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**Die Themen dieser Ausgabe**

1. Schwere Polizeigewalt bei Protesten gegen die Regierung Netanyahus.....	1
2. Schusswechsel an der israelisch-libanesischen Grenze .....	6
3. US-Politologe Beinart plädiert für die Einstaatenlösung.....	7
4. Medienquerschnitt.....	10

**1. Schwere Polizeigewalt bei Protesten gegen die Regierung Netanyahus**

*Die weiter steigenden Zahlen von zum Teil über 2000 täglich neuen Corona-Infektionen, die Regierungsmaßnahmen und die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit führen immer mehr Menschen auf die Straße zum Protest gegen Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu. In Jerusalem ging die Polizei mit Wasserwerfern gegen die Demonstrant\_innen vor. Lehrer\_innen, Sozialarbeiter\_innen und Freiberufler\_innen sind die Corona-Schutzmaßnahmen und ihre wirtschaftlichen Folgen leid. Temporär legten auch Krankenschwestern ihre Arbeit nieder, um ihren Unmut kundzutun. Überall bei den landesweiten Kundgebungen vertreten ist die "Schwarze Flaggen Bewegung", ein spontaner Aufstand frustrierter Bürger ohne zentrale Organisation oder Führung. Ihre Forderung richtet sich direkt gegen Netanyahu, der von seinem Amt zurücktreten sollte. Der Druck wird mit dem gegen den Regierungschef laufenden Prozess erhöht. Netanyahu ist wegen Betrugs, Untreue und Bestechlichkeit angeklagt. Er selbst bestreitet die Vorwürfe. Problematisch ist zudem, dass drei Monate nach Bildung der Regierungskoalition noch immer kein Haushalt verabschiedet wurde. Die Rücktrittsrufer kommen auch aus den Reihen des Parlaments. Oppositionsführer Yair Lapid warf Netanyahu vor, die Kontrolle verloren zu haben. Ein Rücktritt hätte nicht notwendig Neuwahlen zur Folge, meinte Lapid, der eine Notstandsregierung anvisiert.*

**Netanyahu is quaking; a popular protest movement could topple him**

Less than a decade ago, in 2011, widespread socio-economic protests that nobody had predicted erupted. (...) The leaders of that protest movement weren't political figures. They were expressing their own feelings and those of people like them, and many people back then identified with their struggle. Benjamin Netanyahu, then as now prime minister, feared the protest movement's popularity. He sought to make it go away by any possible means, and in the end, he set up the Trajtenberg Committee. Establishing this committee gradually slowed the protest movement until it disappeared completely. Today, too, in 2020, public pressure could undermine Netanyahu. This pressure has arisen both because of the coronavirus crisis and its impact on the economy and because of his own corruption, which has been revealed in all its ugliness and become impossible to hide. From a strategic standpoint, there are two things that could change the situation in Israel. One is Donald Trump being defeated in the U.S. presidential election in November. His downfall would be a blessing both for America and for the liberal democratic bloc in Israel. The second is a new socioeconomic protest movement, which this time would also hoist the banner of a war on corruption. (...) A widespread, nonpartisan protest movement that would combine the issue of economic distress with that of public corruption could definitely

undermine Netanyahu's rule. (...) The pressure is visible on Netanyahu's face. He's quaking. (...) Uzi Baram, HAA, 01.07.20

### **Systemic violence against Israel's citizens is not limited to police brutality**

(...) Police brutality is part of the way our system of government works. (...) People see it and judge it on the spot (...). What ought to truly worry and frighten us is covert violence, the kind that infects the herd. (...) Someone beaten by a policeman can complain. In contrast, someone erroneously identified as having walked by a person with the coronavirus and sentenced to quarantine is helpless. He's imprisoned under house arrest with no trial and no lawyer. Grocery stores, floral shops, falafel stands, pubs, bars, teachers and parents are all frequently threatened these days by violent orders drafted by bureaucrats and doctors, politicians and experts, all of whom are divided among themselves over the right way to deal with the coronavirus pandemic. (...) Even during an emergency (...) it's tremendously important to preserve the country's democratic structure and protect individual rights, human dignity and the right to earn a dignified living. These are the pillars on which the citizenry's faith in its government rest, and this faith is now facing its most difficult test. Without it, violent policemen and excessive fines won't help. Now, the government wants to give its regulations and edicts the status of supreme law, without any Knesset debate or with limitations on the length of such debates. (...) From now on, the executive branch will also be the legislative branch. (...) The public, which fears for its health and its livelihood, can do nothing but withdraw into itself and pin its hopes on its leaders' common sense, on the delusion that they care about the public's wellbeing and on the belief that they know what they're doing. But those assumptions have collapsed over the past few months. (...) A failed leadership has no right to entrench itself through draconian legislation and disguise its violence in magnificent legal robes so that it can harm additional people. If the leadership wants to maintain the little confidence it still inspires, it must admit its mistakes, explain how it plans to correct them, demonstrate the sincerity of its intentions through swift but not hasty action and cease the violence. (...)

