



Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

23. März – 5. April 2008

1. Jüdische Siedlungen im Westjordanland

Anfang März war in israelischen Medien von einem Deal zwischen dem Verteidigungsministerium und Vertretern der jüdischen Siedler im Westjordanland berichtet worden, demzufolge 18 Außenposten der Siedler aufgelöst und im Gegenzug neue Häuser in anderen, größeren Siedlungen gebaut werden würden. Premierminister Olmert bestätigte Ende des Monats den angestrebten Bau von neuen Wohneinheiten in Ostjerusalem und Givat Ze'ev. Außenposten sind indes noch nicht geräumt worden, auch wenn das Verteidigungsministerium ankündigte, eine Räumung werde bald beginnen. Die amerikanische Außenministerin Rice rief Israel dazu auf, die Siedlungserweiterungen einzustellen und betonte, dass diese nicht den Obligationen der Roadmap entspreche.

Palästinenser hatten die Siedlungstätigkeiten zuvor als größtes Hindernis für den Friedensprozess bezeichnet.

The folly at Givat Ze'ev

"The admonition delivered to Israel by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice regarding its resumption of the construction of 750 housing units in Givat Ze'ev raises afresh the question of establishing or expanding Jewish settlements in territories generally considered to be Palestinian. [...]"

There are two separate questions relating to settlements. The first relates to their legality and rightfulness; the second to their desirability. [...]"

Settling Jews outside of Israel proper is - it is submitted - illegal in international law and is defective morally. The fourth Geneva Convention, which Israel has signed and ratified, prohibits such settlements. [...]"

In short, Israel, according to its basic laws, aspires to be both Jewish and democratic. Its outposts in the West Bank are Jewish, but not democratic. This is why this writer considers these settlements to be one of Israel's gravest errors - an error which led to

a head-on collision with international law and with our friends overseas.

But the second question is relevant even to Israelis who do not agree with my premises. [...] Is it desirable, from a viewpoint of purely Israeli self-interest, to flout international public opinion and disregard our friends' advice in order to establish settlements in which a small fraction of our population lives? [...]"

In order to survive, we must rely on the active help of others. It is folly to antagonize these others, and above all the US, in order to satisfy the religious and political wishes of a minority. Rice's admonition should be heard loud and clear in Jerusalem."

Amnon Rubinstein, JPO 25.03.08

Fooling ourselves

"Had Peace Now not published reports from time to time, it is doubtful anyone would have been aware of the continuing construction in the settlements. [...]"

It is difficult to understand the point of the High Court's order to remove one mobile home at Har Bracha when the defense minister is approving the construction of 48 new homes in Ariel for settlers evacuated from Gush Katif. [...] The provocative construction in the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem is continuing full speed ahead, under the fraudulent heading of strengthening Jerusalem. [...] It appears there is no point at all in electing a government and formulating coalition guidelines because whether it is a government of the right or left, building in the settlements continues. Israel is continuing to work against itself, against its future, against any chance for the existence of two nation states side by side. [...] If there is any place forbidden for Israel to build even one more house, it is the West Bank, beyond the separation fence and anywhere it is clear to anyone with eyes to see that it is part of the Palestinian state. Such a state is an Israeli interest of the highest order. A new neighborhood in Ariel or Arab Jerusalem will not advance its establishment."

HAA 01.04.08

Point of no return

"The Geneva Initiative organization recently held a conference aimed at "resolving" the "problem" of the settlements. Don't envy them – this is an impossible mission. [...]

The cost of the latest expulsion – some 10,000 people – comes close to some \$5.5 billion (including the army's expenses, the damages inflicted by Qassams and the fortification of the Gaza-vicinity area). The State would not be able to meet the incomprehensible cost of the final expulsion which is set to be 30-times bigger - \$170 billion. [...]

In light of the bitter experience of the first expulsion [...], have the people of the Geneva Initiative looked into the ability of Israeli society to cope with a shock 30-times greater without falling apart? [...]

And what will the people of Geneva say to the ordinary Israelis who will find an armed Arab entity on the doorstep of their towns and villages, come to the conclusion that the Zionist experiment has failed, and take their families out of the narrow valley of death between the Green Line and the sea and leave? Farewell?"

Elyakim Haetzni, JED 01.04.08

We heard you, Mr. Boim

"Housing Minister Ze'ev Boim explained away the construction of 750 new housing units in the settlement of Givat Ze'ev by saying that the permits had been issued in 1999, but that construction had stopped due to, as he put it, the 'outbreak of violence.' That is, the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising. [...] I am one of those who listened, and I understood from his statements that Boim is inviting us - the Palestinians - to start another intifada. [...] After Annapolis, the Paris conference, and the renewal of talks on the highest level, Israel is once more expanding its settlement construction. The conclusion: Only when we launch an uprising does construction in the settlements cease; under the umbrella of negotiations, the settlement enterprise is revived. [...]

