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Annapolis Spezial

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1. Teilnehmer an der Annapolis Konferenz

Im Vorfeld des Treffens in Annapolis wurde der Teilnahme der arabischen Staaten Syrien und Saudi Arabien, die keine diplomatischen Beziehungen zu Israel unterhalten, große Bedeutung beigemessen. Saudi-Arabiens Außenminister Prinz Saud al-Faisal warnte jedoch, die arabischen Staaten seien "nicht bereit, an einer Theateraufführung" ohne Verhandlungen über die Kernfragen teilzunehmen. Syrien knüpfte seine Teilnahme an die Bereitschaft der USA, die Golanhöhen, die Israel von Syrien 1967 erobert hatte, auf die Tagesordnung der Konferenz zu setzen. Doch indirekt spielte auch die instabile innenpolitische Lage im Libanon eine Rolle. Israel bezeichnete die Zusage der arabischen Staaten als "bedeutsam".

The efforts of the U.S.A.

"70% of success in life is just showing up," said Woody Allen. It appears that with regard to the Annapolis conference, the Americans have embraced the notion: The more come to the party, the higher their ranks, the harder it will be for those set against the conference to define it as a failure. This is the reason the invitations were delayed for so long: The Americans wanted to shape them into a formula that would allow even the most adamant detractors – mainly Saudi Arabia and Syria – to accept. [...]

The last few days have been dedicated by the American foreign office, to persuading the Saudis to send a higher rank, and the Syrians to come at all. As a result the skills of the best rhetorical juggler were put to use – skills enabling them to simultaneously say that: The conference shall deal EXCLUSIVELY with the Palestinian question (any other option would threaten the Palestinians) while at the same time also saying that it will deal NOT

ONLY with the Palestinian question (any other option would not satisfy Syria).

[...] Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has already promised several months ago that "The president of the United States has no interest in summoning people together merely for a Photo-Op" yet, to those following the preparations for the conference over the last week cannot escape the obvious conclusion: Photo-Op it shall be. As such, planners are mostly busy with visual questions: Who will be in the picture, will they smile, where they would be willing to stand. [...]

A line of retreat is also being prepared if need be. "We cannot be blamed for not trying to bring the sides to the table" says Bush Spokeswoman. That, in fact, is the accomplishment the Americans need: International recognition that they did all that could be done. [...] Not peace between Israel and the Palestinians is the center, but rather a "Peace process" that would allow the U.S. to solidify the Middle Eastern coalition it needs in order to stabilize Iraq and block Iran."

Shmuel Rosner, HAA, 21.11.2007

Who comes to the party

"The barometer of pessimism has a new set of measurements: other than the question that has not yet been decided, as to which Arab countries actually show up, all await the rank of those that do. If the foreign ministers of the Arab League decide to attend the conference personally, it shall signal real support. However, if only ambassadors are sent, Abbas will be given to understand that Arab support of the conference is limited and only meant to avoid overly insulting President Bush. The Arab countries can feel some encouragement in the fact that Israel and the U.S. have abandoned their initial stance towards Syria, and invited it to the conference. Having done this they have cracked the classic

separation between "Moderate countries" and "Uncooperative" ones. The Arab support gained by Syria not only in order to resolve the question of the Golan, but, more importantly, in order to receive its cooperation with the appointment of the Lebanese president, does not help President Abbas. Abbas is under immense internal pressure to refuse Annapolis, will be hard put to present a compromising front, if surrounded by Arab ambassadors, who, by virtue of their insulting presence, would forbid him from abandoning historical principles and core issues.