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 07.07.20

### **Netanyahu's crime and punishment**

(...) The State of Israel had a successful decade of economic growth and prosperity. Some of these

achievements are attributed - and rightfully so - to Netanyahu. (...) After a decade of accomplishments and a sense of pride in his achievements, Netanyahu now leads the country in its most brutal and painful campaign to date. Brutal not because of a surprise attack by hostile forces, a wave of terrorism or an Iranian threat, but because this economic and health battle is unfolding amid utter bedlam. Netanyahu finds himself standing alone. There is no one to share the burden and there is nowhere to hide. (...) The economy barely survived the first wave of the coronavirus, and it's anybody's guess where the second wave will lead Israel. Netanyahu is now paying a political price for a decade of complacency. He torpedoed any alternative for brave leadership who could stand by his side. The great and the good have jumped ship or been sidelined. Now, Netanyahu stands alone during his - and Israel's - darkest hour.

Yuval Karni, YED, 08.07.20

### **Mass protests are warnings for Israel's government**

(...) nine years after Israelis started spontaneously protesting the high costs of basic food stuffs in the country, in what would later be known as the "cottage cheese protest," the masses walked out into the streets yet again (...) to protest the government's failures, failures that only compounded the woes of the worst economic plague Israel has ever known, on top of the coronavirus pandemic sweeping the country. The close to one million unemployed, together with hundreds of thousands of business owners, have simply lost patience and any remaining trust they may have had for the current "coronavirus government." For this is a government that has been busy with practically everything but the severe hardships facing the citizens who elected them. (...) Benjamin Netanyahu is an experienced, savvy politician. (...) he realized that he could be facing a new wave of protests, but his efforts to persuade the self-employed to cancel the protest fell on deaf ears. This kind of behavior is precisely why there were protests to begin with, not to mention the hole-filled plans, constant empty promises, assistance that never arrived and the prevailing lack of trust in the government. (...) the people showed Netanyahu's unity government a yellow card, one that could lead to it being sent off the pitch altogether.

Gad Lior, YED, 18.07.20

### **Striking in a pandemic is immoral**

All healthcare workers, chief among them the nurses and doctors, have the right to strike. (...) However, in the health and medical professions, a strike always harms those who are sick and causes them considerable hardship. (...) Therefore, medical and hospice workers must only strike as the very last option, when all other recourse has failed and after significant efforts wage a public campaign and negotiate honestly have been made. (...) All of this, meanwhile, is completely irrespective of the coronavirus pandemic currently menacing the planet with medical and healthcare challenges the world hasn't seen in 100 years and is struggling to overcome. (...) the National Association of Nurses is being too light and hasty on the trigger finger, and not for the first time. At this stage, the strike is immoral and cannot be allowed to happen. (...) Ran Reznick, IHY, 20.07.20

### **Here is what the Jerusalem protests really look like**

The demonstrations in Jerusalem against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's are an amazing thing from a civil and democratic perspective. They are also terrifying. The protesters come out of there emotionally overwhelmed. (...) The demonstrations have no defined leadership, steady funding or a clear plan of action. Information is decentralized and spread by word of mouth or social media. All kinds of political groups (...) make their own signs, accessories and sometimes costumes. They make a lot of noise, shouting, singing and whistling, and with bicycle horns, pots and pans. This is an authentic civil protest (...) very political, in sharp contrast to the "pareve," fearful and self-defeating atmosphere during the 2011 protests. They are focused on the demand that the prime minister accused of crimes yield his seat, along with his swollen, detached and corrupt government. There are many messages in favor of democracy and against dictatorship, for integrity and against corruption. There are musical instruments, flowers and pictures of hearts. (...) The violence always, but always, starts with the police. The Jerusalem District police under the command of Maj. Gen. Doron Yedid has become King Bibi's personal guard. (...) His men are armed with guns, some are on horseback. They contain the protest with restraint and without difficulty, until the moment when the commander in the field decides to mix it up. Then come the thugs from the Border Police and Yasam special forces, who got their training in the occupied territories. They push, hit, knock down and drag the protesters (...). But it won't help them

against the message of the younger generation. We've waited for them for many years, and finally their time has come. This is a dramatic change. (...) It will take a little more time (...) they and their parents will bring down Netanyahu. Uri Misgav, HAA, 23.07.20

### **Will budget battle plunge Israel into yet more elections?**

Alongside the already shaky relationship between coalition leaders Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud and Defense Minister Benny Gantz of Blue & White, two recently proposed bills have served to throw the government into further disarray as it struggles to effectively combat the coronavirus pandemic.

The first was a bill proposed by opposition MK Bezalel Smotrich (Yamina) to investigate alleged conflict of interests within the judiciary. It was a move designed to throw a grenade into the Likud-Blue & White political partnership, but was quickly rejected by the Knesset.

The second and potentially more politically explosive was the bill jointly proposed by Meretz chair Nitzan Horowitz and rebel Labor MK Merav Michaeli to ban so-called conversion therapy for gay men, which passed its preliminary vote on Wednesday.

Furious ultra-Orthodox parties in the coalition vowed to punish Likud MKs for failing to scupper the legislation and Blue & White for supporting it, and have threatened to take retaliatory action.

The threat - which includes a Shas pledge to abstain indefinitely from all Knesset votes - comes as the coalition faces the challenge of approving the annual state budget, something the government might not be able to do in its current formulation.

Political pundits say that disagreements over how the budget legislation will be presented - either only covering the months left until the end of the year or planning for a year and one quarter as Gantz demands - will determine the fate of Israel's political landscape.

If the government cannot pass a budget it will automatically fall and new elections will be triggered. This would circumvent Gantz's stipulation that he become prime minister at once instead of in October 2021 if Netanyahu calls a national vote.