Attempts at reminders that the Palestinians have a right to their land and that settlement construction is a breach of international law are of no avail. [...]

What will help? A violent uprising. That is the only thing, according to the Israeli housing minister, that will bring about the cessation of construction in the settlements and protect the Palestinian interest. Mr. Boim, we got the message. Will anyone in Israel yet accuse you of incitement to rebellion and resistance?"

Kadura Fares, HAA 26.03.08

(Der Autor ist ein hochrangiges Mitglied der Fatah und Mitglied der Palästinensischen Koalition für den Frieden)

2. Syrien

In einer Ansprache vor 50 ausländischen Botschaftern sagte Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak Ende März, dass es eines von Israels wichtigsten Zielen sei, Friedensgespräche mit Syrien zu beginnen, während gleichzeitig die Entwicklungen in der Grenzregion genau beobachtet würden. Während des Gipfeltreffens der Arabischen Liga in Damaskus, das ebenfalls in der letzten Märzwoche stattfand, gab der syrische Präsident Assad jedoch an, dass Israel bewiesen hätte, nicht an Frieden interessiert zu sein. Der Gipfel zeigte allerdings, dass Syrien unter den arabischen Staaten aufgrund seiner engen Beziehung zum Iran zunehmend isoliert ist – weder Ägypten, noch Saudi Arabien oder Jordanien entsandten hochrangige Repräsentanten zu dem Treffen.

Spekulationen um die Fortsetzung des syrisch-israelischen Konfliktes flammten Anfang April einmal mehr auf, nachdem in der arabischen Presse von Truppenaufmärschen in Syrien berichtet worden war. Israelischen Befürchtungen zu Folge könnte dies ein Anzeichen für einen bevorstehenden Angriff durch die Hizbollah sein. Dennoch betonte der stellvertretende israelische Stabschef, dass es keinen Grund für Spannungen gebe und keine Seite Interesse an einer Konfrontation habe.

Tomorrow's no-show Arab summit is slap in the face

"Damascus has in recent years tried to have it both ways, strengthening its military and economic ties with Teheran, while maintaining good relations with neighboring states that feel increasingly threatened by the belligerent rhetoric and nuclear ambitions of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government.

Cairo, Amman, Riyadh and the Gulf states have made their displeasure with Damascus on this point known in the past - but as the saying goes, this time it's personal.

[...] This summit will be remembered as a slap in the face to the Syrian dictator from his fellow Arab leaders. [...]

The question now is whether such a development will only help push Assad deeper into an Iranian embrace, or make him better understand the

growing price he (and his country) will pay for that alliance."

Calev Ben-David, JPO 28.03.08

Israel buying time in Gaza, threatening Assad

"On its northern front, Israel faces a threat far greater than any posed by Gaza. [...] The possibility still remains that Hizbullah, perhaps even Syria, might be tempted to launch a massive missile strike or terror attack against Israel in solidarity with their Palestinian brethren, or in retaliation for the assassination of assassinated Hizbullah commander Imad Mugniyah. Especially in the last month this is becoming a more plausible scenario.

In order to deter Hizbullah and Syria from launching such an offensive strike, Israel has sent both parties an unequivocal message: Any prolonged or major strike will lead to a 'disproportionate' Israeli response on Syrian and Lebanese soil. [...]

Israel can also take a political approach to dealing with this northern front. The security establishment recommends that Israel be willing to enter into political negotiations with Syria immediately. Damascus, on its part, would welcome peace talks with Israel in order to escape the isolation it currently faces both in the Arab world as well as on the international arena. If Syrian President Assad feels that Israel is seriously willing to negotiate with Syria, he might be less willing to resort to military action and more willing to reign in Hizbullah."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 30.0.08

Go to Damascus

"Now, as countries in this region are growing weaker, and the terror organizations are growing stronger and working toward the delegitimization of Israel as a state that has no right to exist, it is vital to cut Syria's links with Iran, Hezbollah and the terrorist groups it is harboring. [...]

Syria's alliance with Iran is not a natural one. Since the return of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, Iran's goal has been to topple the traditional regimes in the region, of which Syria is one, and install religious clerics. [...]

An agreement with Syria would strategically change the picture in this region: It would isolate Iran, neutralize the headquarters of the terrorist organizations and strengthen the moderate Islamic regimes. Unlike the Palestinian leadership at the moment, the Syrians, in their bid for international acceptance, are capable of delivering the goods. But only if Israel realizes that secure and recognized

borders come with a price tag, a hefty one, but worth it for peace - the Golan Heights."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 25.03.08

Olmert's agenda

"As for conceding the Golan Heights to Syria, Olmert, after the disengagement tragedy, is not about to try to uproot the over 20,000 Israelis who have been living there for the past 40 years."

