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1. Bennetts Vermittlungsversuch zwischen Moskau und Kiew

Auf die guten Beziehungen zu beiden Konfliktparteien setzte Israels Regierungschef Naftali Bennett bei dem Versuch, zwischen Moskau und Kiew zu vermitteln. Bennett reagierte damit auf die Bitte des ukrainischen Präsidenten Wolodymyr Selenskyj. Bereits im Vorfeld seiner Reise nach Russland dämpfte der israelische Ministerpräsident die Erwartungen. Die Aussicht auf einen Erfolg sei gering, meinte er, doch es sei seine "moralische Pflicht", zumindest einen Versuch zu unternehmen. Im Anschluss an die Gespräche im Kreml reiste Bennett weiter nach Berlin, um sich mit Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz über den Krieg zu beraten. Über Details seines Gesprächs mit Vladimir Putin habe er keine Auskunft geben wollen, hieß es. Israel verhält sich in dem Konflikt mit äußerster diplomatischer Vorsicht. Aus sicherheitspolitischen Interessen will man die Gunst Putins nicht gefährden. Russland lässt Israels Luftwaffe bei Angriffen auf iranische Ziele in Syrien und im Irak bislang frei gewähren.

Russia-Ukraine: Naftali Bennett's gamble to stop Putin's war

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett made a bold and unexpected move (...) when he traveled to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin (...) thus placing himself in the role of mediator in an effort to stop Putin's war on Ukraine. (...) The mis-

sion was an important one. The horrendous footage of bombed Ukrainian cities and the heart-breaking stories of the more than a million people, who turned into refugees overnight, are reminders that the sooner this war is ended the better. And certainly it cannot be allowed to escalate. (...) Israel (...) has close ties with both Russia and Ukraine and Bennett is in a special position to use them. But the situation is complex. (...) So far, Israel has made a great effort to maintain a diplomatic balancing act, supplying humanitarian, but not military, aid to Ukraine and not calling out Putin by name. (...) Israel is unique in its desire as the Jewish state to help rescue the Jewish communities in Ukraine, without putting the Jews living in Russia at risk. (...) It is well known that Israel maintains coordination with Russia regarding operations over the border, aimed at preventing Iranian entrenchment and the transfer of weapons to Hezbollah. These are prime security interests for Israel, which it does not want to endanger by openly siding militarily with Ukraine. Nonetheless, Israel is clearly a partner with the West which stands behind Ukraine's right to maintain its independence and sovereignty. (...) One of the risks of Bennett's self-appointed role as mediator is that it could create a linkage between the Iran deal and the conflict in Ukraine. (...) On the other hand, if Bennett succeeds, Israel will be in a stronger position to make demands to amend the emerging deal. Bennett's move was bold, but also a gamble. If mediation fails, the image of the Israeli prime minister

sitting across the table from Putin while the Russian president still pounds Ukraine could haunt Bennett and the country. (...)
Editorial, JPO, 06.03.22

Israel's attempt to mediate between Russia and Ukraine could be costly

(...) Bennett's mediation attempt (...) began after the visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Israel (...). Scholz, who has already been tagged as light-handed when facing the Russians, has a lot to lose if engaged in direct contact with Putin, who in Western eyes is seen for what he really is - a war criminal. In that respect, Israel's premier is a great candidate to talk to the Kremlin. Israel is not formally a part of Western Europe; it has strong interests in keeping good relations with Moscow because of the Jewish communities in both Ukraine and Russia and the security coordination between Israelis and Russians on Syria. (...) How can the next phase of the invasion, which is expected to be much deadlier, be prevented? In other words, we should be asking what is the right path to prevent escalation rather than how to achieve peace? Intelligence agencies in the West continue to believe that Putin is determined to occupy the entire Ukraine (...). They say he is determined to fight more and more, that they see no signs of him willing to stop, quite the opposite. The Ukrainian resistance convinced Putin that he should make them suffer even more. (...) so far, the Western intelligence was right about the Ukrainian crisis. Bennett's mediation campaign, despite his truly noble goal, continues to be a high-stakes gamble with a potentially devastating outcome. The Lapid-Blinken meeting will be critical in this context; If Blinken will express even the slightest disapproval of Israel's moves thus far, Jerusalem should make an immediate U-turn away from the mediation attempt and start with a quick assessment of damage. Nadav Eyal, YED, 07.03.22