The Arab deliberation about whether or not to attend the conference at all is a sure sign of a weakening in the standing of the United States. [...] It is now apparent that even attendance in a meeting that is merely a ceremony and a Photo-Op becomes an Arab bargaining chip [...] resulting in Israel and the U.S. having to engage in double negotiations – on the one hand with Mahmud Abbas, the original reason and central figure, and on the other with the Arab leaders in an attempt to persuade them to back Abbas up in the negotiations. Thus all the Arab leaders gain a say in the fundamental conditions under which the conference shall even exist.. [...]"
Zvi Barel, HAA, 21.11.2007

2. Vorbedingungen für Endstatus-Verhandlungen

Im Vorfeld der Konferenz in Annapolis sollte eine gemeinsame israelisch-palästinensische Erklärung über die Eckpunkte künftiger Friedensgespräche erarbeitet werden. Die USA bemühten sich beharrlich um eine solche Erklärung. Im Ringen um das gemeinsame Dokument ging es darum, dass die Palästinenser in ihr die Kernprobleme des Nahost-Konflikts zumindest erwähnen wollten: die Grenzziehung, das Flüchtlingsproblem und den Status von Jerusalem. Israel stimmte dagegen bisher nur einer Verpflichtung zur Zwei-Staaten-Lösung zu und wollte die Detailfragen erst in Verhandlungen nach der Konferenz erörtern. Israel forderte als Bedingung für die Aufnahme des Friedensprozesses die Anerkennung Israels als jüdischen Staat.

Peace is not a game

"Why, instead of trying to bypass any obstacle on the way to Annapolis, has Olmert fallen with his eyes open into this sticky mire? Does he truly believe that Abbas should give up this card (i.e. recognition of Israel) prior to the opening of

discussions on core issues? And if so – is the prime minister willing to give him a concession of equal value? [...]"

Checking with sources closest to the preparation of the Annapolis conference on the Israeli side shows that the decision to demand the high price of recognition of the state of Israel as a prerequisite to any other negotiations was taken with [...] haste, without the government asking for estimation as to the chance of the Palestinian side accepting it, or the life expectancy of a Palestinian partner (in the political sense), that is in favour of the "two states" solution, that would accept these terms should the conference consequently fail."

Akiva Eldar, HAA, 22.11.07

High risk, low chance

"The whole of the security mechanism, with its many branches is due to appear before the Israeli cabinet today, to elaborate on the many dangers as well as low chances for success of the Annapolis conference. [...] according to estimations of the various military and civil defence systems, the chances that the Palestinians will be able to uphold any security obligation, fight terror, and achieve any significant results is slim to none.

On the same subject, there is almost no chance that Abu Mazen's forces will regain control of the Gaza strip. As a result, these same sources estimate that any agreement between Israel and Abu Maazen is unenforceable as long as Gaza is part of the Palestinian authority, as well as under Hamas rule. On the other hand they are aware that not appearing at Annapolis or forgoing the conference carry a very large risk of the Hamas taking over the West Bank as well. [...]"

Ben Kaspi, MAA, 21.11.2007

The camp is burning - Interview mit MK Avigdor Lieberman, Yisrael Beitenu

"It is sad to say, but most people that lecture us over Jerusalem, have no idea not about the geography of it, or the topography, and most definitely not about its demographic issues. The distance between [the mostly Arab populated areas of] Bethlehem or Beit Jiala and [the Jewish neighborhood of] Gilo is near non existent. [...] What is stopping the Hamas in the West Bank is not its distance from Jerusalem but the presence of the IDF. The second we are no longer there, or we transfer control to Abu Mazen, the Hamas will take over. Abu Mazen represents no

one, and has no control over the territory; he lives thanks to the IDF. The second we are gone so will he be[...]. "

Q: So, you are in truth, giving Olmert an Ultimatum?
"[...] No, as far as I am concerned, the true test is his ability to stay true to one subject – our declaration of independence: The state of Israel as a Jewish state above all."

Q: Where did that come from? Where did you bring that insistence, suddenly? Why should we let Abu Mazen decide the nature of the state?

"Because the real dispute with the other side is not one of topography, but of demographics. It is a dispute of the future nature of the state. Whether it is a Jewish state or a binational one, this is the true nature of the argument.

