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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

22. April – 3. Mai 2008

1. Waffenstillstand in Gaza?

12 palästinensische Gruppierungen, darunter Fatah, Hamas und Islamic Jihad, haben sich in Ägypten für einen Waffenstillstand im Gazastreifen ausgesprochen. Ägyptische Verhandlungsführer hatten separat mit den unterschiedlichen Fraktionen verhandelt und schließlich von allen die Zustimmung zu einem Waffenstillstandsabkommen erhalten, das eine Waffenruhe im Gegenzug zur Öffnung der Grenzübergänge des Gazastreifens vorsieht. Nachdem die Waffen in Gaza ruhen, soll der Waffenstillstand in einem zweiten Schritt auch im Westjordanland implementiert werden.

Die israelische Regierung hat sich bisher nicht zu dem ägyptischen Vorschlag, der auf dem Grenzübergangsabkommen zwischen Israel und der Palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde von 2005 basiert, geäußert. Zwar haben Regierungsvertreter verlautbaren lassen, dass auf 'Ruhe mit Ruhe' geantwortet werde, andererseits gibt es jedoch Sorge, dass ein Waffenstillstand die Hamas stärken und Präsident Mahmud Abbas weiter schwächen werde. Medienangaben zufolge wird der ägyptische Geheimdienstchef Omar Suleiman in Kürze in Israel erwartet, um die offizielle Reaktion auf das Waffenstillstandsangebot entgegenzunehmen.

Instead of doing nothing

"[E]ven if not all the Palestinian factions, squads and terror cells join the cease-fire, there is great importance in that Hamas, as the entity controlling the Strip, would be bound by it.

It is important because the cease-fire entails Israeli agreement to allow the reopening of the Rafah crossing and thus to restore life in the Strip to a reasonable and tolerable level. That is an essential interest of Hamas, which seeks to prove that it can function as a responsible government for its citizens, and it may be expected to enforce the cease-fire on the other groups as well. [...]

No less important is the facilitation of a period of quiet for the people of Sderot and the western Negev. [...] The creation of an opportunity for calm and for continuing the negotiations without violent interruptions obligates Israel to respond positively to the cease-fire proposal. [...] This is not the ideal outcome of the war of attrition underway now for years along the border, but those who drag their feet in peace talks must make do with a fragile cease-fire." HAA 27.04.08

Hamas hasn't changed

"What motivated Hamas to rush to declare that a lull agreement was closer than ever is its claim that Amos Gilad confirmed that Israel agreed to a deal that is mutual, bilateral, and comprehensive. Hamas understands this to mean the lifting of the siege imposed on the Strip, the opening of the crossings to anyone, and an end to targeted killings. Does the agreement also include an end to Qassam fire by Hamas' subsidiaries? Not for sure. [...]

As it turns out, not only is the distress faced by Gaza residents worsening, but also the distress of Hamas heads in the Strip. The economic siege is indeed taking its toll, the public is impatient and conveys dissatisfaction with its leaders, yet Hamas heads are the ones who need the lull more than anyone. [...]

The cease-fire's purpose is to prepare for the continuation of the struggle and boost the capabilities of the fighters."

Moshe Elad, JED 25.04.08

Border games

"If Israel rejects Hamas' terms for a cease-fire, then Cairo will consider unilaterally opening its border with besieged Gaza Strip. [...] Opening the border between Gaza and Egypt will allow Hamas to reestablish its standing in Gaza. In addition, it will also create a new balance of power in the region. Such a balance may not necessary work against

Israel and Egypt, as it will also require Hamas to abide by the rules expected of governments.”
Zvi Bar’el, HAA 27.04.08

For a ceasefire with Hamas

“I am in favor of Israel accepting a cease-fire with Hamas. [...] If a cease-fire worked, it would bring peace and quiet on both sides of the Israel-Gaza border, while the downside for Israel wouldn't be any steeper than it's already been for several years. By agreeing to a cease-fire we don't have anything to lose, and a lot to gain. If Hamas offers, we should accept.

I know some of you have questions. Such as: What if it doesn't work? What if Hamas keeps firing Kassams? Or what if Hamas upholds the cease-fire but Islamic Jihad doesn't?

The answer is: Then the cease-fire is over and Israel goes back to war in Gaza like we've been doing for the last seven years. Nothing gained, but nothing lost, either. [...]