The Russian-Ukraine war may be a gas opportunity for Israel

Just like Israel was unexpectedly thrust into the middle of negotiations to seek an end to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, when Prime Minister Naftali Bennett flew to Moscow and held multiple conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, another unexpected war-related issue is also bringing Israel to the spotlight and presenting it with a unique opportunity. Europe could end up short 40 million tons of natural gas, around 10% of its annual consump-

tion, should Russian shipments dry up due to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, pressuring the region to explore alternative sources of fuel. (...) Europe's natural-gas shortage, which has pushed prices to multiyear highs, has revived talk of the EastMed pipeline, a Mediterranean Sea pipeline that could carry gas from Israel to European customers (...). Many European countries are heavily reliant on Russian energy. (...) Israel is poised to be a big help in alleviating the energy shortage that much of Europe could be facing. In December, Bennett held talks with his Greek and Cypriot counterparts. Among the topics discussed were the EastMed gas pipeline and the Euro-Asia Interconnector, the world's longest and deepest undersea power cable, which will help prepare the region for a clean-energy transition. (...) With the current war, the pipeline could also be vital for Europe. But while it presents Israel an opportunity to revitalize the EastMed gas pipeline plan, which would benefit the state, caution is advised in proceeding. Israel can't be seen as taking advantage of, or exploiting for financial gain, the hardships facing Europe as a result of the continent's energy crisis. It won't take much - or anything - for Israel's detractors to warp a prospective pipeline into a ploy by the Jewish state to gain an influential foothold on the European continent. (...) It is incumbent on Israel to explore ways to push forward the plan with or without the participation or approval of the US. But it needs to be done smartly, quietly and with nuance. Israel may benefit by the pipeline, but the focus - for now at least - needs to be on the millions of people it will help.

Editorial, JPO, 08.03.22

Regrettably, Mediation Will Not Win Us the World's Heart

(...) Naftali Bennett has been flying from capital to capital in an attempt to mediate between Russia and Ukraine. He has been making long phone calls with leaders from around the world and seems to have positioned Israel in unfamiliar territory—the middleman. Israel, the country that is usually the target of criticism and condemnation, and which often uses middlemen to communicate with its enemies, has found itself on the conciliator seat. (...) Israel has always been a special nation among the nations. (...) The world does not welcome us among them. Nevertheless, both Russia and Ukraine seem to have accepted Bennett's mediation and at least on the surface, they seem to play ball. For its part, the rest of the world, too, seems quite comfortable with Israel's unusual position, as the Israeli PM reports to

the US, France, and Germany about his efforts and receives their blessings. However, for all his efforts, Bennett will not make peace between the adversaries. Perhaps he will be able to negotiate an armistice, in the best-case scenario, but not peace. (...) The Israeli nation was formed when people of numerous tribes and clans united in the spirit of the above motto of mutual complementarity, and engendered a new nation made of all the nations in the ancient world. In a sense, they demonstrated the method by which humanity can achieve world peace. Because the Jewish people consists of members of all the nations, all the nations feel they have a stake in the Jewish people. And because of our unique role, to demonstrate the method for achieving strong and lasting peace, they feel entitled to criticize us when they feel that we are betraying our calling. When we make peace within us, we indirectly make peace among all the nations of the world, precisely because we contain them within us and they are our origin. Therefore, if we want to end wars once and for all, we need to carry out the one and only task that the Jewish people has ever been given: to be a model of unity, a light unto nations, and the world will support us in our efforts.
Michael Laitman, TOI, 09.03.22

The real danger of Putin's 'Nazi' slur for Ukraine, Israel and the world

(...) Since those fateful days of the Maidan revolution in February 2014, when Putin's satrap Victor Yanukovich was ousted from power, the Kremlin has depicted Ukraine as a dangerous, radical place run by fascists and neo-Nazis. (...) And it wasn't just Ukraine that was tarred as "neo-Nazi," "pro-Nazi" or just "Nazi" during the last eight years. Europe at large, and specifically Poland and Germany, were described by Russian propagandists as leaning towards Nazism, while Russia was depicted as the last bastion against it, just like in June 1941 when Hitler attacked Soviet Union. (...) In Putin's Russia, each year the parades became grander, and the rhetoric around them – more aggressive and edgy. (...) The narrative is black-and-white: The Ukrainians were antisemites and Nazis, while the Russians were Red Army liberators who are still fighting against Nazism today. All this flies in the face of the obvious facts that all Soviet citizens served in the Red Army, including Ukrainians, while antisemitism was widespread in both the Russian Empire and in Soviet Union. At this point the Israeli connection comes to mind. Among 1.2 million Russian-speaking Israelis, there were and are many Red Army veter-