Moshe Arens, HAA 24.03.08

Israel's accountability problem

"During his remarks, Olmert claimed that he wishes to conduct negotiations with the Syrian regime towards the surrender of the Golan Heights to Syria. Olmert's statement came just days after President Shimon Peres publicly opposed such negotiations on strategic grounds. [...] But when he spoke approvingly of talks aimed at surrendering the Golan Heights to Iranian-Syrian control, Olmert was not concerned with strategic realities. He was similarly unconcerned with what the Israeli public - which opposes such negotiations - believes is in Israel's national interest. When Olmert made that statement he was interested in what the international, overwhelmingly anti-Israel media would think and write about him personally. And so he went on record supporting an initiative that undercuts Israel's national interests."

Caroline Glick, JPO 27.03.08

3. Barak und die Arbeitspartei

Während einer Fraktionssitzung der Arbeitspartei lieferten sich der ehemalige und der gegenwärtige Parteivorsitzende und Verteidigungsminister Amir Peretz und Ehud Barak einen Schlagabtausch. Peretz warf seinem Nachfolger vor, keine politische Agenda zu haben, woraufhin Barak ihn als erbärmlich bezeichnete. Die Sitzung war einberufen worden, um Richtlinien für das Vorgehen der Partei in der Regierungskoalition zu formulieren. Zuvor hatte Barak in einem Gespräch mit Eltern von im Libanon-Krieg gefallenen Soldaten gesagt, die Arbeitspartei werde die Koalition schneller als erwartet verlassen. Diese Bemerkung hatte in seiner Partei jedoch Verwunderung ausgelöst, insbesondere weil die Arbeitspartei bei Neuwahlen Umfragen zu Folge keine guten Ergebnisse erzielen würde.

A state or a circus?

"Barak's obsession with being reelected is not something to be ashamed of. The man has already been prime minister, and after several years away from the political arena, there is nothing wrong with trying to win the job back, now that he is older and wiser. His conduct as defense minister, Labor chairman, and a human being in general will determine whether or not he is ripe to lead the country. [...] Barak, with all his brilliance, doesn't have a clue when it comes to dealing with internal political machinations. [...]"

With all the current of infighting in the Labor Party, it is not clear what the party needs elections for. None of them – not Peretz, not Barak, and certainly not Olmert – are the knights in shining armor that Israeli voters are dreaming of."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 04.04.08

Security and defense: On the defensive?

"Barak tried to create an image of being 'Mr. Security' and [that] Israel's security was his only concern,' a defense official explained this week. 'But then, when polls continued to show him lagging behind all of his opponents, he began focusing more on politics.'

The polls indeed show that things have not been going as planned for Barak, who continues - despite his efforts to distinguish himself - to lag far behind Likud head Binyamin Netanyahu. This, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert gaining steam and breathing down his neck.

With predictions that elections could be held as early as next year, Barak, his associates say, is feeling the pressure. He also understands that the time to prove himself is now, and that if he ever wants to be prime minister again, he will need to provide security for the residents of Sderot and other Gaza-belt communities."

Yaakov Katz, 27.03.08

Labor, lost

"Labor is disappointed with Ehud Barak. [...] His main goal, Peretz charges, is to become prime minister. His main flaw, everyone agrees, is that he has no agenda. [...]"

In the last two decades, and now especially, Labor has lacked vision. When there is a vision that unites a public of followers, even an average leader can lead a party, and even a state. [...] If Labor holds no interest for the public, it is not because of Barak's remoteness and complexity, nor due to the lack of an 'agenda,' but because Labor, with Barak at the

helm, does not represent something credible and authentic."

Israel Harel, HAA 03.04.08

Fighting is what they do

"There have always been quarrels at the Labor Party, even during its prime years. The greatness is now gone, the party is gone, and all that are left are the personal feuds, in remembrance of the destruction. [...]"

Is it true that Barak has no economic, social and diplomatic agenda? No. He has an agenda, but in terms of economy, society and the Palestinian issue, it is located to the right of the Labor Party's proclaimed views. [...]"

Barak's problem is not a lack of agenda but a lack of direction, a lack of decision. He does well in analyzing what others are doing, but finds it difficult to decide what he should do. The result is a zigzag in every field he touches, from the question of what to do in Gaza to the question of what to do with Olmert. We have a zigzagging Barak."

Nahum Barnea, JED 04.04.08

HAA = Haaretz

HZO = Ha Tzofe

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

IHY = Israeli HaYom

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Verantwortlich:

Hermann Bünz,
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Maike Ziesemer

Anita Haviv

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il