But Likud believes that Gantz has decided not to compromise on budget issues - even at the cost of new elections. Blue & White sources say that no decision has been made, and they are convinced that Netanyahu wants to drag Israel into another

round of voting to suit his own personal interests and in contravention of the coalition agreement. Netanyahu is currently in the middle of corruption trial that will require his presence in court three times a week from January unless he can legislate a way out, for which he will need a more supportive Knesset. (...)

At the Blue & White faction meeting held Wednesday, Gantz insisted that the best course of action was to approve a budget for a year and a quarter, to ensure the stability of the country's institutions.

He garnered support from MK Yoaz Hendel, whose two-man Derekh Eretz party split from the Blue & White alliance after the March 2020 election.

Writing on Twitter, Hendel said that he was "under the impression that a budget for one year and three months is needed, not a budget for three months. Every day we delay in making this decision is a wasted day in the campaign to save the economy and deal with the coronavirus."

He accused the prime minister of causing chaos in order to suit his own ends.

"If Netanyahu wants a [limited] budget just so that he has an 'exit point' from the [coalition] agreement - he is choosing instability. To go to the polls is to run away from dealing with the crises, both economic and health. We need to calm down now."

President Reuven Rivlin also weighed in with a similar message, urging coalition parties to "wake up!"

"With great concern I am following the developments in the Knesset, which repeatedly are shaking an already fragile partnership between coalition factions," the president said in a statement Thursday. "Wake up! End the talk of early elections."

Meanwhile, Haaretz newspaper reported this week that Netanyahu is indeed planning November elections, some two weeks after the U.S. goes to the polls to vote for president.

As Blue & White's relationship with the ultra-Orthodox parties has taken a serious blow over the ban on conversion therapy, it is unlikely they will intervene to ensure Gantz' turn as prime minister, as laid out in the coalition agreement.

Moran Azulay, YED, 24.07.20

### **Does government chaos mean elections are coming?**

The unity government has long lost its public appeal, but now it is also losing its grip on relevant politics. With government infighting breaking records on a daily basis, and with a state budget nowhere in sight, the question of whether Prime Minister Ben-

jamin Netanyahu will trigger another general election has again been presented, but still has no definite answer. (...) the prime minister has done nothing over the past few weeks in order to maintain the coalition. (...) Ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism (...) believe Netanyahu could easily keep Blue and White in check but chooses not to, and as far as they are concerned, the only reason for that is that Netanyahu wants to prompt general elections. Shas and United Torah Judaism are not amused, to put it mildly. Blue and White's decision (...) to side with the opposition and vote in favor of a bill that bans gay conversion therapy may have been the last straw for the Haredi parties. (...) The Haredi parties were wary of a national unity government from day one and signed off on it over what can be described of election fatigue in the wake of three consecutive campaigns. (...) the damage Blue and White leader Benny Gantz has caused to their political relationship may be irreversible. (...)

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 23.02.20

### **Is Netanyahu heading for elections?**

#### **As soon as January date for testimony was declared, the die was cast.**

Although sworn in only two-and-a-half months ago, the wheels are already coming off the bus of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's latest administration, with talk of elections in November seen as an increasing possibility due to a government failure to pass the budget next month.

Not only is Netanyahu at daggers drawn with Blue and White leader Benny Gantz, ostensibly his senior coalition ally and alternate prime minister, but Netanyahu's loyal haredi partners have threatened to boycott votes in the Knesset plenum while tempers have reached boiling point within Netanyahu's own Likud Party.

And in the real world, Israel is deep in the depths of coronavirus, with no coherent policy for restraining the pandemic. The daily number of people infected with the virus continues to rise alarmingly, as does the number of people seriously ill with COVID-19. The effect on the economy is disastrous, with an unemployment rate of over 20% and the national debt piling up.

Restaurants open or closed? Swimming pools OK or forbidden? Gyms up and running or closed down? NIS 750 cash handouts for all or criteria-based? Who knows? Decisions change daily for no apparent reason. As one very senior Bank of Israel official commented, current government policy is notable

mostly for the lack of serious data behind it and a chaotic decision-making process. (...)

When Gantz broke every promise, he had made in three rounds of bitterly contested elections and decided to serve under Netanyahu, he argued he had done so because Israel needed a unity government to combat coronavirus. So far, it's fair to say, the impact of Blue and White joining forces with the Likud has had absolutely no impact on Israel's struggle against the pandemic.

The only realm where Gantz, alongside Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, has made a difference lies in the diplomatic arena and Blue and White's success, for the moment at least, in preventing Netanyahu's dangerous plans to unilaterally annex parts of the West Bank. Their opposition to such a move convinced the Trump administration, laboring under its own myriad of problems, that now was not the time to destabilize the Middle East. But this will probably be their only accomplishment.

Gantz's opposition to Netanyahu's desire to push through a budget next month only for what's left of 2020 – the factor behind the current tension between the two men – and not a dual budget for 2020 and 2021 as agreed upon in the coalition agreement, has nothing to do with economics.

The law states that if a government fails to pass the state budget, it has to stand down. Gantz fears, with good reason, that leaving the option of a 2021 budget open until next year will provide Netanyahu with a loophole to go to the polls in March 2021, thus ending Gantz's hopes of replacing Netanyahu as alternate prime minister in November 2021 as per the coalition guidelines.