ans, real heroes who marched all the way to Berlin, who liberated Auschwitz and the capitals of Europe. Victory Day is still celebrated by many Israelis who made aliya from the former Soviet Union, who know well that if not for that hard-won victory, there could be no future for the Jewish people anywhere. This sentiment, and the recognition of ex-Soviet Jews' heritage, encompassing not only the Holocaust, but also fighting in the Red Army (...) has been exploited by Moscow to recruit Israel and its institutions in its narrative war against Ukraine and Europe. (...) There is no doubt that in recent years antisemitism has been on the march around the globe – mostly in Europe and in U.S. – as reflected in the data collected by many monitoring organizations. There is no reason to be oblivious to or forgiving of the fact that in Ukraine, in common with many other countries on the continent, there are neo-Nazi and extreme right groups who march with torches, brandish swastika tattoos and incite if not commit violence. These kinds of displays cannot be tolerated, not in Ukraine, not in the U.S., and not in Russia. However, when these facts are inflated beyond any proportion and interpreted as equal to the Nazi threat to humanity in 1939, Israel should be alarmed. When Russia raises a false "denazification" flag to justify invading a democracy with a thriving Jewish community, a sizable population of Israeli citizens, a Jewish president, Jewish MPs and legislation that criminalizes antisemitism, Israel should stand up and resist. Putin's "de-nazification" drive is both false and dangerous. (...)

Ksenia Svetlova, HAA, 09.03.22

Bennett's gamble

(...) when tensions at the Ukraine-Russia border – between two strong allies of Israel – rose to new levels last fall, it was difficult to predict how Bennett would handle such a complicated geopolitical challenge. (...) it now looks as if Bennett has emerged as a key interlocutor with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and may even end up playing a critical role in brokering a peace deal at some point. And Bennett's new role at the center of the tensions has also given him greater influence in the ongoing Iranian nuclear negotiations. (...) For years, Israel's lobbying efforts against an Iranian deal have largely fallen on deaf ears. But now Bennett is not just pleading for his country's security, but may be playing a role with Putin that will force Western leaders to take his warnings more seriously. (...) unlike his predecessor Benjamin Netanyahu, whose vociferous opposition to the entire deal left him sidelined as it was final-

ized, Bennett has been focused on making sure negotiators understand that some aspects of the potential agreement will be more damaging than others. This may allow Israel to have more of an impact as an influencer of a final deal than would have been the case with a more absolutist approach. And Bennett will now be in the room with the key players for the foreseeable future as the war in Ukraine continues to worsen. (...) The best possible outcome for Israel would be to maintain its relationship with Russia, continue to protect its own interests in Syria, provide for the safety of Ukrainian refugees, strengthen its ties to Western Europe and enhance its stature on critical global matters outside the Middle East – all without endangering its enduring ties to the United States. There's no guarantee this is the way matters play out, but in the midst of a worldwide tragedy, it wouldn't be such a bad place to be once the dust finally settles.

Dan Schnur, IHY, 10.03.22

2. Offenbar Ende der Atomverhandlungen in Sicht

Die Verhandlungen um ein Atomabkommen mit Teheran befinden sich offenbar in einer entscheidenden Phase. Einem Twitter-Eintrag des EU-Außenbeauftragten Josep Borell zufolge sei die finale Version eines Abkommens so gut wie fertig. Sicherheitsexperten in Israel sehen noch immer zahlreiche Lücken in dem sich abzeichnenden Kompromiss, der es dem Iran ermögliche, binnen kürzester Zeit eine für einen atomaren Sprengstoff ausreichende Menge an 90-prozentig angereichertem Uran herzustellen. Auch durch das iranische Raketenprogramm sieht sich Israel bedroht. Teheran entwickelt seit Jahren moderne Mittelstreckenraketen. Unklar ist, inwiefern der Krieg in der Ukraine die Position Russlands beeinflusst. Möglicherweise verfolgte Regierungschef Naftali Bennett mit seiner jüngsten Reise nach Moskau auch das Ziel, sich bei Russlands Präsident Vladimir Putin über den Stand der Verhandlungen mit dem Iran zu informieren.