I don't know whether a cease-fire would hold or not, and neither does anyone else. What we do know, however, is that after years of us bombing Gaza and killing Palestinians, the Kassams are still flying, Hamas has risen to power and the "moderates" are nowhere.

This policy is not working. This policy has failed. A cease-fire with Hamas may bring us more security or it may not, but I don't see how it can bring us any less security than what we've got with the status quo.”

Larry Derfner, JPO 30.04.08

We are also to blame

“[W]e do not need a cease-fire in Gaza, but rather an offensive operation along the lines of Operation Defensive Shield. As you may recall, we embarked on Defensive Shield despite warnings of heavy casualties from politicians, military commentators, and even high-ranking officers on active duty. A handful of those same individuals of little understanding and faith remain to this day in important positions in politics, the media and the army. [...] There are signs that the political echelon is about to accept the truce being offered by an exhausted Hamas. [...]

Terror wears us down, disrupts our lives, deepens our internal rifts, and continues to lower - as in the Beit Hanun tragedy - Israel's shining image in the world. Hence it is a strategic danger. For this reason the end goal of the battle against that terror must not be a cease-fire.

Only total victory - Hamas' request for a cease-fire proves we are not far off - can remove the strategic danger it poses.”
Israel Harel, HAA 01.05.08

2. Spionageaffäre

Am 22. April wurde in den USA der 84-jährige Ben-Ami Kadish verhaftet, dem vorgeworfen wird, als Ingenieur der US-Armee in den 1980er Jahren Militärgeheimnisse an Israel weitergegeben zu haben. Der Spionagevorwurf ist insbesondere von Bedeutung, da Israel 1985 – nachdem der israelische Spion Jonathan Pollard, der bis heute inhaftiert ist, verhaftet worden war – der amerikanischen Regierung garantierte, keine weiteren Geheimdienstaktionen in den USA durchzuführen. Die Aufdeckung Pollards hatte zu einer Krise der US-israelischen Beziehungen geführt. Die amerikanischen Geheimdienste meldeten außerdem Zweifel daran, dass Pollard der einzige israelische Spion gewesen war, und führten ihre Untersuchungen fort. In den israelischen Medien wird darüber spekuliert, ob sie erst jetzt Kenntnis von Kadishs Tätigkeiten erlangten, oder ob seine Verhaftung absichtlich auf diesen Zeitpunkt gelegt wurde, etwa um eine Freilassung Pollards zu verhindern. Kadish soll seine Tätigkeiten bereits vor Pollards Verhaftung eingestellt haben. Er ist inzwischen gegen eine Kaution von 300.000\$ freigelassen worden.

Lying worse than spying

„While we could say that the offences Kadish is charged with cause embarrassment but not damage, because they were committed many years ago, the cover-up took place these days. The result is that Israel not only spied, it also lied. The fury in Washington is focused on the cover-up rather than on the espionage. This, more than any other aspect of the affair, is where the greatest potential for damage lies. When the Pollard Affair was exposed, ties between Israel and the US suffered a harsh blow. Over the years, the relationship was mended, but the suspicions remained, and this sense of wariness was boosted Tuesday when Kadish's story was revealed.

The American wariness is not only directed at the State of Israel, but rather, also at Jews who live in the US and hold senior and sensitive posts in the military and defense establishment there. The stain left by Pollard accompanied all of them. If it turns out

that he was not the only one, the level of wariness will increase accordingly.

Meanwhile, the hopes for commuting Pollard's sentence one of these days have completely evaporated Tuesday."

Orly Azoulay, JED 23.04.08

Don't write off Israel-US ties

"The new espionage affair, the 'Kadish Affair,' will apparently not cause grave damage to the Israel-US relationship over time - not only because it took place and ended almost a generation ago, but mostly because it is in fact an extension of the Pollard Affair, over which Israel had already apologized officially and openly, and which had been beaten to death by the US media. [...] The Bush Administration, which sympathizes with Israel, will certainly not make a big deal out of the new affair, and the next Administration will also likely prefer not to inflate its implications.

The ones who will attempt to exhaust the potential for slamming Israel inherent in the affair are Israel's harsh critics, who are mostly active behind the scenes in the Pentagon, in the US intelligence community, and in the American academia."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 23.04.08

Kiss on the cheek, knife in the back

"It's a bit far-fetched to search for a conspiracy in the exposure of the Ben-Ami Kadish espionage story. Just as there is no cabal of Israel supporters in America, there is also no conspiracy against Israel on the part of its opponents there. [...]

