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1. Friedensplan von Shaul Mofaz

Der Friedensprozess zwischen Palästinensern und Israelis ist festgefahren. Während es Premierminister Netanjahu und Palästinenserpräsident Abbas nicht gelingt, an einen Tisch zu kommen, legte der ehemalige Verteidigungsminister Shaul Mofaz von der stärksten Oppositionspartei Kadima nun einen eigenen Friedensfahrplan vor. Dieser sieht die Gründung eines palästinensischen Staates mit vorläufigen Grenzen vor, die von Israel zunächst unilateral bestimmt würden. Der Status von Jerusalem und ein Austausch von Land würde in einer zweiten Phase verhandelt werden. Mofaz kritisierte die Regierung, die keinen Friedensplan habe und den Zeitdruck unter dem Israel stehe verkenne. Er erklärte sich auch bereit, mit der Hamas, die von Israel als Terrororganisation eingestuft wird, zu verhandeln, sofern sie „ihr Verhalten ändere“.

With Mofaz as Beilin

“Shaul Mofaz [...] comes along this week and proposes a plan for establishing a Palestinian state gradually on ‘most of the territories’ captured in 1967. Mofaz, as a former defense minister and army chief of staff, is aware of the military and demographic dangers facing Israel and sees a solution in the evacuation of the settlements and the setting up of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. He is a far cry from other politicians in his willingness to talk with Hamas.

Mofaz's proposal is not perfect. [...] It's hard to find a Palestinian counterpart who would, at the start of the negotiations, recognize Israeli sovereignty over West Bank communities such as Ariel and Ma'aleh Adumim, as the Mofaz plan provides. The plan's details are less important, however, than the very existence of the initiative, which poses a challenge to Netanyahu and his government and stimulates public debate. This is the opposition's classic role in

a democratic system. [...]

The Mofaz plan, along with the pressure from the United States, can [...] prod the prime minister to go beyond the peace process' paralysis and submit an initiative of his own as a solution to the Palestinian conflict.”

HAA 11.11.09

The Israeli option should be first

“The Mofaz model comes with good intentions, but based on past experience, it will likely yield bad results. [...] The main problem with Mofaz's plan is that it puts forth the Palestinians' best alternative ahead of Israel's.

Facilitated by security strategists and political pundits, the gist of Mofaz's master plan is to enable a Palestinian state on borders that temporarily encompass approximately 60 percent of Judea and Samaria, and to guarantee Israel's eventual withdrawal from 92% of the territories once conditions ripen. [...] Mofaz is an Israeli war hero, but his proposed plan for peace does not serve his country well. The plan's main problem is that it is more of same in terms of giving the Palestinians something in return for nothing. [...] Israel should start by getting land rather than always giving it away.”

Ophir Falk, JPO 17.11.09

Mofaz' left turn

“Apparently he realized, just as Ariel Sharon realized in the 2003 campaign, that in order to win the premiership one needs to break to the Left. [...]

One way or another, he is forcing the main players in the political arena to dust off their old campaign kits. [...] Mofaz's diplomatic plan elicited broad public support according to a weekend poll. His problem is that the other politicians in the race may adopt this plan, a move that would leave him without a unique status to boast.”

Baruch Leshem, JED 16.11.09

Wettkampf der Torheit

„Das friedenspolitische Programm des Abgeordneten Shaul Mofas hat den guten alten Wettkampf, in dem Israelis der zwei Jahrtausende alten Hoffnung nachjagen, im Lande Zion [...] einen palästinensischen Staat zu gründen, auf einen neuen grotesken Höhepunkt gebracht. [...]

Nun, da der Mann, der als ‚rechter Wegweiser‘ von Kadima galt sich als ‚linker Wegweiser‘ neu erfunden hat, ist der Höhepunkt des politischen Opportunismus erreicht – und das sollte nicht nur die Unterstützer von Mofas beunruhigen, sondern all jene, die sich Sorgen um das Ansehen des politischen Apparats in Israel machen.“

Yoav Shorek, HZO 11.11.09

The new converts

„Once every few months another right-wing politician sees the light. Suddenly he believes that time is working against us, [...] that the Palestinians deserve a state and that the occupation must come to an end. [...] Former chief of staff and defense minister Shaul Mofaz [...] has joined the converts' community. [...]

On the face of it, this is good news. [...] It appears that those who seek peace and justice are in a clear majority. [...] But this of course is a delusion. As soon as the spotlights are turned off and the columnists finish their praises, the converts resume their routine without lifting a finger to advance what they preached. [...]