Iran talks highlight Israel's failed US policy

(...) Bennett and Lapid have had some success containing their disagreements with the Biden administration over the Iran nuclear talks, Palestinians, the Jerusalem consulate, and West Bank settlements. (...) Yet, it is on the core Israeli security issues – Iran nuclear talks and weapons delivery – that the Bennett-Lapid approach must be judged. (...) Israel has been quietly approaching Congress

for a few months about what it considers America's wrong-headed negotiating approach to the nuclear talks, but without success. Members have had other concerns demanding their attention, such as Ukraine, Afghanistan, China, COVID-19 and domestic legislation. In recent weeks, Congress has finally begun to awaken to the danger of the Vienna talks (...). It is now too late to shape America's negotiating strategy in Vienna, and if a deal emerges from Vienna very soon, it's unlikely Congress can stop it. (...) it appears evident that the Bennett-Lapid conciliatory approach has failed. Now, Israel must pivot to focusing on preparing for a military confrontation that would prevent a nuclear Iran, which seems all but inevitable whether there is an imminent (bad) deal or not. Therefore, Israel needs to finally begin to ask members of Congress to pressure the Biden administration to expedite delivery of weapons that would bolster Israel's capabilities for that military confrontation. It is not only in Jerusalem's interests that Israel's effort is most effective, but also in Washington's.

Michael Makovsky, JPO, 02.03.22

In the face of the Iranian threat, Israel's prudence on Ukraine is the moral choice

CNN's star host Christiane Amanpour, like other progressive voices, is mad at Israel for not standing unequivocally by the United States' side against Russia. This is nothing but dangerous moral grandstanding, that frankly lacks any morsel of morals. For too many years, the West has been prostrating in front of Iran although it is the most murderous actor in the Middle East and despite its actions and proxies having killed hundreds of thousands and displacing millions all the way from Yemen to Syria. This happens despite Iran being the cause of Lebanon's collapse through its Hezbollah proxy. This happens despite pro-Iranian militias making every effort to expand the destruction to Iraq. This happens despite Iran publicly announcing its stated goal to destroy Israel time and again. All this notwithstanding, the West intends to sign a new nuclear deal with Tehran that will make it much more dangerous to most Middle Eastern nations. (...) To this end, Jerusalem most likely holds secret understandings with Russia which allow it to strike at the Iranian forces trying to entrench themselves in war-torn Syria. But Amanpour has a demand that seeks to undermine those understandings under the guise of "morality". In her view, it doesn't matter if her "moral" stance would serve to make this axis of evil much more powerful. It doesn't matter if Hezbollah obtains

precision missiles that can inflict greater damage to Israel, and it doesn't matter if this all results in much, much more Israeli casualties. It simply doesn't matter. The West is rightly concerned about Russia, but how come it closes its eyes in the face of the Iranian threat? Where is the morality here exactly? Turning a blind eye to the situation effectively equates to abandoning the people of the Middle East — Muslims and Jews alike. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 04.03.22

The 'longer and stronger' Iran deal lie

(...) While sanctions are supposed to influence the behavior of the third most powerful person in the world, representatives of the West are preparing to remove all sanction to appease Iran. To say the approach is hypocritical is an understatement. (...) The draft agreement does not require Iran to destroy its centrifuges, one of the biggest mistakes of the original deal that allowed Iran to enrich uranium to a level approaching the purity needed for a bomb. Iran would remain on the threshold of building a bomb – with a breakout time of perhaps as little as six months. (...). The negotiators are depending once again on both Iranian compliance and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification, both of which proved to be a joke. (...) The US is offering to ease sanctions if Iran returns to the flawed deal. There is no indication the agreement will be extended, which means that Iran will be free to do what it likes in 2026, which seemed to proponents like a great victory but now is just four years away. (...) the US is also prepared to unfreeze \$7 billion in Iranian funds held by South Korean banks. This money will allow Iran to fund more terror, further develop its ballistic missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads and continue to destabilize the region and threaten its neighbors. Russia has been a major obstacle to imposing tougher terms on Iran and now it has more important things to worry about, so it is an ideal time for strengthening our position in the Vienna talks rather than capitulating to Iranian demands such as the outrageous insistence that the US remove the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps from its terrorist list. (...) Imposing Russia-like sanctions might yet work in bringing an end to the mullahs' reign of terror and its development of a bomb. (...) The lesson Iran's autocrats are taking from the Ukraine war, which they already understood, is that the way to ensure their survival while pursuing their agenda of spreading radical Islam throughout the world, and destroying Israel is to have a nuclear capability. They see that fear of a nuclear exchange is the

