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1. Annäherung zwischen Israel und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten

Im Gegenzug für eine Normalisierung der Beziehungen zwischen Israel und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten, die nach Vermittlung der US-Regierung zustande kam, legte Israels Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu die umstrittenen Annexionspläne im Westjordanland zunächst auf Eis. Das geplante Abkommen zur Normalisierung der Beziehungen soll eine Geheimklausel für Waffengeschäfte enthalten. Die Emirate setzten das fast 50 Jahre geltende Gesetz zum Boykott israelischer Waren außer Kraft. Man hoffe, mit dem geplanten Abkommen auch den Friedensprozess im Nahen Osten voranzutreiben. Erstmals landete bereits ein Linienflug aus Tel Aviv in Abu Dhabi. Offizielle diplomatische Beziehungen im arabischen Raum unterhält Israel bislang zu den Nachbarn Jordanien und Ägypten. Netanyahu sprach von einer "neuen Ära in den Beziehungen zwischen Israel und der arabischen Welt". Es werde "weitere arabische und muslimische Staaten geben, die sich dem Friedenskreis mit uns anschließen", gab er sich zuversichtlich. Gleichzeitig ließ Netanyahu durchblicken, dass die israelischen Annexionspläne in den besetzten Palästinensergebieten mit der jüngsten Absichtserklärung nicht vom Tisch seien. Die palästinensische Führung in Ramallah kritisierte die Normalisierung der Beziehungen zwischen den Emiraten und Israel. Unmut äußerten auch israelische Siedler_innen, die auf eine baldige

Annexion von Teilen des Westjordanlandes gehofft hatten.

UAE agreement could usher in a new golden age for Israel

The newly announced bilateral agreement (...) will not have any significant impact on the business-security relations between the two countries. The deep and obvious strategic interest of both countries is rooted in their cooperation against Iran, Hezbollah and other global jihadist organizations such as ISIS. This shared interest between the two states has helped Israel's defense industries and companies engaged in advanced agriculture to prosper. (...) Israel has expanded its economic-military dealings in the Gulf States thanks to a new venture. (...) Upgrading the UAE's weapons now will surely prove to be a lucrative business opportunity for Israel. (...) This (...) is a testament to the fact that Israel's defense establishment (...) see these states as posing no threat to Israel. The agreement with the United Arab Emirates will only strengthen Israel's response to the threat from Iran, which has entrenched itself right in Israel's backyard in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza, and turned them to a constant security threat to Israel. (...) The agreement between the UAE and Israel has made Iran much more susceptible to Israel's eyes and ears. This collaboration could definitely weaken the threatening Shiite axis. (...) Furthermore, the UAE has greatly enhanced its diplomatic activism in the Palestinian Authority. They

cannot stand the President of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas. They loath Hamas and will actively support any pragmatic movement in the PA who will work to advance peace. (...)

Alex Fishman, YED, 16.08.20

Made peace in Dubai? Now make peace with the Palestinians

The importance of the normalization agreement expected to be signed between Israel and the United Arab Emirates should not be understated. Twenty-six years after signing a peace agreement with Jordan and more than 40 years after the peace agreement with Egypt, another Arab country joins those ranks, and there is hope that others will follow. (...) the UAE has agreed to make its secret ties with Israel formal and public, and this bolsters the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and puts a stamp of approval on other such treaties. UAE ruler Mohammed bin Zayed (...) has created an important precedent, one that obligates Israel to step back from the idea of annexation. Thus he has succeeded more than his counterparts in Egypt, Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi, and King Abdullah of Jordan. The agreement was not meant to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (...) But Netanyahu, who sees in the agreement only business opportunities, must not regard it as an exemption from dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli crisis. Because beyond blocking the annexation, the agreement contains a promise and a warning regarding the implementation of Trump's peace plan. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 16.08.20

The Israel-UAE Agreement: A Message to Iran, the Palestinians and Biden

The Israel-UAE agreement is extremely important. (...) It will increase the prospects for peace, stability and prosperity in the Middle East. For several years Israel and several Gulf states have been closely collaborating mainly on security issues and under the table. Now, these relations are being opened and upgraded. People across much of the Sunni Muslim Arab world don't perceive Israel anymore as an enemy, but rather as an ally. It will increase the legitimacy of Israel's existence as a Jewish state in the Middle East. A combination of both threats and opportunities have pushed for the agreement. The threat both countries are facing is Iran's quest for hegemony and domination in the Middle East via violence, terrorism, military interventions, and nuclear weapons, from Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to Yemen. (...) The Israel-UAE alliance is expected to more

effectively deal with Iran. It also sends a message to Biden and the Democrats, who during the Obama years concluded a nuclear deal with Iran, viewed by Israel and the entire Sunni Arab world as weak and ineffective. (...) Opportunists exist at the fields of technology and economics. (...) The UAE has resources while Israel has the human power to promote innovation, sustainability and entrepreneurship. (...) The agreement undermines the Palestinians' strategy of conditioning peace agreements between Israel and Arab countries until there is an agreement between them and Israel. Other Gulf countries like Bahrain and Oman are likely to sign similar agreements. (...)