In Gantz's mind, Netanyahu would prefer to go to elections next spring, when hopefully the worst effects of coronavirus are behind us and not this November, when the pandemic is still raging and the winter influenza season is about to begin and the hospital corridors are overflowing with sick people. Hence Gantz's determination to force Netanyahu to stick to his written agreement to pass a dual budget for 2020 and 2021.

What the Blue and White leader is forgetting is that all of Netanyahu's decisions are based on one thing, and one thing only: his own personal survival. The good of the country, the good of the Likud Party, all come second to the prime minister's primary objective: staying out of jail.

The minute Jerusalem District Court president Judge Rivka Friedman-Feldman announced her decision last week to start hearing evidence in the

trial against Netanyahu in January, three days a week, the die was cast. Netanyahu will seek any opportunity to bring down this government and go to the polls before January.

The prime minister knows there is no way he can run a country either still in, or recovering from, the coronavirus pandemic while sitting in court three days a week. Even in a normal situation, it's impossible to run a country like Israel while being locked in a courtroom for the majority of the week.

The minute his trial on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust starts, the calls to have Netanyahu declared incapacitated will become impossible to refute. Netanyahu's only chance of escaping being forced to stand down while standing trial lies in throwing the country into chaos with a fourth round of elections beforehand.

That is the direction our prime minister is now leading the country, without a care for the consequences for the nation.

Jeff Barak, JPO, 26.07.20

### **Netanyahu is using the state budget to stay in power**

(...) Israel has been without an approved budget since the beginning of the year. The budget (...) passed in 2017 (...) has been the basis for government activity well into 2020. The result is a gap of between 15 billion and 20 billion shekels between the budget framework and the actual budgetary needs. (...) three months have gone by since the government was established and the 2020 budget is still not approved. (...) it will be necessary to make the cuts (...) of 3 billion shekels a month from the ministries' budgets. This would deal a massive blow to the opening of the 2020-21 school year, to community centers and informal education, to all non-profit associations engaged in welfare activities, and more. Without an approved budget, Israel will be breaking its promises to the international credit rating agencies, which could lead to a lowering of its credit ranking. Such a nightmarish scenario would substantially shorten the route to a dangerous financial crisis. In the midst of the worst financial crisis Israel has experienced since 1985, and as it needs financial stability more than anything to overcome the coronavirus crisis, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is threatening to push Israel into the abyss. It's hard to think of a clearer badge of shame for "Mr. Economy" Netanyahu. (...) the budget crisis is a fabricated one. There would be no problem passing a budget tomorrow. But to do this, he must agree to approve a two-year budget, for 2020 and

2021, just as he committed to do in the coalition agreement. (...) Netanyahu is aware of the economic logic and knows it's the right thing to do, but (...) if he agrees to a two-year budget, he will lose the stick with which he can dismantle the government in 2021, and then he'll have to fulfill the rotation agreement with Gantz. As usual, he is putting his personal survival before the survival of the State of Israel.

Editorial, HAA, 29.07.20

### **The unity government is steadily jettisoning public trust - opinion**

(...) Instead of trying to steady the ship and give the public a secure feeling, the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz has instead become more insular, seemingly jettisoning any interest in earning the public's trust. (...) once the government was formed (...) the large number of new ministers appeared to all squabble over details rather than work as a team. (...) The corrosive effects of non-stop elections and the politicization of matters of national security – like the management of the coronavirus crisis or annexation plans that would begin to set Israel's borders in the West Bank – have eroded public trust in the government, and now we fear, in the IDF. (...) security and health must come first. Unfortunately, this government has shown only disunity. Unsurprisingly, Netanyahu has appeared to care more about tax breaks and getting funding for his trial than about the larger issues the country faces. This is precisely why a prime minister should not be on trial and in office at the same time. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 29.07.20

### **2. Schusswechsel an der israelisch-libanesischen Grenze**

*Zwischen Israel und der Hisbollah droht nach heftigen Gefechten an der libanesischen Grenze eine erneute Eskalation. Laut Militärangaben war es in der Region Har Dov zu einem Schusswechsel gekommen, als die Israelische Verteidigungsarmee (IDF) eine Gruppe von Hisbollah-Kämpfern daran hinderte, nach Israel einzudringen. Israel drohte dem Libanon und der Hisbollah im Fall neuer Angriffe auf sein Gebiet mit einer sehr harten Reaktion. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu warf den schiitischen Milizen einen „Infiltrationsversuch“ vor. Die Hisbollah spielte mit dem Feuer. Verteidigungsminister Benny Gantz kündigte bei einem erneuten Angriff eine „starke, scharfe und schmerzhaft Reaktion“ an. Die Hisbollah, die auch von der EU als*

*Terrororganisation gelistet wird, machte umgekehrt Israel für einen Raketenangriff in Syrien verantwortlich, bei dem ein ranghohes Hisbollah-Mitglied getötet wurde. Die islamistische Organisation verfügt im Libanon über einen politischen Flügel, der an der Regierung in Beirut beteiligt ist. Militärexperten gehen davon aus, dass keine der beiden Seiten ein Interesse an einem erneuten Krieg hat.*