principal restraint on military action against Russia, and Iran's leaders believe they will enjoy the same protection once their mission is accomplished. Given the IAEA's inability to verify Iran's compliance with any deal and the certainty that Iran's leaders will not give up their nuclear program, it is necessary to strike Iran before we are forced to sit on the sideline and watch our Middle East allies be slaughtered. (...) we have resources and options available to eliminate the Iranian threat if they do not agree to a longer and stronger deal. There is no reason to appease a not-yet-nuclear Iran when the US is demonstrating what leading a unified Western alliance can do against an aggressor who sees no barriers to his grandiose ambitions.

Mitchell Bard, IHY, 04.03.22

We need a coalition of moral courage to oppose Iran's fascism

(...) Iran (...) is the largest state sponsor of antisemitism on the planet, constantly churning out genocidal memes and disseminating hostile propaganda against Jews. Its annual cartoon contest on Holocaust denialism has drawn widespread condemnation, but far fewer people realize it is spewing out this poison in multiple languages on a daily basis. And Iran's stated desire to annihilate the Jewish state must be taken seriously. As we have seen with Putin and other tyrants throughout history, we are deluded to disregard their stated goals. We can't afford to ignore those, like the tyrants who rule Iran, who promise genocide. We must take them at their word. (...) The Iranian regime is the single most prominent sponsor of terror and terrorist organizations around the world. (...) a one-track process to return to JCPOA is far from adequate to confront the full range of threats generated by this regime. (...) the Islamic Republic must be deterred simultaneously on multiple fronts. (...) If there is any realistic hope of a new Iranian nuclear deal being effective, it needs to be complemented and enhanced by a highly public multi-track process that pressures the regime and strengthens the hand of its opponents. (...) we need a zero-tolerance policy on terror. (...) The US and its partners should establish a process inspired by the 1970's Helsinki Process that links security arrangements in the region to a respect for the dignity of all people and the acknowledgment of their basic inalienable rights. (...) The Iranian regime's targeting of religious, ethnic and sexual minorities cannot be ignored. All people should have the right to assemble in public and private spaces, to

love those who they choose, and to worship as they want. (...)

Jonathan A. Greenblatt, TOI, 11.03.22

3. Flucht nach Israel

Israels Innenministerin Ayelet Shaked ist wegen ihrer restriktiven Maßnahmen gegenüber hilfesuchenden Ukrainer_innen in die Kritik der breiten Öffentlichkeit geraten. Israel öffnet die Tore für jüdische Flüchtlinge. Mit bis zu 100.000 Neueinwanderern, die jüdisch sind oder jüdische Verwandte haben, rechnen die Behörden in den kommenden Monaten. Für nicht-jüdische Hilfesuchende gelten jedoch komplett andere Regeln. Nicht nur die Zahl der Menschen, die einreisen dürfen, blieb zunächst auf 25.000 begrenzt. Zudem mussten Einreisende ein Art Kautions in Höhe von umgerechnet rund 2500 Euro pro Person hinterlegen. Man werde die Tore öffnen, räumte Shaked nach der Kritik ein, aber „nicht für eine unbegrenzte Anzahl“.

Israel cannot stand on the sidelines of the Ukraine crisis

(...) Israel behaves as if it's the only country in history that has had something to lose by taking an unequivocal position on a global crisis, the only one that has ever been torn between conflicting interests, the only one for which opening its door to refugees would have demographic, economic and other consequences. (...) Israel cannot preach for more than 70 years about how the world stood on the sidelines and closed its gates to refugees and then, at the moment of truth, do exactly the same thing itself, and even believe it is right to do so. Unlike many European countries, which are allowing refugees from Ukraine to enter with no conditions, Israel continues to view them as "infiltrators." (...) According to the updated rules, Ukrainian refugees can enter Israel only if they were invited by Israeli citizens who post financial guarantees for them and promise on their behalf that they will not settle in Israel permanently. Israel cannot give itself dispensations. At a time when the world is mobilizing to help Ukrainians fleeing their country, Israel is defending its borders against any threat to the purity of the Jewish nation. This is unforgivable. And the world is watching it all. If Israel doesn't wake up and recognize that it is part of the international community, and that it has duties as well as rights, there will be a price to pay. (...) Ukraine isn't asking Israel to let these refugees stay forever; it's merely asking for practical measures to help people in need.

