



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 22/11

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

28. November – 11. Dezember 2011

1. Iranisches Atomprogramm

Eine Reihe von Vorfällen hat das iranische Nuklearprogramm einmal mehr in die Schlagzeilen gebracht. So gab das Regime in Teheran am 8. Dezember an, eine amerikanische Spionagedrohne abgeschossen zu haben, die Beweis für einen verdeckten Krieg der USA sei. Einige Tage zuvor war es zu einer Explosion in der Nähe der Stadt Isfahan gekommen, wo sich eine Uranaufbereitungsanlage befindet. Schon Anfang November waren bei einer Detonation auf einem Militärgelände 17 Menschen ums Leben gekommen. Teheran sprach von einem Unfall, ausländische Medien spekulierten jedoch, dass auf dem Areal Raketen getestet worden seien. Gemeinsam mit den USA und Kanada hat Großbritannien eine Sanktionen gegen den Iran verschärft. Infolgedessen kam es zu Übergriffen auf die britische Botschaft in Teheran.

US-Verteidigungsminister Leon Panetta warnte indes Israel vor unilateralen Schritten gegen Iran. Ein Militärangriff könne das Atomprogramm ohnehin höchstens um zwei Jahre verzögern. Dennoch verkündete Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu in einer Ansprache, dass er gegebenenfalls "die richtigen Entscheidungen" auch gegen den Rat enger Verbündeter fällen würde.

Europeans still asleep

"The recent Iranian attack on the British embassy [...] raised Israeli expectations about the chance that the European Union would finally act in a decisive way against Iran. But the new round of sanctions is a far cry from the tough measures Jerusalem would like to see. [...] For the EU, Iran seems to be a side-show and a rather abstract and distant threat. For Israel, however, it is a matter of life and death. [...]"

By now it should be clear that Iran will not voluntarily give up its nuclear program, even if this means that the country will be reduced to beggary.

It's highly doubtful, however, that anyone in Brussels will notice the writing on the wall."

Yochanan Visser, JED 10.12.11

Confronting Iran

"The fact that Britain's embassy was targeted practically as soon as London forbade all British financial institutions from trading with Iranian banks [...] speaks volumes. [...]"

For now, the UK appears braver than any of its European peers. It remains to be seen if Iran's latest rabid response to tougher sanctions will convince more EU powers to follow London's example. Quite distressingly, Germany still hasn't severed its massive commercial ties with Iran, while French petroleum giant Total keeps supplying Iran with refined fuel. [...] The latest rude reminder from the rogue regime must be seized upon by both Israel and the free world to galvanize effective last minute resistance to the ayatollahs' evil schemes. [...]"

If the will exists, Iran can still be thwarted."

JPO 03.12.11 Editorial

A war of wills

"Panetta and former Mossad head Meir Dagan agreed that Israel must not attack Iran on its own. The central rationale for this position was that an attack would not destroy Iran's nuclear program but merely delay it by one to two years. [...] However, the physical outcome of an attack is not the point.

What we are witnessing is a war of political wills. [...]"

The U.S. is the world's only superpower, but it acts feeble, avoids confrontation, and is hesitant to pay a price to realize its political will. [...] If the U.S. and Iran both mustered the same degree of seriousness and determination to address the nuclear issue, if both showed the same readiness to take risks and pay a price, the former would gain the upper hand and its political will would prevail. [...]"

Even if Israel attacks, more than destroying centrifuges, it would be an overtly political act. The

purpose of such an attack would be to lead the Israel-U.S.-Iran triangle to circumstances in which all sides put their cards on the table. [...] [This] will create a new political reality, no matter how many centrifuges are destroyed along the way."

Ron Tira, IHY 07.12.11

The ticking bomb in the basement

"There is a far more sensible military option that Israel's leadership and the Israeli public should seriously consider: nuclear disarmament. [...] Israel has a nuclear weapons program [...] It was done [...] against the will of the international community – rather like what Iran is possibly doing today. [...]

For at least three decades, efforts to avoid a nuclear arms race in the Middle East have crashed against the rocks of Israeli intransigence. If Iran does succeed in developing its own bomb, Arab powers are also likely to scramble to gain their own capability. The best way to avoid this is for Israel to come out of the closet about its bomb [...] and commit to a nuclear weapons-free Middle East."

Khaled Diab, HAA 06.12.11

Is Iranian nuclear issue intractable?