When I raised the subject of the Israeli Arabs, I was called a racist and Arab Hater. Today it is obvious, when looking at the goal of the [Israeli Arab] "Tracking committee" that state that they shall never recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people.

[...] I believe that the vast majority of the Israeli Arabs are good and loyal citizens. [...] I would expect them to create an alternative leadership to the Committee.

It is obvious that if Abu Maazen and Salam Fayad are not willing to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, it means that they have no intention of founding a Palestinian one, but rather, of disassembling the Jewish one. Abu Maazen is now looking for allies within the Palestinian people, and his main ones now are [Israeli-Arab MKs] Tibi and Baraka. If that is the case, then the first thing they should do after Annapolis is recognize Israel as a Jewish state, as we have recognized the Palestinian Right to independence long ago. If we do not make such a claim, there should be no negotiations".

Ben Kaspi, MAA, 23.11.07

Local Opinion

"Annapolis may be a good place for a Photo Op, but it is not a place where a long lasting a just peace process will spring from"- That was the summary of the members of the Balad [Israeli Arab very left wing party] and other political and social parties within the Arab community. [...] "As in any issue, it is hard to find a complete consensus within the Arab street, with regards to the Annapolis conference".

"The fate of the conference is already doomed before it starts due to the lowering of expectations, but if we are discussing a conference that is meant to be the first stepping stone for the beginning of the negotiations, then we return to the Madrid

conference," said [former MK] Bashara [now living in Jordan] in a screened speech. "We are now 15 years later, and we all know what the results were and what the reality is. We could have accepted Madrid as merely an opening ceremony. There is no point in having another festivity that is meant to mark the beginning of a campaign to normalize relations with Israel, and serve as a life vest for Olmert – left bleeding after the second Lebanon war".

"The slogan of "Two countries for two people", that is unfortunately being adopted even by Arab parties, receives here a meaning with dangerous consequences," said MK Gamal Zhalka [chairman of Balad]. "

Jacki Huri, HAA, 25.11.2007

A weak starting point

"Neither side shall initiate or take any steps that change the status of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza strip [...] until the full implementation of the agreement". This was one of the sentences of the Palestinian draft to the joint document that was to be accepted in Annapolis, and it appears in the summary chapter. One might have expected it to be one of the few sentences in the draft that would be agreed upon both sides. [...] Israel has signed it before. When members of the PLO and several other states wanted to claim that the construction in the territories was violating the Oslo agreement, they based their claims on that sentence.

The basic question is: Why was the Palestinian side satisfied with such a worn sentence? Why not prevent Israel from illegally altering more and more of the geographical conditions in the West Bank? As it is only a draft, it would make sense for the Palestinians to start from a higher bargaining point with more specific demands: To freeze all building in the settlements, to cease seizing of lands, to stop the building of roads, to remove blockades. As far as the Palestinians are concerned those are just the counter demands to Israel's demands of the fight on terrorism, extremism, etc. all of which are included in the draft, and some of which are signed by the Palestinians.

[...] The lack of an explicit demand to cease the expansion of the settlements fits right in with the negotiating tactics of the PLO and the Palestinian authorities, as they were defined during Oslo [...] according to this tactic, during the negotiations with Israel they will stand up for their own, leaning on all international agreements, and then everything will

be removed anyway: fences, settlements, blockades. That is why the Palestinians resist the more abstract definition of "Israel as the state of the Jewish people" and do not insist on including "Until the final signature Israel will freeze construction in the settlements". The problem is, of course, that during this intermediate period Israel creates vast changes in the West Bank, with the intention that those changes have an impact on any agreement. That is why the Palestinian draft represents a very weak starting point, even a defeatist one, from the view point of the Palestinian expectations from their Leadership."