Eytan Gilboa, JPO, 17.08.20

Israel and the UAE: A reality check

The Israeli agreement with the United Arab Emirates (...) is (...) a normalization agreement (...). The impending formalization of the more than two-decade informal relationship between Israel and the United Arab Emirates is an important breakthrough in Israel's ties with the Arab world. Motives aside, it constitutes a major achievement for Mohammed bin Zayed, Benjamin Netanyahu and for its broker, Donald Trump. (...) What is proposed is not, however, a peace accord: it is impossible to sign such a document between two countries that have never been at war with each other. Therefore, the claim that this a clear instance of "peace for peace" rings hollow. (...) Its ultimate significance, once details are ironed out, will lie in the extent and depth of the actual ties forged between the two countries in the coming years. It will also depend on the role this new relationship plays in paving the way for additional arrangements with other states in the region (...) recognition in return for a freeze on annexation. (...) it is not too far-fetched to suggest that annexation plans (...) once taken off the table, will be difficult, if not impossible, to revive (...) the UAE-Israel deal totally bypasses the Palestinians. At best, it normalizes occupation; at worst, it might, by removing any impetus for change on the ground, actually entrench Israel's long-term rule over Palestinians and their territories. From this vantage point, the rapid and complete denunciation of the Israeli-UAE-US move by the Palestinian leadership is totally understandable. (...) Military confrontations and ongoing skirmishes have not yielded any positive results over the years. Now the force of successful diplomacy is reaffirmed. (...) The announcement of the establishment of official ties between Israel and the Arab Emirates gives a boost to those who would like to

see a similar process with other countries, in effect regionalizing the solution to the Arab-Israel conflict in a sequence different than that envisaged until now. (...)

Naomi Chazan, TOI, 17.08.20

The Palestinians are angry again

Scenes of Palestinians burning pictures of Arab leaders who decided to sign peace agreements with Israel and accusing them of betraying the Islamic Arab nation and the Palestinian people have repeated themselves time and again throughout the history of the Palestinian national movement. (...) The peace agreement between the UAE and Israel, expected to be signed in September, is opening another window of opportunity, although it also exacerbates the power struggles between Abbas and Dahlan within the Fatah movement, and between Meshal and Sinwar within Hamas. The warming relations between Israel and the UAE could strengthen the Dahlan-Sinwar duo while weakening the Abbas-Meshal one. It could also diminish Qatar's and Turkey's influence on the Palestinian arena. (...) Palestinians will have to understand that only when Israel feels less threatened by Arab states will it become more flexible, allowing them to establish an independent state alongside Israel. Abbas must place national Palestinian interests above his own personal ones and reconcile with Dahlan, link arms with Sinwar and move towards a comprehensive diplomatic agreement with Israel, under the aegis of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. (...)

Ronit Marzan, HAA, 19.08.20

UAE-Israel deal heralds new era

Civilization is currently facing the greatest threats since the rise of Nazism. Coronavirus and its social and economic byproducts have resulted in global waves of populism, accompanied by violent demonstrations initiated from elements of the extreme left and right. These elements, in particular the Black Lives Matter movement in America, are exploiting racial issues to host radical anti-Semitic groups and oppose Israel in their platform. (...) Many "progressives" either endorse or stand aside from this madness (...), some also seek to repudiate history and substitute it with their crazy, false narratives, which amount to a rejection of Western civilization (...). While purportedly combating racism, these demonstrations have intensified the already prevalent anti-Semitism from vociferous anti-Zionists and Jew-baiters. (...) In less than three months, elections will

take place in the United States. Should the most pro-Israel administration be displaced by a radicalized Biden administration, it would portend a great danger to Israel. (...) A politically dysfunctional Israel and a hostile US administration could pose a daunting threat. But once again, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pulled a rabbit out of his hat. With the help of US President Donald Trump, he brought about the peace treaty with the United Arab Emirates, postponing any moves to annex territories. (...) this achievement (...) sets the foundations for Israel's peace policy goals and demonstrates to the Palestinians that the Sunni Arab world today does not support their intransigence. It creates a new economic, social, and security pact that will benefit the entire region and isolate Iran. Additional Muslim countries, outside the Iranian-Turkish bloc and its surrogates, will forge diplomatic relations with Israel. The Palestinians will then hopefully realize that there is no alternative to direct negotiations with Israel to bring about an end of conflict and peace. (...)