"In fact, thanks to Iran, Israel has many more potential allies in the region's Arab governments than before, with only the Palestinian issue preventing wholehearted support in some cases. [...] Much of the Islamic revolutionary regime's anti-Zionist, anti-Israel and anti-Semitic vitriol draws strength from the oddly exogenous Palestinian cause, which in turn prevents many more Arab states from overtly siding with Israel in the present nuclear dispute. [...] It should [...] be at this level that a solution be attempted, that is, to focus on resolving the Palestinian issue.

A nuclear but rational Iran [...], dispossessed of a Palestinian casus belli, confronted with other regional Islamic governments now openly willing to place their bets with Israel, and economically atrophied, will be largely forced to keep itself in check."

Kevjn Lim, JPO 11.12.11

False linkage

"The real intellectual flaw is [...] the idea that Iran's quest for nuclear weapons is connected primarily to Israel and to what Israel does. The fact that Iran seeks nuclear capability to dominate the Middle East is not a factor according to this analysis. [...]

Indeed, there is a serious danger for Israel if the distorted idea spreads that it somehow is the main threat motivating Iran's nuclear program. Many in

the West are looking for excuses for not confronting Iran over its nuclear program. They know that placing a total embargo on Iranian oil could affect the international price of oil and make a Western economic recovery more challenging. It would be far easier for many states to pressure Israel into making concessions rather than focus on Iran alone. Nevertheless, the idea that the Iranian nuclear program is linked to Israel must be fully rejected."

Dore Gold, IHY 09.12.11

2. Die israelische Wirtschaft und die Empfehlungen der Trajtenberg-Kommission

Der Großteil der Empfehlungen der Trajtenberg-Kommission ist noch nicht implementiert worden. Nach den sozialen Protesten im Sommer hatte die Regierung die Kommission damit beauftragt, Reformen zu entwickeln, die die hohen Lebenshaltungskosten senken und Einkommensunterschiede verringern würden. Bisher sind jedoch lediglich einige Steuerreformen durchgeführt worden, darunter Steuererhöhungen für Vielverdiener und Umsatzsteuersenkungen auf bestimmte Produkte. Die Abstimmung über weiterreichende Empfehlungen der Kommission hat die Regierung jedoch bereits mehrere Male verschoben. Besonders kontrovers ist dabei eine mögliche Kürzung des Verteidigungshaushalts.

Gleichzeitig wird in Israel die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Europa mit Sorge beobachtet, da eine europäische Rezession auch das Exportland Israel empfindlich treffen könnte.

Anybody remember Trajtenberg?

"Who even remembers the Trajtenberg Committee's recommendations?

[...] The first were the manufacturers, who blocked Trajtenberg's recommendation to enlarge the employers' payments to the National Insurance Institute. Then they sabotaged one of the committee's major recommendations - a swift reduction of customs duties. [...]

In housing, the situation is no less depressing. [...]

In addition, the ultra-Orthodox leadership isn't even dreaming of accepting Trajtenberg's recommendation to conduct core-curriculum studies in its schools. [...]

The struggle over the defense budget ignores the Trajtenberg's Report, which recommended a significant cut in the defense budget in order to release

additional funds for education, housing and other welfare plans. [...]

Without a slash in the defense budget even the little that remains of the Trajtenberg Report will be impossible to carry out."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 29.11.11

A tough choice: security or society

"No one can deny that Israel's geopolitical surroundings are unstable. [...] There is no doubt that investments in the Israel Defense Forces will save lives in the future. [...] Rather than significantly cutting the defense budget, it is preferable to improve its capabilities using the existing resources it is afforded.

However, if we follow this approach, where will we get the resources to fund the social needs outlined by the Trajtenberg Committee and others? The answer is from the excessive, impractical and unjust tax break given to Israel's richest and most established industrial plants that amounts to no less than 6 billion shekels, all under the guise of 'the law for the encouragement of capital investment.'"

Uriel Lynn, IHY 04.12.11

Italy's welfare

"Most Western economies face a similar prospect. Health and retirement benefits aren't adequately covered by taxes. Overspending leads to over-borrowing. Burgeoning budget deficits and debt threaten eventual insolvency. Belt-tightening is mandated to avert collapse, but it could trigger recession and unemployment. This spells the end of an era – the demise of the socialist welfare state. [...] Lately [...] Europe's model of looking after the needs of the citizen from cradle to grave appears to be no longer workable. [...]