Amira Hass, HAA, 24.11.2007

At the end of all ends

"When all the Israeli Prime Ministers return from Annapolis, and from the conference after it in Seattle, and maybe the one after that in Omaha; after the horns and festivals of peace are done; in one year, or five, or ten, this shall be the situation: The state of Israel will return home, many settlements beyond the "green line" will be dismantled, nearly 200,000 settlers in Judea, the Shomron and the Golan will build new houses or rent apartments in what was once called, and probably will be again, "Little Israel", more or less in the borders of 67'. Jerusalem, alas, shall be the capital of two states. If it won't happen in the days of Olmert, then in those of Netanyahu, or Barak, or Livni, or someone we cannot yet name.

Let there be no misunderstandings: Personally, this is exactly what I would NOT want to happen. I too, like many Israelis, would like an Israel as large as it is today, as strong, as assertive, as independent. Sorry. That's not what's going to happen in the next years and generations.

What is written here was obvious right after the six day war, which is why the government of Levi Eshkol decided to return all the territories immediately, should the Arab nations agree to peace.

It is equally obvious to all, even today, in conversations off the record with well known Right wing leaders, what is going to happen. Other than the Marshal Islands and Micronesia, no one in the world supports the idea of "The greater Israel", and those that know what the world could do to Israel in 2008, knows that the time for deliberation is over, this is probably what we are going to have to do.

When that happens and the state of Israel comes home, the shock may be unbearable, and it may break the neck of this hard, beloved, country. At that

time files and dusty folders will be brought out into the light from dark archives. [...] People will lay them all out in the open, and ask, rightly: Where were we and what were we doing? How did we not accept THAT plan, or the other one? And why did we stone (and once even shoot at) the people that came and said: Take this, it's all that there is. Any other plan will be worse.

A peek into the annals of history would reveal that we could have had an acceptable and moderate, though Jordanian, rule of the Judea, and with all, or at least most, of Jerusalem Jewish. We could have had full peace with Syria (probably without the Golan, or with it leased for generations) and many more "ifs" and the hardest question of them all: if this is what we get after near on half a century, what was all the killing, of us and of them, what was it all for? [...] And that is why Annapolis is only another step, just one, in a tall building - full of floors and stairways, and on each one lie the bodies of saints and innocents, as many as the stars in the night sky."

Eitan Haber, JED, 25.11.07

True or false peace

"Israel is a peace seeking country, but we must not let that yearning blind us to the difference between false and true peace. The question is not whether or not to go to Annapolis, but rather how much the entry ticket has already cost us. In order to get to the conference the Olmert Government approved the release of hundreds of prisoners, and the handing over of 25 armoured cars, a thousand rifles and 2 million bullets, against the council of the IDF. Has anyone any doubt into whose hands those weapons will fall, and against whom they will be turned?

[...] the first condition for true peace is a partner that is both willing and able to bring about peace.

[...] We might at the very least learn from experience. Also in the second Camp David settlement Barak gave all, and got nothing but a wave of suicide bombings. We got murderous terror instead of true peace because we did not have a true partner, and because the negotiations were handled in poorly.

That is precisely the situation today. To sign with a weak Abu Mazen is the same as building a sky scraper with no foundations - sooner or later the building will collapse.

It can be done otherwise. A responsible government must negotiate assertively, persistently and proudly. It would advance in a practical fashion the economic development of peace seeking Palestinians, while

encouraging them to form stable political structures. A responsible government would take care of security, insist on mutual dealings and know well the difference between true and false peace."

Benyamin Netanyahu, JED, 26.11.07

3. Bilanz der Annapolis Konferenz

Dem US-Präsidenten gelang es, beim Nahost-Treffen in Annapolis ein Abkommen von Israelis und Palästinensern mit konkreten Rahmenbedingungen für die bevorstehenden schwierigen Verhandlungen zu treffen. Erst sie werden zeigen, wie viel das Treffen von Annapolis wirklich wert ist.