Mofaz suggests talking to Hamas, but it doesn't occur to him to try to do it here and now. [...] And the public? It says yes to two states and votes for Likud and Avigdor Lieberman. In this great masquerade, Israel has raised denial and pretense to an art. The terrible price will be paid soon.“

Gideon Levy, HAA 12.11.09

2. Netanjahu in Washington

In den israelischen Medien wurden die Umstände von Premierminister Netanjahus Besuch in Washington überwiegend als Hinweis auf eine Krise zwischen den USA und Israel interpretiert.

Netanjahus Termin mit Präsident Obama war mehrmals verschoben worden und fand schließlich in den späten Abendstunden ohne offiziellen Fototermin oder Pressekonferenz statt. Während des Treffens unterhielten sich die beiden Regierungschefs mehr als eine Stunde lang unter zwei Augen. Israelischen Quellen zufolge ging es bei dem Gespräch hauptsächlich um den israelisch-palä-

stinensischen Konflikt. Netanjahu habe Obama dazu aufgefordert, Abbas zurück an den Verhandlungstisch zu bringen und versucht ihn davon zu überzeugen, dass er ein großes Interesse am Fortschritt des Friedensprozesses habe. Das Weiße Haus ließ lediglich verlauten, das Treffen sei „positiv“ verlaufen und habe sich um die bilateralen Beziehungen der beiden Länder gedreht.

A relationship in crisis

„Relations between Israel and the United States are in crisis. This is the conclusion that stems from the difficulty in arranging a meeting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama.

The White House wanted Netanyahu to sweat before being granted an audience with the president, and wanted everyone to see him perspire. [...] In such circumstances, it is no longer important what will be said at the meeting, and the extent to which there will be an attempt to present it as an achievement. The prime minister of Israel was humiliated before all. [...] Netanyahu may be an experienced diplomat and politician, and Obama may be a novice, but Obama is the president of a superpower, and Netanyahu represents a small country that depends greatly on the United States. It sometimes appears that Netanyahu forgets this, and pretends he is the head of a superpower. [...] Instead of making excuses and explaining the terrible situation, Netanyahu should make the effort to resolve the crisis with the American administration.“

Aluf Benn, HAA 09.11.09

Washington chill

„As Netanyahu made his way to Washington, there were those bent on exacerbating tensions between our premier and President Barack Obama. [...] Much was made of the fact that even as he embarked on his journey Netanyahu still did not have a firm appointment to see the president. [...] Comings and goings aside, the administration has been fundamentally misreading the situation here on the ground, allowing its own initial poor judgment to be reinforced by unrepresentative voices in Israel and on the margins of the American Jewish community. [...]

Most Israelis support a demilitarized Palestine living side-by-side with the Jewish state of Israel - the very vision articulated by Netanyahu in his seminal June 14 Bar-Ilan address.

Rather than giving Netanyahu a cold shoulder, Obama should warmly embrace this viable blueprint for peace.”
JPO 08.11.09

Saying goodbye to mom

“Netanjahu was received in Washington this week with the honors reserved for an especially embarrassing relative. The kind of relative you were forced to meet – after all, he’s part of the family and mom really asked you to do it – but you made sure to meet him in a place nobody knows, so no one will see you. [...] However, it seems that something bigger is going on around here. [...] The Americans are closer than ever to reaching the understanding that they would sleep well at night even without the Mideastern food poisoning, and that they have better things to do in life than playing the role of babysitter for us and the Palestinians.”

Asaf Gefen, JED 14.11.09

Are we with Obama, or what?

“The ostensibly shoddy way Netanyahu was treated does not mean that there wasn’t a serious discussion at the meeting. The two were alone for at least an hour and a quarter after their aides left, and it’s unlikely that during that time these two loquacious men didn’t find a great deal to discuss, seriously and perhaps even harshly. [...] What’s important for us isn’t the personal relations between the president and the prime minister, but that the diplomatic, security and economic support America has given Israel since its establishment continues.”

Yoel Marcus, HAA 13.11.09

3. US Reaktion auf Bau in Ost-Jerusalem

Die amerikanische Regierung reagierte ungehalten auf die vom Jerusalemer Planungs- und Baukomitee ausgesprochene Genehmigung für 900 weitere Wohnungen in Gilo, einer jüdischen Siedlung in Ost-Jerusalem. Washington kritisierte zudem, dass gleichzeitig in palästinensischen Vierteln regelmäßig Häuser zum Abriss freigegeben werden. Der palästinensische Chefunterhändler Saeb Erekat bezeichnete den Plan zur Erweiterung Gilos als ein Hindernis zur Wiederaufnahme von Friedensverhandlungen. Die israelische Regierung sieht Gilo als integralen Teil von Jerusalem und weigert sich, einem Baustopp auf diesem Gebiet zuzustimmen.