We in Israel aren't immune either. Israel traditionally bought heavily into the model of a national welfare system that offers wide-ranging entitlements bankrolled by the taxpayer. [...]

Such palpable dangers of state-budget profligacy notwithstanding, Israel's own summertime 'social justice' protesters demanded that entitlements be further enlarged. So successful was their campaign that the government agreed to forgo some of its fiscally prudent constrictions. [...]

When the world's wealthiest societies titter on the abyss of economic disaster, we mustn't luxuriate in throwing caution to the wind. Not only aren't we stronger than they are, but if their buying power decreases, we are in trouble.

[...] It may not be politically expedient or popular, but our economic leaders need to draw attention to this fact – perhaps in a last ditch effort to encourage greater circumspection in public opinion."

JPO 08.12.11 Editorial

Needed: Fiscal responsibility

"The worldwide economic crisis, which is centered in Europe, is now drawing closer to Israel's gates. [...] This week, the OECD published a forecast that the growth rate in Israel in the coming year will be only 2.9 percent. [...]

A large deficit is dangerous because it brings about an increase in the public debt, and then the concrete danger of lowering the credit rating, raising interest rates, a drop in investments, dismissals of workers and a deepening of the slowdown. That is precisely what happened to the European countries [...] Israel must not be allowed to reach such a humiliating state. Therefore, the Finance Ministry deserves support for the fiscal plan to make [...] cutbacks. [...] It is also important to carry through on cuts in the defense budget so it will be possible to pay for the recommendations of the Trajtenberg Committee."

HAA 30.11.11 Editorial

Economic emergency

"Despite the many eulogies we have been hearing for the free-market system, the current economic crisis in Europe is actually nothing other than a eulogy for the socialist system. The smaller European economies – Greece, Portugal and even Spain – were bogged down by debt. Waging no wars, and with a plethora of workers' unions, they developed some serious love handles of excess fat. The population got old, illegal immigrants invaded, and these countries ushered in the 2008 global economic crisis with no fuel and no cash. From there, the road to trouble was a short one. [...]

This crisis affects Israel because of the vast extent of its exports to Europe. We need Europe because we are an export-dependent economy. Therefore, we too must minimize damages and look toward more attractive markets, in the Far East perhaps."

Hezi Sternlicht, IHY 28.11.11

The crisis and the Jews

"Many questions should also be asked about the economic and social consequences of the current major financial problems in Western societies. [...]

Whether the Euro will be saved or not, the societies without growth will see increasing social tensions. [...] It is too early to foresee [...] what the various

consequences of [...] the economic and social upheaval in the Western world will mean for Israel and the Jews. One signal is that the 'Occupy' movements have attracted both anti-Israelis and anti-Semites. They will also jump at future opportunities to promote their messages of hate. [...] Unrest enables anti-Semites and other hate mongers to invent scapegoats responsible for societies' ills." Manfred Gerstenfeld, JED 01.12.11

3. Stillstand der Friedensverhandlungen

US-Verteidigungsminister Leon Panetta hat Israel zu einer Rückkehr an den Verhandlungstisch mit den Palästinensern aufgerufen. Statt die Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde zu schwächen – Israel hatte Steuergelder der PA nach der Aufnahme Palästinas in die UNESCO vorübergehend eingefroren – sei es in Israels Interesse, mit den Palästinensern zu kooperieren.

Tatsächlich aber ist es in den Friedensverhandlungen zu einem vollkommenen Stillstand gekommen. Präsident Mahmud Abbas hatte dem Nahost-Quartett zwar kürzlich neue Pläne für Grenzziehung und Sicherheitsarrangements vorgelegt. Die amerikanische Regierung kritisierte die Palästinenser jedoch für ihre Weigerung, direkte Gespräche mit Israel zu beginnen. Gleichzeitig lehnte Israel es ab, Gegenvorschläge einzureichen, solange Abbas nicht zu direkten Verhandlungen bereit sei.

Die palästinensische Führung bemüht sich indes weiterhin um eine Internationalisierung des Konflikts. Zuletzt kündigte die PLO an, sie werde den UN-Sicherheitsrat um eine Verurteilung der israelischen Siedlungstätigkeiten anrufen.

The shattered dream

"Peace has vanished from our lives. Nobody talks about it anymore; even the negotiations about it, the longest in history, are officially dead. [...] First the Israelis lost interest in it, then their proteges the Americans did too. [...]"