Editorial, HAA, 01.03.22

Amid Ukraine crisis, Israel should be a safe haven for refugees

(...) Israel was established as a state and a haven for all Jews, and the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine has proven, like countless examples in the past throughout the world, that when Jews are in danger, Israel is there to help. Along with global Jewish organizations, the government has sprung into action in an attempt to rescue the Israelis still in Ukraine and to aid the Jewish Ukrainians who are fleeing the country. (...) However, another aspect of Israel's efforts regarding the war is somewhat less admirable. (...) dozens of Ukrainian nationals had arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport and were sent back despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian invasion. (...) officials in Jerusalem were asking for bonds of up to NIS 20,000 to allow someone to remain in the country, money that none of these refugees have. (...) Israel is admittedly hesitant to open the borders to non-Jewish refugees because there have been many instances in the past of tourists from former FSU countries who remained in the country illegally and began to work. (...) It is high time that Israel stop being so stringent in its opposition to absorbing refugees from distressed situations. Israel is a strong country, its Jewish character and essence unthreatened by hundreds – or even thousands – of people who desperately need a haven. Just like we welcome in Jews from around the world with open arms, in times of war, we should do the same with whoever needs our refuge.

Editorial, JPO, 02.03.22

Bennett bears responsibility

The international missions that Prime Minister Naftali Bennett undertook (...) don't absolve him of responsibility for the fate of Ukrainian refugees. From the start of the Russian invasion (...) around 2,800 such refugees had arrived in Israel. To date, the Population and Immigration Authority has denied entry to around 130 of them. While the total number of Ukrainian refugees is already thought to have reached more than 1.5 million and the European Union is letting them reside in its territory in security for the first three years, a double cloud of shame is forming over Israel. Not only has it not accepted people fleeing for their lives, but it has also made it hard for those it does allow to enter, demanding financial guarantees of at least 10,000 shekels (\$3,000) each. (...) Israelis should stop being led

astray by the view that there's a good cop (Bennett) and a bad cop (Shaked). Instead of engaging in public relations and trips around the world, Bennett would do better to concentrate on providing suitable assistance to the refugees arriving at the doorstep of the country for which he is responsible. He must make it clear to all the relevant parties that Israel has to display humanity toward non-Jews as well. It's not enough to make declarations about absorbing refugees "for humanitarian reasons." Israel must grant some kind of temporary legal status to non-Jewish Ukrainians, including work permits, certain social benefits and health insurance.

Editorial, HAA,08.03.22

Israel's Ukrainian Refugee Quota: An Equitable Proposal

(...) Israel has (...) sadly been caught up in a domestic brouhaha regarding the number of war refugees to allow into the country. (...) this issue is complex (...) over the past several years the country with largest number of "tourists" in Israel who have not left after their visa expired is the Ukraine! (...) Thus, it understandable that this Ministry (...) is wary about what will happen when the war is over (...) Israel already is suffering from a severe housing shortage that has caused real estate prices to skyrocket: around 10% in the last year alone! A large influx of families would not only compound this problem; just finding them adequate housing would be a very difficult task. (...) Yet, Israelis have always seen themselves as a caring people, especially with memories of World War 2 when few countries were willing to let them in (...). Given that all Western countries – near the Ukraine and further away – are united in their stand against Russian aggression, it shouldn't be hard for all of them to establish an international conference for all countries wishing to help, and then together setting a quota for each country. (...) The U.N. Refugee Agency could be the coordinator of refugee population transfers to ensure that each country's quota is met, but not more than the allotted numbers. If these numbers, especially for the larger population countries, look daunting, one has to realize that as some point when the war is over (...), most of these refugees will return to their homeland. Indeed, the irony is that because most of these refugees are children (...), Russian continued domination of the Ukraine would mean that the country it is "swallowing" has no demographic future i.e., the Russians would be burdened by a hollowed out country added to its own recent, precipitous demographic decline. If all these coun-

tries felt that each was pulling the exact same relative weight in refugee absorption as all the others, it would be much more palatable for their citizens to bear the temporary burden – neutralizing any electoral/political damage that their democratically elected leaders might be otherwise afraid of. Morality and efficiency don't usually mix well. In this case, however, a commonly agreed upon refugee quota would be the most effective way to morally ameliorate a huge humanitarian crisis.