Trotz der vereinbarten Aufnahme von Friedensverhandlungen ist in Israel wie in den palästinensischen Gebieten wenig Optimismus zu spüren. Während Israelis die Ereignisse im fernen Annapolis mit Skepsis verfolgen, ist auf palästinensischer Seite die Ablehnung mit Händen zu greifen.

Why are they praying?

"Thousands of people, headed by the Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu, once chief rabbi, gathered Monday before the Wailing Wall in order to say a prayer. [...] They were there in order to request the aid of Heaven in the failure of the Annapolis conference.

At the base of the Conference there stands a true wish to bring about Peace. The "religious" right in Israel has its own opinions as to the conditions of such a peace, but it does not oppose the IDEA of a peace, the idea of an end to all war. And yet it gathers in its thousands in order to call upon the heavens to break up the meet at Annapolis [...]

When [the religious right] defines the conflict with the Palestinians in religious terms, it is leading to a dead end. It is one thing to haggle over the security arrangements and quite another to fight for the ancestral rights for the whole of the land based on Holy Scripture. The attitude of the masses by the Wall is an inevitable road to endless bloodlettings.

The secular right has no viable alternative to a renewed effort at starting talks with the Palestinians. It is true that the accumulated experience since the Oslo agreements supplied ammunition for the Likud and other right wing parties in their battle against the surrendering of territories: The way Arafat handled himself since he returned to Gaza, and the results of the withdrawal have shaped the Israeli opinion. The suicide bombings, the Kassams, the rise of the Hamas and the backstabbing behavior of the

Palestinian leadership have left their mark on the Israeli public and obscured the donations made to this situation by its own leaders in various stages along the way.

And even so the secular Right comes empty handed when it objects to the Annapolis conference. It brings no alternative to end the conflict, only empty words [...]

[...] Much like the religious reasoning would eternalize the conflict the secular right offers no end. Much as the claim to the whole country by Holy Writ makes the violence unsolvable, so the earthly arguments do not promote the sides when it starts from the assumption that there is no one to talk to [...]."

Uzi Benzimen, HAA, 28.11.07

There are no shortcuts to security

"The first time the Palestinian security forces headed by Jibril Rajub had to report to the Israeli side of a hostile bombing squad leaving to attack Israel, the sky nearly fell on Ramallah. This was towards the end of 95', when the security appendix of the Oslo B agreement had just started being implemented. Rajoub was faced with the legacy of many Palestinian generations that stated that there was no worse crime than to squeal to the "Zionist Enemy" about another Palestinian "Fighting to free the conquered land". [...]

The creators of the Oslo agreement wanted an agreement centered on the "Security appendix"- the engine that would pull the whole Oslo train. That was not to be: it was obvious from the first that the Palestinian legacy would outweigh the Oslo logic. The security appendix was born and raised a bastard.

[...] There is no doubt that the biggest obstacle faced by the Palestinians in the Oslo treaty was their willingness to coordinate their action with the Israeli security forces. It is important that we remember that as far as Israel is concerned there exists in the Palestinian society a Taboo born of one hundred years of ongoing conflict. It includes a line of "prohibitions" such as selling land or cooperating with the enemy. Breaking these rules was punishable by death. The transgressor threw himself and his family knowingly out of Palestinian society.

When Rajoub and Dahlan tried to lay out their plans for the budding Palestinian security forces, they run into this wall. The Israeli side viewed this as a break of the agreement. The road from there to the abandonment of the cooperation was short and swiftly traveled.