The obvious condition posed by the Palestinians to finally freeze settlement construction serves as an excuse for Netanyahu not to conduct even make-believe negotiations. [...]"

It may seem a good thing that this masquerade has ended, but a troublesome thought remains - if there's no peace and no talks, what comes instead? There's only one certain answer - this void will fill up. [...] If the Palestinians' faint hope of freedom is doomed, they will be forced again to take another

path. [...] This vacuum will be filled by another circle of bloodshed, more horrible than the previous ones." Gideon Levy, HAA 08.12.11

America must take the lead on Iran

"Panetta stopped by the Saban Forum in Washington [...] to convey two messages to Israel. First, don't attack Iran alone. Second, 'get back to the damn table' and restart negotiations with the Palestinians. [...]"

Panetta's 'damn table' remark makes it clear that he sees Israel as responsible for the failure of negotiations. Not necessarily exclusively. Perhaps he also holds the Palestinians responsible. On Saturday, however, he was only pointing the finger at Israel, and that's a bad sign. If that's how it is in a U.S. election year, what will happen afterward? Well, maybe those 'damn' negotiations will resume after all?"

Dan Margalit, IHY 04.12.11

Panetta's panacea

"Panetta and his colleagues assume that a U.S.-driven resolution of the Palestinian issue would be a key panacea to regional conflicts, improving Arab sentiments toward the U.S.

[...] His rebuke of Israel forces the Arabs to further radicalize their demands, policy and terrorism, lest they be outflanked by the U.S. from the hawkish side. It does not get them to 'the damn table;' it gets them away from 'the damn table.'"

Yoram Ettinger, IHY 05.12.11

America blaming the victim

"It would be challenging to determine what planet Mr. Panetta just arrived from given the fact his comments demonstrate a total lack of understanding of the issues. Unless, of course, his intent is to blame the victim. [...]"

Abbas has rejected Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. [...] How anyone can continue to back a two-state solution when one side flatly refuses to accept it makes as much sense as trying to promote a basketball game when only one team is willing to show up. [...] The time has also come to start questioning the sincerity of those who promote a two-state solution. They expect Israel to give up its heartland, thereby transforming Tel Aviv and dozens of other major cities into Sderot, placing millions of innocent civilians at risk of daily rocket and mortar fire. [...] No person or nation who supports such moves should be considered a friend of Israel."

Dan Calic, JED 08.12.11

Reflections on partition

"Sixty-four years have passed since the Nov. 29, 1947, adoption of the U.N. Partition Plan [...]. At the time, Palestinians and Arab states violently opposed the plan. [...] With their recent U.N. petition [...], the Palestinians have come full circle. They are admitting they made a historic mistake. [...]

Still, it is difficult for the Palestinians to establish their state by means of an agreement with Israel because they would have to recognize it as the nation state of the Jewish people. [...]

At the same time, [...] there are still many Israelis who refuse to accept Palestinians' demand to establish a country on land they perceive as exclusively Jewish. [...]

A conflict of identity is a zero-sum dispute. [...] As long as the sides continue to engage in such a conflict, it is unlikely to be resolved. In fact, both sides appear to be growing more extreme, thereby aggravating the identity conflict, with religion and its earthly ambassadors playing a central role in denying the rights of the other, and forestalling the compromise necessary to achieve peace."

Yaacov Bar-Siman Tov, IHY 29.12.12

A Jewish role model

"In recent years, the Palestinian Authority has slowly but haltingly begun building pre-state institutions of governance, most notably under the leadership of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. [...] But Fayyad and what he stands for lack support in the Palestinian street. [...]

Even the PA's unilateral UN bid for statehood, which has mistakenly been compared to the Jewish people's successful UN campaign 64 years ago, seems more like the continuation of the Palestinians' destructive strategy. The aim appears to be the creation of a Palestinian state [...] without making peace with Israel. [...] Instead of focusing on their battle against the Jewish state, Palestinians should concentrate on completing the unfinished job begun by Fayyad."

JPO 30.11.11 Editorial

The Hadassah model

"Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demands that the Palestinians [...] recognized Israel as a Jewish state, as a prerequisite to the resumption of any kind of political negotiations.