Obama got carried away

“The latest move in respect to Gilo appears like a tragic mistake that was not thought out at all and will merely serve to complicate the regional situation.

We are talking about a move that is so illogical [...] that even Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni [...] realized that she must openly speak out against this new demand, which views Gilo as a settlement.

Yet this is not only the demand that we stop building in Gilo – a stipulation that nobody really intends to adhere to – that makes us lose sleep, Mr. President. It’s also the tone of your words. [...] You explain that the construction would prompt the Palestinians to commit radical acts. You are hinting to us that terrorism is a direct and unavoidable result of Israel’s conduct. [...]

There are especially illogical demands – and the one that views Gilo as a settlement is one of them – that unite us Israelis from the Left and Right and remind us that at the end of the day we, and only we, are entitled to decide where we build, what we build, and what will happen in our sovereign state.

America is a good friend and it will remain such [...] even if once in a while we have to put it in its place.”

Hanoch Daum, JED 20.11.09

Obama’s empty fist

„The American demand is proper, even if it is very late and unusually aggressive. However, its lack of context is infuriating. Freezing settlements is not a policy. Its entire purpose is to give Mahmoud Abbas [...] a reason to get back to negotiations. But negotiations cannot be a final goal, just as freezing settlements cannot be considered the ultimate achievement. What then? [...] Does Washington have a plan for continuing negotiations? [...]

If a plan to construct 900 housing units in Gilo bothers Obama, what does he think about the 40,000 Israelis already living there? What is the point in demanding a construction freeze if it does not involve a comprehensive plan that determines the borders between Israel and Palestine, and where Jews can or can’t live? [...]

It increasingly seems that the demand for a settlement freeze is no more than a desire to chalk up some sort of achievement, one that does not change the status quo but does grant prestige.”

Zvi Ba’rel, HAA 22.01.09

Obama’s no wimp

“The decision to approve the Gilo expansion is one more nail in Abbas’ political coffin and one more blow to Obama’s prestige. [...] Obama’s fury was

over not only the principle, but also the way Netanyahu handled the crisis. [...] The impassioned reaction to U.S. Middle East Envoy George Mitchell's request to postpone the Gilo plan outraged Obama and his staff even more than the act itself. [...] The Obama administration has recently begun discussing how to appease Abbas - for example, by giving him letters spelling out U.S. support for a final-status arrangement based on the 1967 borders and reaffirming Washington's position that Jerusalem is divided into eastern and western parts. Netanyahu's behavior in the Gilo affair could remove any remaining doubt in Obama's mind over signing such letters."

Akiva Eldar, HAA 19.11.09

Wo sind die Einwohner von Gilo?

„Gilo ist ein altbekanntes jüdisches Wohnviertel am Rande von Jerusalem, und als solches hat es das Recht, sich auszubreiten und zu wachsen. [...] Trotzdem zeigt sich, dass Präsident Obama in seinem aggressive Kampf gegen die Siedlungen nicht bereit ist, das Baubedürfnis infolge von natürlichem Wachstum anzuerkennen und zu begreifen, dass die Hauptstadt Israels seit 1967 und bis zum heutigen Tage das vereinte Jerusalem ist. [...] Es ist das Recht der Einwohner von Gilo, den Häuserbau in ihrem Viertel voranzutreiben. Dazu brauchen sie keine Erlaubnis Außenstehender. [...] Es ist ihr Recht, in ihrer Stadt zu leben, in Jerusalem, der Hauptstadt Israels.“

Moshe Ishon HZO, 19.11.09

America speaks Arabic

“US Special Envoy Mitchell's demand that the Israeli government refrain from building in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood is merely the prelude to a process meant to erode the legitimate status of Israel's Jerusalem neighborhoods. [...]

They are finally being granted American recognition of their traditional Palestinian name: Settlements.

A direct link exists between Obama's speech in Cairo and the American decision that Gilo and French Hill are just the same as the settlements of Ofra and Elon Moreh. We can therefore conclude that the US Administration has started to speak Arabic. Salam Aleikum, America! [...]

We must admit that the Arabs managed to drive a wedge between us and our traditional ally. Salamat, America!"