[...] There is one main conclusion to be drawn from this problem: the implementation of the security appendix cannot come separately, cannot be started unconnected to an overall solution for the conflict. Readiness and willingness to cooperate on security issues (on both sides) will exist only when there is readiness and willingness to sign a true peace treaty, without dilemmas or byways. "
Moshe Elad, HAA, 28.11.07

Escapism

"Talking was never our problem. Exciting, brave, full of good intentions, all the superlatives have been endlessly repeated when referring to the speeches of different leaders in different conferences. In fact, if we were to line up the speeches from Annapolis, Shepherdstown, Camp David, Y Plantation, Akaba - and the list goes on, we would discover how repetitive history is. And how sad that is [...] every time we would like to believe that this is it: this time that Hollywood magic will work [...] that these two suffering people, that are the whole story, will finally live in peace [...] and perhaps the difference in Annapolis was just that: this was the first time where it seemed the leaders are more interested for the conference to take place, more so than their people. They believe in it more than millions of Middle Easterners that sat skeptically, not to mention apathetically in front of their TV sets. As far as the Israeli and Palestinian people are concerned this is no more than another festive meeting of leaders fleeing a burning reality for two days. Escapism, that's the name for it.

It is very easy to list the immediate achievements of the conference: the impressive attendance, the united front against Iran, the outlining of a time frame for a complete agreement, as well as specific schedules for the negotiations, a return to the Roadmap, a repeated commitment by the US towards Israel as well as a good, a really good, atmosphere. A conference of good intentions. How shall one put this? Were it not for our previous (bad) experience, we were as in a dream.

President Bush promised us an agreement by the end of 2008. In Sderot they would have settled for two weeks without any missiles, but Abu Maazen cannot guarantee even that much. And Olmert? Even before the negotiations began Yishai and Lieberman are shaking their fists and threatening political war.

So what did we actually get at Annapolis? Good people with good intentions but without the ability to bring about their realization. [...]"

Sima Kadmon, JED, 28.11.07

Cheap Pessimism

"The day will come when we will be forced to ask ourselves why we insisted on ignoring what went on in front of our eyes.

Many weeks prior to the Annapolis conference reporters stated and world wide were mourning its premature demise. They were telling us of its inconsequence, the fact that none of its participants can "supply the goods". Paradoxically, it was this lack of seriousness that allowed all the leaders to prepare the conference in relative peace.

Yesterday those same correspondents were supposed to have realized that the rumours of its death were not only premature, but completely irresponsible. Long before the speeches it was obvious that a lot more is going on here than we were promised: the extended Arab presence, the attendance of over 40 countries, the Syrian decision to show up, the recruiting of the help of the EU and, actually, the violent demonstrations against the conference in Hebron and Gaza as well as the noisy venom spewed by Ahmadinejad. If it's such an irrelevant conference, what got the bee in their bonnet?

And then came the joint declarations, and the tight negotiation schedule set out by Bush, Abu Mazen's recognition of our need to abolish terror and Olmert's speech to the Palestinian people, and suddenly we were there again: inside the peace process. The Roadmap, as you may recall, should have been implemented back in 2005. For over two years the "Cart of peace", as the Prime Minister called it, has been standing in the barn and collecting dust. Now someone has opened the barn doors. We may not yet be on our way, but we have definitely started blinking at the bright light suddenly streaming in.

Cynics, however, never give up. Minutes after President Bush shook hands with Olmert [...] we were flooded with ridicule and admonition, half baked explanations, and self satisfied vicious interpretations.

[...] One must not underestimate the honesty of Olmert and Abu Maazen's intentions. Both of them have more to lose from the process started in Annapolis, and we should ask ourselves why they still decided to commit to it in front of the whole world.

Pessimism, much like Cynicism, is a wonderfully easy solution. It is also a conservative trait of people who believe that one must commit only to the reality

that one knows. I read Henry Kissinger's new book this week, and he chose to end it with an old Spanish proverb: "Roads do not exist; they are created by those who walk them". "

Yair Lapid, JED, 28.11.07

The IDF catch

"The declaration in Annapolis, regarding the beginning of a move towards a permanent settlement – with deadlines for execution, faces the Israeli security services with an intolerable situation. It must maneuver between a compulsory political timetable that demands measured military moves on the one hand, and a deep security crisis that includes the high probability of terror attacks and attempts to sabotage the negotiations [...] we have faced this situation before- in 95'-96' [...] at the time, when the wave of terror resumed the then Prime Minister Rabin coined the phrase: "We shall fight like there are no talks and talk like there is no fighting". It did not work. The security forces could not balance well enough. The Palestinians could not or would not subdue terrorism, Israel hesitated in order not to hurt the peace process or weaken the fragile Palestinian leadership and was beaten. Terror won.