### **It's time to calm the northern border**

The attacks by the Israel Defense Forces in southern Syria were in response to the firing of a rocket or mortar shell that exploded in the buffer zone on the Golan Heights and caused damage in the town of Majdal Shams. (...) This was one more attack of the kind Israel has been conducting for months now inside the sovereign territory of Syria. While sanctifying its own sovereignty, Israel violates the sovereignty of neighboring states like Syria and Lebanon, and presumably that of Iran as well, all the while enjoying Russian silence and American support. Israel has adopted the territory of these states as an arena of free and legitimate operations, on the grounds that they extend patronage to Hezbollah, permit the entrenchment of Iran and pose a threat to Israeli security. This is a dangerous policy that could drag Israel into a violent confrontation or even war. For proof, look to the heightened alert and the bolstering of the IDF presence along the northern border, and the assessments regarding possible retaliation by Hezbollah. (...) just as Hezbollah must consider its public and political standing before deciding on a military response, so too must the Israeli government. The coronavirus crisis and the economic crash, which highlighted the government's dysfunction and loss of control, should serve as a warning not to test Israelis' willingness to also endure a war waged by a leader who has lost the public's trust. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 26.07.20

### **Hezbollah took a hit but may still be a threat**

(...) when (...) the IDF conducted a strike near the Damascus airport targeting weapons and ammunition (...) Hezbollah (...) decided to respond (...) in accordance with a doctrine announced by its leader Hassan Nasrallah in 2015 that called for every casualty to be avenged. Hezbollah intended to maintain its deterrence in the face of Israel while also proving to its Iranian benefactors that it is the most efficient and powerful proxy the Islamic Republic now has in the Middle East. But the terror group did not wish to take action that would be in violation of Israel's sov-

ereignty and force the Israelis to respond militarily deep inside Lebanon. The aim was to exact a price from the IDF in an area that is disputed territory (...). The IDF was prepared for just that eventuality and had positioned its tanks under the cover of vegetation. The military also set fires in the area to create a curtain of smoke further obscuring its forces. (...) The question now is what's next? It is clear that Hezbollah does not want to cause casualties among Israeli civilians, which is why the IDF quickly announced that roads along the border were open for civilian traffic and local residents were no longer confined to their homes. But the Lebanese terror group may not see this operation as a success and may still be trying to exact a price from Israel. (...) Israel has no interest in escalating tensions. (...) This was a blow to Nasrallah and his organization and the IDF needs nothing more to prove its deterrence. Still, the troops must remain alert in case any other militants remain in the area and intend to carry out an attack on the forces there. The tactical mind games, therefore, continue.  
Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 27.07.20

### **More than meets the eye**

(...) the strategic battle Israel is waging against the radical Shiite axis forming to its north is far from over (...) Hezbollah is still looking to retaliate over the death of one of its operatives in an alleged Israeli strike in Syria (...). From a tactical standpoint, the IDF could note operational success. Troops on the ground were on alert and ready, they engaged the terrorist immediately, and the protocols cordoning off the sector to civilians were executed smoothly. (...) it seems that Israel predicted Hezbollah's moves (...). Hezbollah, it seems, carried out this failed attack as an ad-hoc mission. Breaking it down, it makes no sense for Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to send a sizeable cell, in broad daylight, to an area practically crawling with Israeli troops. (...) It is possible that the Shiite terrorist group felt pressured to mount a reprisal, or perhaps it just wanted the issue of retaliation over and done with before Muslims worldwide mark Eid al-Adha, which this year falls on Thursday. Or perhaps this was a PR stunt as the very fact it took action allows it to keep fostering the narrative of "defender of Lebanon." The fact it chose to deny the failed attack even took place means it still has a score to settle with Israel, meaning the IDF will remain on high alert in the northern sector until further notice. Many pundits argue that Israel cannot afford to miss the opportunity to deal Hezbollah

with a strategic blow, but the IDF was right to contain the incident and avoid escalation. (...)  
Yoav Limor, IHY, 28.07.20

### **Lebanon is paying for Hezbollah's illogical power games**

(...) There is a cause for concern (...). Since the end of the fighting in 2006 and until today, Hezbollah has been arming itself with massive amounts of missiles and rockets. There are 130,000 missiles aimed at targets all over Israel, according to estimates. With or without Hezbollah's efforts to turn many of these missiles into precision weapons, which Israel has purportedly been working hard to foil, and with or without any more weapons systems, this arsenal poses a real threat to Israel's safety. (...) Lebanon does not need nor desire an additional confrontation with Israel (...). But the country has been taken hostage by Hezbollah. It is completely under the terror group's control, and logic may not be a determining factor in what comes next. Lebanon is in the midst of the worst financial crisis in its history. Inflation has reportedly reached 56%, turning it into a failed state akin to Venezuela or Zimbabwe. (...) half the country is living below the poverty line, 30% in inhuman conditions. The Lebanese people are going hungry and public protests against the government and the banks are increasing. It is safe to assume Israel is not prominent on the minds of most of the country's population. (...) But in Lebanon, the sectarian politics are a little more complicated. (...) even if we, as Westerners, think there is no logic in a further escalation of hostilities, the Shi'ite cleric marches to the tune of his own drum. After years of fighting alongside the Syrian regime in that country's brutal civil war, Hezbollah must now show Iran it is still relevant, and that can only be achieved by keeping the conflict with Israel alive. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 31.07.20