[...] Israel is a de-facto Jewish state and so it should avoid demanding to be recognized as such. Israel must work to earn respect as a Jewish state – gaining respect based on excellence and right of pos-

session is more powerful than pleading for tactical recognition, which is forcibly imposed. [...]

The Arab peace initiative is still a collective act of Arab goodwill and so far, it has yet to encounter good will in Israel. Imagine the power of that good will were it a mutual one. I hope that the new awakening in Israel will see it make good use of the opportunity for change in the Middle East."

Kamel Hussein, JED 11.12.11

Arabs scared of the truth

"Israel is being accused of drawing out the negotiations and lacking a genuine, honest will to secure peace among its leaders and citizens. [...] I shall make do with reviewing two points: The first is historical and pertains to Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. Don't these agreements attest to Israel's serious intentions? [...]

The second point pertains to the Shalit swap. In an Egyptian TV interview, [...] Shalit chose to express his hope that the conflict shall end and all prisoners shall return to their families. On the other hand, released Palestinian prisoners chose to commit to continuing terrorism and bloodshed. [...] This terror policy constitutes the main obstacle to Palestinian reconciliation efforts and the achievement of peace. [...] The solution to the Palestinian pain will not be achieved via the killing of Israeli innocents [...], but rather, by abandoning the path of violence and returning to negotiations. Let's hope they understand this soon."

Nizar Amer, JED 03.12.11

4. Medienquerschnitt

Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen LeserInnen dennoch einen Einblick in das breite Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir in dieser Schlaglichtausgabe wieder eine kleine Auswahl an weiteren Themen, die in den vergangenen zwei Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.

*Über eine **kontroverse Werbekampagne**, mit der Israelis in den USA zur Rückkehr bewegt werden sollten und die vor Assimilierung warnte:*

Selling Israel the right way

"Netanyahu could have easily avoided insulting [Israeli expats] had he finally realized the real reason that prompted them to leave Israel. Scientists,

doctors, authors and artists are fleeing our country as if they were frightened mice on a sinking ship. [...] These are the best of the best, our finest men and women [...]. They are fleeing because their talents and work are not being recognized and because they fear that they will not be able to support their families here. [...]

Government officials [...] would do well if they come up with a long-term solution for bringing Israelis back to their country. A solution whereby all those returning will be rewarded with proper salaries, receive job guarantees, and most of all, be met with an intelligent attitude [...].

Israeli food and Memorial Day candles are not good enough reasons to return to Israel."

Merav Betito, JED 07.12.11

Jews belong in Israel

"Assimilation in the U.S. has reached epic proportions. [...] I have no doubt that the problem of assimilation troubles Israeli emigrants, even if they are not religiously observant. Their fear that their children will be completely assimilated is both serious and real. In my view, there is nothing wrong with playing on this fear to encourage Israeli emigrants to return. [...]

It is a real shame that the ad campaign has been cancelled. The strong criticism it garnered merely proves how effective it was."

Haim Shine, IHY 11.12.11

Professional, organizational and cultural failure

"The broadcasts hit on the subject of assimilation. More than 50% of marriages in the US are mixed. The community tries to include these couples, so as not to lose them. [...] Not only does Israel reject Reform conversions carried out in the US, it suggests in the broadcasts that Israelis had better come back before assimilation overtakes them. What does that say to the thousands of assimilated couples in the US? [...]

The protest from the US Jewish community came forcefully and fast. [...] It can only be hoped that the damage that has been done is not too great, but that is something we will find out when we need their help, which will probably be soon."

Nachman Shai, GLO 05.12.11

Über die **Diskriminierung von Soldatinnen** aus religiösen Gründen:

This woman's army?

"Inappropriate practices of separating women during official events, or the ostentatious departure of religiously observant soldiers while women are singing at ceremonies, morphs the IDF from a people's army into 'God's army.' [...] These phenomena also reflect a dangerous transfer of command from the government and military commanders to the rabbis. [...]

It is not for naught that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton compared the exclusion of women here to what is happening in Iran. [...] Religious fundamentalism is fundamentalism, whether it is radical Islamist, Christian or Jewish. [...]

The 'ayatollah-ism' of the army is a threat to our national security [...]. Damaging the status of women in the IDF legitimizes their exclusion in other areas, such as on buses, in cemeteries, on posters and on public signs."

Zahava Gal-On, IHY 07.12.11

HAA = Haaretz

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

GLO = Globes

Veröffentlicht: 13. Dezember 2011

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