. From what little can be gathered, these models of the Shahab missile boast greater navigational capabilities, greater range and improved precision. So yes, Israel may have flexed its muscles during its last experimental run, but why not? We are after all a superpower. Alex Fishman, YED, 09.12.19

Zu wenig Butter von israelischen Kühen

The Great Butter Shortage

(...) the country has been suffering from a severe shortage of butter. Supermarkets and stores have run out of supplies of locally manufactured butter, and no one is sure who is to blame for this Chelm-like situation in which only imported butter (...) is available at much higher prices. How did the country reach "The Great Butter Shortage" in the first place? Israel's dairy industry is closely regulated by the state, which determines both how much milk is produced and at what prices manufacturers and retailers can sell dairy products, including butter. Butter is produced primarily by Israel's largest manufacturer, Tnuva, and the second-largest, Tara. (...) The Israel Cattle Breeders Association claims that local farmers have been producing less milk because demand from dairy producers decreased.

The Israeli Dairy Board says it is not too blame, but it is government policy to give preference to local manufacturers, thereby protecting the dairy industries on kibbutzim and moshavim. For its part, Tnuva blames the government for the shortage, saying it was doing its best to increase production but the government wasn't allowing it to raise prices. Tnuva rejected any suggestions that local butter is in short supply because it is being exported to China, Canada or elsewhere. A Facebook post showing Tnuva butter being sold in Canada cheaper than in Israel caused a stir on social media. In Israel, Tnuva butter is sold for NIS 3.94 shekels per 100-gram bar (\$1.13) – a price set by the government – while it was photographed being sold in Toronto for 0.97 Canadian dollars per 100-gram bar (0.73 US dollars). The Agriculture Ministry said it had foreseen the shortage of local butter and recommended that the Finance Ministry allow the import of butter without extra tariffs. (...) Israelis want to buy locally manufactured butter, and they are used to paying a certain price for it. The issue is also symbolic. Industry insiders say the butter shortage, which actually began last year, was the result of an intentional move by Tnuva after the Finance Ministry refused to raise the regulated price of butter. (...) both Tnuva and Tara reduced butter production as it became less profitable (...). As a result, consumers turned reluctantly to imported butters. Now that the Finance Ministry is allowing the import of tariff-free butter, and local dairies are again stepping up their production, the Great Butter Shortage – unlike the current political crisis – is expected to be over soon. But the bitter aftertaste will linger on.

Editorial, JPO, 01.12.19

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