### **3. US-Politologe Beinart plädiert für die Einstaatenlösung**

*Ein Essay in der New York Times reichte aus, um Israels Printmedien mit scharfen und kontroversen Kommentaren zu füllen. Der US-amerikanische Politologe Peter Beinart hält in der amerikanischen Tageszeitung ein Plädoyer für die Einstaatenlösung. Allein die große Zahl der israelischen Siedler, die in Ostjerusalem und im besetzten palästinensischen Westjordanland leben, mache die auch von ihm über Jahrzehnte präferierte Zweistaatenlösung unmöglich. An Israels Linker sei es nun, für einen Staat mit gleichen Rechten für alle Bürger zu kämpfen.*

*fen. Beinart, der erklärtermaßen regelmäßig eine orthodoxe Synagoge besucht, räumt ein, dass es dann mit dem Judenstaat vorbei ist. Er besinnt sich auf die frühen Zionisten, die eine jüdische Heimstätte vor Augen gehabt hätten.*

### **Peter Beinart's one state solution sounds so perfect it's practically utopian**

(...) I agree with three of Beinart's main conclusions. The most important of them is that one binational state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan with equal rights for Jews and Palestinians would be a just way to end the fundamentally unjust situation, whereby millions of Palestinians do not have national or civil rights. As Beinart points out, as long as such a binational state could remain a haven for Jews suffering persecution anywhere in the world, it would still fulfill the *raison d'être* of the Jewish state. (...) I can imagine the overwhelming majorities of both nations coming to terms with the hyphenated "Israel-Palestine" and realizing it was the best possible outcome. (...) The only problem is, I can't vote for a state like that. Not one party in Israel, no, not even the Joint List, is proposing it. And neither could the Palestinians, back when they had elections, vote for it. (...) I agree as well with Beinart, that a large proportion of Israelis, and Israel-supporting Jews in the Diaspora, have projected a Nazi mentality on to all the Palestinians. While antisemitism is all too prevalent among Palestinians, they are not planning a genocide of Jews. (...) And Beinart is right in his historical analysis that there were past leaders (...) who believed that Zionism didn't necessarily have to mean a full sovereign state for Jews only, and that it could be part of a wider federation including other nations. But this is also where his argument becomes fatally flawed. (...) Zionism wasn't an ideology. It (...) was a plan to solve the acute problem of Jewish persecution (...) Ben-Gurion (...) knew Zionism was a pragmatic plan and the best way of realizing it was to go with whatever was possible. (...) Zionism worked for those for whom it was intended to work. (...) Beinart makes a strong case for why the two-state solution has failed. He needn't have bothered. The problem isn't with the two states, but with the solution. Most Israelis are in principle in favor of the two-state solution. Sadly, there just aren't enough of them who feel the need for a solution. (...)

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 09.07.20

### **Peter Beinart is neither a Zionist nor a liberal**

(...) Beinart is the High Priest of the Jewish American left. He is also J Street's unofficial ideolog. (...) A liberal Zionist is a person who has criticism of the Israeli government but does not deny its right to exist. A liberal is respectful of the right for self-determination on both sides. Beinart is no Zionist and is certainly not a liberal. (...) He negates the rights of Jews to an independent state because a minority of them oppose the rights of Palestinians to have the same. He supports the far-right policies of settlers from his position on the left. The French call it " *Les extrêmes se touchent*," The opposite ends meet. (...) In what reality could two groups that have so much animosity, follow different religions, different languages, culture, and tradition – succeed in existing in peace and harmony? The situation we are living with now, which is in need of change, would seem like heaven on earth compared to the nightmarish prospect of a one-state solution. Calls to exterminate Jews come not only from the Hamas terror group. They can be heard from members of the Palestinian Authority including its religious leader, who like his predecessor in the 1930s the pro-Nazi Amin al-Husseini, calls not only for the destruction of Israel but the extermination of Jews. Beinart is mum in the face of those calls. The Middle East is ripe with conflicts of national, ethnic, tribal, and religious groups waging war, slaughtering each other. But Beinart is mum in the face of that too. (...) Why does Beinart only hold the Jews responsible for the ongoing Israeli control of the West Bank? Why has he never laid blame on the Palestinians? Relieving them from any responsibility is racist and condescending. (...) A one-state solution works when it is made up of two nations that share the same roots, religion, language, and culture. (...) Beinart's column is another small win for the Israeli far-right and some Palestinians, who oppose to a two-state solution. He is not promoting peace and reconciliation. The far-right deals in action as they work to achieve this nightmarish vision of one great state now supported by Beinart's words and ideas as part of their own propaganda.

Ben Dror Yemini, YED, 12.07.20

### **Peter Beinart doesn't go far enough**

(...) Peter Beinart has raised the possibility of a binational state (...). A single state is the only alternative to what exists today, and what annexation plainly offers for the future: apartheid. Some have suggested confederation, but that fails for the same reason the two-state solution does, Israel is simply unwilling to provide the Palestinians with any mean-



ingful political or economic space. (...) The One Democratic State Campaign has formulated a political program that calls for a single democracy of equal rights, the homecoming of the refugees and the emergence of a shared civil society. It goes even further, recognizing that Zionism and Palestinian nationalism can co-exist within a pluralistic democracy – and both may eventually transform into something new, shared and vibrant. Will Israeli Jews buy into it? No, of course not. (...) The refusal of most whites in South Africa to willingly dismantle apartheid resembles that of Israeli Jews. So Palestinians and the few Israeli partners that share the vision of a shared society must take a leaf from the ANC play-book. Like the ANC, we must create a direct link between the international public, for whom Palestinian rights is a major issue (...), and our one-state movement. In that way we render Israeli apartheid unsustainable, as the ANC did in South Africa, finally bringing the Israelis into the transition process when they have no choice but to cooperate. The struggle for a single state, for justice, should be seen as a challenge to all of us, not as a threat. South Africans, the Northern Irish, Black and white Americans in Mississippi and many other peoples once locked in seemingly endless conflict discovered that when issues of inequality and justice are addressed, their “irresolvable” differences become manageable. (...) Jeff Halper, HAA, 13.07.20