Sam Lehman-Wilzig, TOI, 11.03.22

Jewish and sociopathic

Two facts stand out in Israel's policy vis-a-vis the war of Ukraine. The first: Israel refuses to open its gates to Ukrainian war refugees. The second: Israel refuses to condemn Russia and to join the Western war effort led by the United States, which means imposing sanctions on Moscow and sending arms to Kyiv. In both cases Israel has security reasons to justify its decisions. (...) The liberal minority voices protest in the name of universal principles of morality, but it cannot force the government to change its stance. In both cases the government prefers what it sees as the Jewish existential consideration, over the principles of justice and morality and the identification of the U.S.-led bloc of liberal democracies known as "the West." In these historic times, when every country is obligated to define its national and moral priorities in the face of the war in Ukraine, the bottom line is that Israel is openly declaring that it is not "Western," and is not a part of the Western camp. (...) Israel is not a Western state, and never has been. It is a Jewish state. The need to formulate a policy in light of the war and its refugees has forced the country's leadership to choose, and they have chosen: Jewish above democratic. Not Jewish and democratic but rather Jewish – first and foremost. Israel's role in the world is to protect the Jews, period. It belongs to a camp of a single state: the Jewish camp. (...) As it is expressed in the issue of the refugees and aid to Ukraine, the Jewish camp is sociopathic. (...) It is no coincidence that Israel is not a partner to the Western values of democracy, liberalism and universal morality. It does not implement such a policy in its own backyard. In the West Bank too, Israel does only what is good for the Jews. There too it chooses Jewish over democratic. The split personality, between Jewish and democratic, that Israel has supposedly been struggling with since its establishment, and the constant tension between the two components of its national character, have arrived at a solution in this global crisis. It

happened inadvertently, without a national referendum. Long-term processes have ripened into a decision. We can erase “democratic.” Israel is not a Jewish and democratic state, only Jewish and sociopathic.

Rogel Alpher, HAA, 14.03.22

4. Medienquerschnitt

Bundeskanzler Scholz in Israel

The significance of Germany's Olaf Scholz's Israel visit

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's short visit to Israel (...) came amid significant progress in negotiations between Iran and the superpowers in Vienna ahead of the signing of a new nuclear deal, and about a month after the Defense Ministry signed an agreement with ThyssenKrupp to produce three advanced navy submarines, partially funded by the German government. (...) There is a consensus in Israel that the new Iran deal represents a threat to the Jewish state, the region and the entire world, and that attempts to placate Tehran are unacceptable and bound to fail, as they have in the past. They ignore Iran's goals to destabilize the Middle East and extend its influence over other states, such as Syria and Lebanon, as well as in the Gaza Strip. While Israel's new strategic deal with Germany is a welcome development, Germany's support for the Iran deal is not because it imperils the Jewish state. For the record, Scholz said a new Iran deal could not be postponed “any longer”. (...) If there's one thing that the weak international response to the Russian war against Ukraine has taught us it is that Israel ultimately can only rely on itself and its military might and protect itself and its own interests. When it comes to Iran, the international community has failed to halt the Islamic Republic's aspirations to sponsor global terrorism, assert regional hegemony, build nuclear weapons and target the Jewish state. Since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, Scholz's coalition government has reversed Germany's ban on sending weapons into conflict zones. Arming Ukraine at this time is justifiable, as is the sale of submarines to Israel. But contributing to the existential danger to Israel posed by Iran is quite another.

Editorial, JPO, 03.03.22

Steigende Inflationsrate

Annual inflation in Israel seen hitting 4% in April

The inflationary environment in Israel is lower than in the US and Europe, due to the strength of the shekel and lower sensitivity to energy prices. Nevertheless, the level of inflation in Israel is expected to continue climbing above the 3% upper limit of the Bank of Israel's annual target range due to the Russia-Ukraine war and the sharp rise in commodity prices. (...) Fuel prices alone will add 0.2% to the March Consumer Price Index (...). The precarious geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe will also affect food, shipping and raw materials prices and could lead to a global slowdown in growth. (...) the Bank of Israel has already indicated a rate hike in the coming months despite estimates by the decision makers in the bank that inflation will fall later in the year. It will be interesting to see if the Bank of Israel revises its inflation forecast in light of the situation in Russia and the Ukraine or whether it will choose to view it as a transient, exogenous event. It is reasonable to assume that the Bank of Israel will revise its inflationary forecast upwards.

Guy Ben Simon, GLO, 09.03.22

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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