Mixed feelings - professional admiration with national concern - are characteristic of espionage stories between allies, especially when the little fish is spying on the big fish that is protecting him. [...] It doesn't take a grandiose scheme in order to persuade American Jews to photocopy secret information on behalf of Israel. [...] What is needed - and lacking - is cold, strategic thinking in order to understand that this is a dangerous game. The spying in the U.S. helped to shorten development schedules, to save billions, to know the enemy, and at the end of the day perhaps also to save lives - but at the price of jeopardizing the main support column of the State of Israel."

Amir Oren, HAA 24.04.08

Hardball with Washington

"Tuesday was a banner day, a proud day for Jewish conspiracy theorists in America. [...] He's just like Jonathan Pollard, they whooped. Another Pollard! At

last, we have proof that Israel operates spy rings and SLEEPER CELLS in America! They bragged and bragged and smiled and smiled as their terrorist metaphors got wilder and wilder.

Sleeper cells? You mean agents sent to a country to lay in wait for the command to attack? Well, not exactly.

Both the fact that Kadish was released on a paltry \$300,000 bail and the details that have been reported about his case make it pretty clear that Kadish was not a very serious spy. [...]

Most Israeli commentators and unnamed government officials angrily allege that the timing of Kadish's arrest was chosen to damage Israel's relations with the US at a key moment. In two weeks President George W. Bush is scheduled to visit Israel to participate in its 60th Independence Day celebrations. It has been widely presumed that during his visit, the Olmert-Livni-Barak government will seek to secure Bush's agreement to commute Pollard's sentence and release him from prison before Bush leaves office. Kadish, it is alleged, was arrested to block any possibility that Pollard will be released. [...]

It is also possible that Kadish was arrested to try to force Israel to make massive concessions to the Fatah terror group in order to secure a 'peace agreement' between Israel and the PLO before Bush leaves office. In the past, the US has used allegations of Israeli espionage to cow Israel into toeing its line of appeasement towards the PLO."

Caroline Glick, JED 24.04.08

It is still a crime

"The greatest damage of the Kadish case may come from a tiny minority in the Jewish community that seems to justify spying by claiming Washington has not supported Israel with intelligence about its enemies and with political backing.

And they make things worse when they belittle the latest case by ridiculing it as government harassment of an elderly 'zayde.' Such conduct can be as destructive as the crime itself; it says that spying for Israel is not only acceptable but honorable and even necessary - and it reinforces accusations that Jews put loyalty to Israel ahead of loyalty to America. "

Douglas Bloomfield, JPO 30.04.08

3. Holocaustgedenktag

Seit 1959 wird in Israel jährlich am 27. Nisan des jüdischen Kalenders der Yom Hashoa begangen, der Holocaustgedenktag, an dem im ganzen Land mit Zeremonien und Veranstaltungen an die Opfer des Holocausts erinnert wird. Die Medien nehmen diesen Tag zum Anlass, um Artikel zu verschiedensten Themen, die mit dem Holocaust verknüpft sind, zu veröffentlichen. In diesem Jahr galt der Fokus der offiziellen Veranstaltungen den Holocaustüberlebenden und ihrer Rolle beim Aufbau Israels. In den vergangenen Jahren war die Regierung immer wieder heftig kritisiert worden, da sie die übrig gebliebenen Holocaustüberlebenden, von denen heute viele in Armut leben, nicht ausreichend versorgt habe.

The meaning of Yom HaShoa

Yom Hashoa, opens the chance to reflect on the systematic murder of six million European Jews, the modern paradigm of man's inhumanity to man. But this year in particular, and in Israel in particular, two lessons demand a special urgency.

The first relates to Holocaust survivors living here. [...] It is an especially apt moment to call attention to the shameful failure of Israel to fulfill its obligation to survivors here. More than 250,000 Holocaust survivors reside in Israel, [...] some 70,000 of them live in poverty.

[...A] survivor who lives in Germany, France, or Austria, for example, receives on average more financial aid than a survivor living in Israel. This despite the fact, as MK Colette Avital notes, that the Israeli government continues to get \$200 million a year from Germany.

Much of this money, however, never reaches its proper recipients. [...] Last year, State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss published a special report which concluded that mismanagement in the Finance Ministry caused the delay and cancellation of financial support for institutions that assist survivors, and the misdirection of funds designated for survivors. [...]