#### **Peter Beinart to attend the Zionist Congress? I hope so.**

(...) Peter Beinart, the wayward guardian of his particular strain of Zionism, has publicly renounced his support for a Jewish state. Less known is that he was recently elected as a representative to the 38th Zionist Congress (...). Given his recent Op Ed in The New York Times (...) advocating the undoing of Israel in order to allow for the founding of a country in which there would be “equal rights for Jews and Palestinians,” there are those calling for him to resign his seat, or to be banned from attending if he doesn’t. (...) Beinart secured his place as an alternate delegate running on the ticket of the Hatikvah party, a conglomeration of several progressive Zionist groups. To do so, he had to affirm his acceptance of The Jerusalem Program (...), the official platform of the World Zionist Organization “views a Jewish, Zionist, democratic and secure State of Israel to be the expression of the common responsibility of the Jewish people.” It is easily arguable that forsaking that responsibility, as Beinart has done, would oblige him – morally if not legally – to relinquish his claim to

represent those who elected him. (...) Beinart’s arguments – as faulty, naïve, and unviable as they may be – highlight issues that are nonetheless real, serious and worrisome – and far too often disregarded. (...) all who do believe in Israel as a Jewish and democratic state had best take note of his concerns. (...) Beinart’s piece is one of many such signals warning us that the Zionist dream is in trouble. (...) another over nearly 4,000,000 Arabs who do not have not the right to vote for those who control much of their lives (...) runs counter to the Zionist ethos. (...)

David Breakstone, TOI, 14.07.20

#### **Peter Beinart is so disappointed by Israeli Jews he’s given up on them**

(...) Israeli Jews, perhaps more than ever before, are ignoring American criticism; their country no longer relies on U.S. aid like it once did. Beinart’s essays (...) have no tangible bearing on actual policy. (...) Israeli Jews and, to a lesser extent given their marginalization at the Israeli majority’s hands, Palestinians. (...) only six percent of Palestinians, when forced to choose between an array of plans, said they would abandon the two-state solution in favor of a one-state solution. That polling also showed that support for the two-state solution actually grew to almost 50 percent (...). Beinart and his intellectual allies are guilty of inflating the importance of both their personal indignation and that of the American public at large. He implicitly ties Israel’s future to American public opinion, implying that by priming young Americans, particularly young American Jews, to support the left-wing one-state solution, he will effect genuine change in Israel. He seems to think that because his and allied voices are on what he considers the right side of history, they will have more success in influencing Israeli policy than the panoply of two-state-focused organizations that have failed to do the same for decades. This is painfully naïve. Israeli Jews have for a long while not cared that American Jews (...) find the Jewish state’s illiberalism and nativism to be both embarrassing and unethical. Beinart’s assumed air of moral superiority matters not to Jerusalem. Our diaspora has long pleaded on principled grounds for reform, for democracy, and for two-states, but many Israeli Jews prefer illiberalism. The standard Israeli Jewish line of thinking goes as such: A single binational state will, thanks to Palestinian population growth, eventually result in a majority Palestinian state, in which Jews, without overall control, will be unsafe (...). That thesis, while dubious, offers key

insight into the Jewish state's mindset. Israelis Jews remain scarred by centuries of antisemitism. (...) Jewish Israelis, forged in the fires of aggrieved nationalism, have come to believe that the outside world — from Ramallah to Berlin to Paris — is so unsafe for Jews that they must do everything possible to secure the Jewish homeland. Hamas's violent takeover of the Gaza Strip only further solidified this psyche. Illiberalism is now a price many Israeli Jews are willing to pay for Jewish safety, regardless of outside criticism. (...) Young Israelis are more right-wing than their elders. (...) Israel has weaned itself off of American patronage, which in the pre-Trump era came attached with at least some human rights considerations, instead deepening ties with the illiberal and human rights-blind Chinese, Russian, Indian, and Hungarian governments. (...) Rather than scolding the Jewish state and calling for its effective dissolution, we must convince Jewish Israelis that their illiberalism threatens Jewish survival, because, in one way or another, it does.  
Charles Dunst, HAA, 16.07.20

#### **Beinart's guilt damns a nation**

(...) Many Jews feel guilty for the plight of the Palestinians. Beinart's way of dealing with these feelings is by eliminating the Zionist project – one of the most amazing success stories of national revival in history. Discussing the elimination of an existing state is unprecedented. (...) There is no precedent for a successful reunification between two states entwined in a bloody conflict with different ethnicities and languages. (...) Lebanon, Syria and Iraq all contain different ethnic groups that have been fighting for decades. These conflicts take place despite the groups' shared history, language and culture – elements not shared by Israelis and Palestinians. Even among the Palestinians, a conflict exists between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. It's unclear how adding Jews to the mix will create a peaceful coexistence in one state. Considering the hostility and distrust – not to mention the cultural, economic, political, and social gaps between Jews and Palestinians – a civil war seems a more likely outcome. (...) Beinart fails to discuss Jordan in his proposal. In Jordan, some 50% to 70% of the population is Palestinian. Wouldn't a one-state solution work better for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Jordan, who share language, religion, culture and even relatives, than in Israel where the Jews and Palestinians share distrust (...) a utopian experiment that, were it established, would likely prove catastrophic.