This lesson is worrying the security forces with the approach of 2008 talks, as it is obvious that the Hamas and Iran will do all that is in their power to fail them. The estimate is that the Hamas will try not to provoke a full on onslaught of the IDF, but it is in the state of military awakening and revitalization for several months: new cells, new squads that have now moral or pragmatic problem with mass terror attacks [...] it is possible that there will be no Intifadah like popular uprisings, as the street is tired and disillusioned, but terror and attempts to dishearten the Palestinian authorities and the Israeli public will power – those are definitely to be expected. And under all these threats the IDF is supposed to tip toe around so as not to harm the Palestinian authority. This is a catch, a paralyzing catch: it is like winning with one hand tied. [...]

Any attempt at a short cut and transfer military responsibility too early over to the Palestinian security forces will turn the west bank into what we see today in the Gaza strip: the building of a military force that would shoot at Israel from the west bank.

Either way, whether the peace talks lift off or not, we are facing a tumultuous year in the territories."

Alex Fishman, JED, 28.11.07

Only Bush can

"If there is one lesson to be learned from Annapolis it is the absolute vital role of American leadership involvement in the peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It was only the insistence of the American Secretary of State and the support she got from the President that brought the foreign ministers of most the Arab countries, as well as the elite of international diplomacy to Annapolis to clap for Olmert and Abbas and to push them on their way to another attempt, be it desperate and full of political potholes as it may be, at a permanent settlement. [...] The strength of the United States lays in its ability to go through changes and come out the other side strengthened, that and the fact that the United States cannot be refused. Olmert had excellent excuses to turn down Rice's ideas. [...] Abbas had wonderful reasons of weakness and lack of ability preventing him from entering into negotiations. The Saudis had steadfast justifications to stay home while the occupation continues and the settlements are still in place.

And yet they each changed their minds and reversed their claims once they found out that Bush was unflinchingly behind the initiative, and was not exempting anyone.

[...] and yet the only chance for the success of the process, or at least measurable advance within it, lies with a continued American leadership. If the American government will once again reserve its involvement, the Annapolis conference and all the following declarations and events will disappear without a trace."

Aluf Ben, HAA, 29.11.07

The end of "the great hopes"

"The identity of the main actors was different, but other than that everything else – especially the verbal exchange and the settings in Annapolis – was frighteningly familiar. It was reminiscent of half a dozen other "Monumental Peace moments". All of which ended in bloodbaths [...]

There were huge headlines festively declaring "and end to the shedding of blood and tears" [...]

The Israeli leaders did not forget to mention that peace was signed over and against the protestation of "anti truce" forces back home. It was not many days later when the tears, in amounts not seen before, were shed again from the eyes of mothers, fathers, brothers daughters, relatives and loved ones. Arafat, after his pretty speech on peace in Washington started sending suicide bombers at us that blew themselves up in Cafés, buses and places of business [...] the same happened to Peres, and

then Netanyahu and Barak [...] It is true that in Annapolis cautious hope and the feeling of quite festivity took the place of euphoria. But festivity too is out of place. Suffice to watch the violent demonstrations in the West Bank, the strongholds of Abu Maazen, to understand how little support he enjoys. Let alone to mention Gaza."

Israel Harel, HAA, 29.11.07

HAA = Haaretz
HZO = Ha Tzofe
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth
JED engl. = www.ynetnews.com
JPO = Jerusalem Post
MAA = Maariv

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