Moshe Elad, JED 18.11.09

4. Soldaten gegen Siedlungsräumung

Sechs Soldaten der Kfir-Brigade, die ausschließlich im Westjordanland dient, machten Schlagzeilen, als sie auf ihrem Stützpunkt ein Banner gegen die Evakuierung jüdischer Siedlungen aufstellten. Dies ist der zweite Fall innerhalb eines Monats, in dem Wehrpflichtige ihre Opposition gegen einen Rückzug aus den besetzten Gebieten deutlich machten. In beiden Fällen war ein Großteil der beteiligten Soldaten Angehörige des Hesder-Programms, das es religiösen Männern erlaubt, das Thorastudium mit einem verkürzten Armeedienst zu verbinden. Offiziere hatten bereits zuvor die Entfernung von zwei extremistischen Yeshivas (Religionsschulen) aus dem Programm gefordert. Armeequellen zufolge waren beide Vorfälle gefilmt und von rechten Organisationen als Propagandamaterial verbreitet worden.

Divided loyalty in the IDF

“They say they are rebelling because they cannot act contrary to their conscience.

These arguments are nothing but a cover for blatant political activity within the Israel Defense Forces, led by radical rabbis outside of it, some of whom openly flout the rule of law. The revolt reflects a serious problem concerning divided loyalty in the army. [...] Left-wing dissension was and remains controversial even among those who oppose the occupation. Most left-wing conscientious objectors act on their own accord, and when they serve their sentence in military prison nobody sends them consolation prizes. In contrast, the hesder yeshiva students are organized in homogenous, separatist groups within their army units and frequently seek their rabbis' advice. [...] Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said this week that dissent in the IDF will destroy the state, but neither he nor Defense Minister Ehud Barak or Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi seem resolved to stop the drift.”

HAA 19.11.09

Silence of the Rabbis

„The childish and flawed insubordination displays by Kfir Brigade troops taint the image of an entire community that is highly devoted to Israel. There are many religious soldiers in the army, and the vast majority of them view the abovementioned acts as a radical phenomenon. [...]

This community will not be lending its hand to turning the IDF into an army of militias where each

soldier only adheres to his sectarian leader. These soldiers will not allow an overly zealous minority to drag them and us into this abyss. [...]

Yet more than anything, I am bothered by the great silence of most religious leaders. Perhaps they are unaware of the severe implications of these precedents not only for democracy in this country, but first and foremost for their own followers. [...]

Elazar Stern, JED 17.11.09

Samson's pillars

"[The soldiers'] main complaint was of being 'exploited to carry out political policies that have no relation' to Israel's security needs.

The reservists did not say they would refuse orders. [...] Improbably, the defenders of Homesh can trace their 'lineage of dissent' to another group - the 350 reservists who, in March 1978, sent a letter to prime minister Menachem Begin saying his attachment to the Land of Israel and to settlements had become an obstacle to peace. [...] Within a month, the grass-roots movement had brought 30,000 demonstrators into the streets of Tel Aviv to put pressure on Begin as he negotiated with Anwar Sadat. [...]

Over the years, some who started out with Peace Now began taking extremist positions - for instance, refusing to do army service in the 'Occupied Territories.'

A recipe for national disaster, brewed by the Left, is now percolating on the Right. We're witnessing a parallel 'selective refusal.' Right-wing soldiers will serve so long as they're not asked to do something that conflicts with their political views.

Left unchecked, this phenomenon could prove fatal to the Third Commonwealth."

JPO 12.11.09

The new golems

"Even the breast of salient leftists should have swelled with pride. Because what all the refusal movements on the left failed to accomplish in the past - namely, to induce the general public to accept the idea that refusing an order can be a legitimate act - was accomplished by a handful of soldiers from the Nahshon Battalion, from a hesder yeshiva. [...]

In other words, embedded in this small act of rebellion, which emanated from the religious side, is a ringing slap in the face of the secular state education system, which [...] has not produced so much as one pupil who will even consider the idea of flaunting a similar banner [...]. Only a herd of conformists, interspersed here and there with episodic refuseniks who received no backing from

the conformist masses. Could it be, after all, that a yeshiva education is better at developing independent thought than a secular education? [...]

The religious sector's [...] messages may not be to everyone's taste, but at least one of them should definitely be seared into our consciousness: that a [...] conservative education, even if it comes with a massive dose of indoctrination, cannot fail, and in the long term produces brains that think with far greater originality than those that have undergone a supposedly liberal state education, which is feeble and neutralized of any passion for an ideal."

Benny Ziffer, HAA 20.11.09

HAA = Haaretz

HZO= Ha Tzofe

IHY = Israeli HaYom

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

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