Anat Talmy, IHY, 21.07.20

#### **The end of Israel and Peter Beinart as the last man**

(...) Peter Beinart (...) joins Israel's most committed enemies with his call for an end to the Jewish state. The article resurrects much of the traditional nonsense of Beinart's writing in the past: fabricating Israeli crimes, overstating Palestinian desire for peace, trivializing Palestinian terrorism against Jews, and throwing in schmaltzy, cringe-worthy matzo-ball Jew-talk by which he seeks to legitimize his extremist anti-Israel views. (...) While many journalists have made an art of trashing Israel, Beinart has made it his career. (...) Jews who attack Israel (...) always make news. (...) Classical Zionists, Beinart argues, never wanted a state but a homeland. Few lies about Israel's founding have ever been so blatant. The very title of Theodor Herzl's bible of modern Zionism was called *Der Judenstaat* (...). But such subterfuge is classic Beinart, hoping that his audience is ignorant enough never to call him out on his facts. That the Jews always had a homeland and a presence therein is also left unsaid. Of course, the Jews' theoretical "homeland" didn't offer much in the way of protection and security: on its own, the Land of Israel's existence did nothing to mitigate 2,000 years of persecution, pogroms and wholesale slaughter. The founding of the State of Israel, on the other hand, is, thank God, forcing an end to all three. (...) Beyond ignoring history, Beinart blinds his readers from other key facts, too. He leaves out Hamas's stated goal of annihilating world Jewry "wherever they are found," or Fatah's recent unity pact with it, notwithstanding its genocidal goals. He doesn't speak of Hezbollah's 150,000 rocket arsenal or Iran's confessed ambitions to bring annihilation upon Israel. (...) Shmuley Boteach, JPO, 21.03.20

#### **4. Medienquerschnitt**

##### **Boris Johnson warnt vor Annexion**

##### **As Israel's friend, I urge you not to annex**

(...) it is with sadness that I have followed the proposals to annex Palestinian territory. As a life-long friend, admirer and supporter of Israel, I am fearful that these proposals will fail in their objective of securing Israel's borders and will be contrary to Israel's own long-term interests. Annexation would put in jeopardy the progress that Israel has made in improving relationships with the Arab and Muslim

world. (...) annexation would inevitably set back these opportunities and constrain potential Arab partners. Israel's enemies would seize upon it and use it against those in the Middle East who want to see progress. (...) The UK has often stood in a small minority at the UN in defending Israel against unwarranted and wholly disproportionate criticism. Annexation would represent a violation of international law. It would also be a gift to those who want to perpetuate the old stories about Israel. I profoundly hope that annexation does not go ahead. If it does, the UK will not recognize any changes to the 1967 lines, except those agreed between both parties. (...)

Boris Johnson, YED, 01.07.20

### **Zahl der täglichen Neuinfektionen erreicht neuen Höchststand**

#### **To stop coronavirus, wear a mask and follow restrictions**

The situation is dire – and nobody seems to know how to deal with it. (...) The rise in coronavirus rates has also affected virtually every facet of life in Israel, and for Israelis. (...) the questions arise of how we got to this point and what we can do about it. The ongoing tug of war between health and finance officials has prompted indecision and paralysis. If the Health Ministry had its druthers, the country would be back in full shutdown mode until the number of patients has diminished considerably. But the Treasury warns that the economy's collapse – which sparked massive unemployment and destroyed thousands of businesses and livelihoods – can't be repeated. With the lack of clear direction and a cohesive plan to combat this alarming spike in the number of coronavirus cases, it appears that the only way out of this recurring crisis is to take the virus by the reins and the masks by their straps. Everyone from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the World Health Organization insist that face masks can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 – and that the more people wear masks, the better off we all are. So put on a mask when you go outside, and adhere to social distancing and hand hygiene. Regardless of the government's chaotic policy, it's the Israeli public's lack of discipline that is playing a large role in letting coronavirus continue to flourish. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 02.07.20

#### **On the verge of losing control**

(...) It is happening in every community in all sectors of the population, especially among young people.

(...) public gatherings, including weddings and other celebrations, are a key element in community spread, and we must not wait a single day longer to restrict them. (...) The math for the numbers of seriously ill corona patients we can expect to see in the next few weeks is very clear. If nothing changes unexpectedly, 2% of new cases in the past two weeks, or 10-20 individuals, will become seriously ill within two weeks, and require two to three weeks of hospitalization. Within a few weeks, therefore, we could see 200 corona patients hospitalized in serious condition, in intensive care that requires close care by a large staff wearing clumsy protective gear that must be changed frequently. That isn't a number that will bring down the healthcare system, but it certainly comprises a major burden on the system, which is already stretched to the limit. (...) At the end of the day, we must not wait for the authorities to declare restrictions. We all need to safeguard our lives. (...) Wearing masks in public, washing and sanitizing our hand, and staying at home if any symptom appears will also help check the rate of infection. (...) This is the time to avoid any risk, limit social contact, and totally avoid crowded places. (...) Keep your distance, wash your hands, wear masks, and stay healthy.

Ran Balicer, IHY, 05.07.20

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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