A second, and much broader lesson also presents a keen challenge today. It is an irony of history that delegitimization of Israel and Jewish nationalism in the name of a progressive 'universalism' now finds fertile ground in the very European soil that hosted the genocide of the Jews. [...] Jews learned that universal human rights are meaningless unless rooted in a state capable of enforcing them; that a sense of national belonging can offer not only

physical survival, but also cultural regeneration; that the national Jewish mission, far from denying the universal human mission, can do much to encourage it - and since the days of the biblical prophets in fact has.

That is the meaning, for us, of Yom Hashoa.

JPO 01.05.08

They chose to rebuild

"As Israel celebrates its 60th anniversary, its population of Holocaust survivors finds itself once again in the spotlight. Passionate discussions of the government's treatment of and attitude towards the survivors, together with a global and national reawakening of interest in the Holocaust, have only fueled this topic. [...] The survivors' first encounter with life in Israel was far from easy. But they did not lose strength or the desire to live. They took nothing for granted, and with little help, they began from scratch. Building towns and kibbutzim, schools and yeshivot, creating new businesses and opening new cultural vistas, the survivors exhibited a creativity and energy that continues to astonish us today. Clinging to their Jewish identity, they quickly became active partners in the most important communal endeavor of the Jewish people of the 20th century - the establishment and development of the State of Israel. [...] Today, as we look around at the modern state of Israel - in the arts, in national defense, in law, in medicine, in the economy, in religious scholarship, into the very faces of our society - we are indebted to the survivors. They are an inspiration to us all."

Avner Shalev, JPO 30.04.08

There are no Holocaust survivors

"Most of the friends of my 95-year-old mother are no longer with us. [...] Like most of her friends who were cataloged in Israel as survivors, remnants, people from the camps and ghettos and forced laborers who saved themselves, to the end of their days they were not saved. [...] The physical, and mainly the emotional wounds [...] turned them into shadows who walked and walk among us in disguise. [...]

There is a great degree of pretense on Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day. Not because there is no intention of remembering it, but because a separation is made between the Holocaust as a general concept for the horror, and the people themselves.

[The survivors] are humiliated not only because their voice has faded and their elbows are weak, but because in the roots of the Israeli consciousness,

their place is missing because they scratch the false collective image of the new Israel.

In the 60 years since the establishment of the State, and the 63 years since the end of World War II, the collective consciousness has not understood that the destruction of European Jewry is one of the sources of strength for the existence of a Jewish state. [...] We grew up on the myth of power, whereas the Holocaust, due to a distorted perception of the founding fathers, was cataloged as weakness. [...] There is a need to admit that those who saved themselves from there did not really get a genuine embrace here. They walked among us, and the handful who remain still walk among us, by dint of existential inertia. Because there are no real Holocaust survivors."

Yehudit Winkler, HAA 01.05.08

Are Auschwitz trips needed?

"A nation needs memories and people need symbols. For that reason, I understand the importance of sending military delegations to Poland, particularly on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. [...] Despite this, I am questioning the need to send youth delegations to Poland. The issue is raised in the media on occasion and prompts debates related both to the high financial cost and to the wild behavior of our high school students.

The basic premise of those who came up with the idea of traveling to Poland was that there was no better way to provide those born in Israel with a sense of the horrors of that period. Yet by doing so they chose to forge the national identity of our youth on the basis of victimization. However, I wonder whether it is appropriate to present the Holocaust as the constitutive ethos of the Israeli existence. [...] As a proud Zionist myself, I disagree not only with the emotional manipulation inherent in those trips, but mostly with the tendency that seeks to reinforce the connection between victimization to Zionism and Israeliness. I believe that the Israeli ethos is made up of many symbols, with the Holocaust being just one of them. However, the trips to Poland distort the proportions."

Gili Haskin, JED 01.05.08

Clear message to the world

"[O]n Holocaust Memorial Day, we are permitted to – and in fact, obligated to – make it clear to others that there will be no situation whereby the State of Israel will be harmed without those who perpetrate this, including their collaborators, paying the full

price for it. The decree "Never Again" does not only mean that no longer will we be defenseless, but also that those who harm us will not be spared.

[...] Recognizing this would ensure the realization of the 'Never Again' decree's original meaning – there will no longer be anyone who will dare rise against us."

Uzi Arad, JED 01.05.08

HAA = Haaretz
HZO = Ha Tzofe
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth
JPO = Jerusalem Post
MAA = Maariv
IHY = Israeli HaYom

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