Isi Leibler, IHY, 21.08.20

Netanyahu and Mossad at war with Defense Ministry over UAE weapons deal

(...) for the last two years, both the Mossad and the Prime Minister's Office have been pushing for the Defense Ministry to approve the deal that would see Israel sell advanced equipment to the UAE - including intelligence capabilities and sophisticated precision weapon systems. (...) Officially, the UAE falls into the "special" designation, meaning Israeli industries cannot sell the Gulf state any special weapon systems. In practice though, the UAE has enjoyed a supply of highly classified Israeli military equipment for the past eight years. The shift came in 2010, after the termination of the Hamas chief of logistics and weapons procurement, Mahmoud Abdel Rauf al-Mabhouh, in a Dubai assassination widely attributed to Mossad. (...) The restoration of relations was conditioned on an Israeli agreement to sell a number of weapons to the United Arab Emirates. Following this agreement, the UAE was offered classified Israeli weapons systems, and since then the Emirates have actually benefited from a fairly open and diverse arms market in Israel, while pledging that none of the weapons would be transferred to elements hostile to Israel. Currently, the Prime Minister's Office and the Mossad, now headed by Yossi Cohen, are demanding that the Defense Ministry facilitate the issuance of permits that will allow Israel to sell weapons to the Emirates. This is both for economic reasons and as part of the moves to

strengthen the ties between the two countries. But the Defense Ministry says that selling equipment with a particularly high level of classification to the Gulf states still presents the danger of Israeli equipment and know-how falling into hostile hands such as Iran. (...)

Alex Fishman, YED, 25.08.20

2. Trotz ergebnisloser Haushaltsdebatte vorerst keine Neuwahlen – Proteste gegen Netanyahu dauern an

Das Parlament in Jerusalem (Knesset) billigte kurz vor Ablauf der gesetzlich vorgeschriebenen Frist eine Gesetzesinitiative, die weitere Zeit für die Verabschiedung des Haushalts einräumt. Ohne mehrheitliche Zustimmung der Parlamentarier_innen hätte sich die Knesset auflösen müssen, was wiederum zu erneuten Wahlen geführt hätte. Die beiden Koalitionsparteien Likud von Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu und Blau-Weiß unter der Führung von Verteidigungsminister Benny Gantz sind sich nicht über den Staatshaushalt einig geworden. Der Likud wollte einen Haushalt nur für dieses Jahr verabschieden und verwies dabei auf die besonderen Umstände der Corona-Krise. Blau-Weiß lehnte dies ab und forderte die Verabschiedung eines zweijährigen Haushalts wie im Koalitionsabkommen vereinbart. Der Kompromiss verschafft den Koalitionsparteien nun weitere 120 Tage Zeit, um sich bis zum 23. Dezember spätestens zu verständigen. Unterdessen dauert der Protest gegen Netanyahu an. Tausende Demonstrant_innen fordern seit Wochen den Rücktritt des wegen Korruption angeklagten Ministerpräsidenten. Netanyahu steht außerdem wegen seiner Handhabung der Corona-Krise in der Kritik. Der 70-Jährige räumte im Frühjahr vorschnelle Lockerungen ein, deren Folge ein exponentieller Anstieg der Corona-Erkrankungen ist. Die Arbeitslosigkeit in Israel stieg infolge der Pandemie auf über 20 Prozent, tausende Klein- und Mittelbetriebe mussten schließen, und die Regierung hat bislang noch keinen langfristigen Plan zur Bewältigung der Wirtschaftskrise vorgelegt.

Leave the violence to those on the right

(...) the public conversation among Netanyahu's opponents has been radicalized. (...) what contributed the most was the egregious and methodical incitement campaign he has been waging for years against his political opponents and their voters. Israeli leftists and liberals (...) are subject to threats, slander on social media and even physical assault

by right-wingers (...). All this, however, must not be used to justify incitement or violence against Netanyahu (...). The political violence in Israel has so far come from the right. Evidence of this can be found in the country's cemeteries. In the demonstrations of the past few weeks that turned violent, too, the attackers were from the right and their victims from the left. There is no symmetry, no extremists on both sides. Netanyahu's speech claiming that the protesters against him spread diseases cannot be treated the same way as a post on social media by an ordinary citizen calling the prime minister a dictator. Does that mean there's no risk of violence from the liberal camp? The security around Netanyahu makes it nearly impossible to hurt him, but could the increasingly extreme talk by his opponents drive a desperate person to try anyway, or to attack a right-wing politician not protected by such massive security detail? Anyone who says such a scenario is impossible is irresponsible. The grassroots protest against Netanyahu is legitimate and inspiring and the demonstrations against him, which are spreading throughout the country, are among the most meaningful social and political developments here in recent years. The greatest enemy of this protest movement is violence, because it would give Netanyahu legitimacy to employ much harsher suppressive measures against his political opponents. The demonstrations must remain nonviolent, so that they may continue to spread and expand. That will be the secret to their success.

Barak Ravid, HAA, 02.08.20

Israel's budget sham

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is lying to the public when he attributes his insistence on a one-year state budget to economic considerations. His steps are dictated not by the desire to solve the economic crisis, but rather by the desire to dissolve the government. For him, the budget is the only escape hatch from his promise to rotate the premiership with Benny Gantz. He is refusing to sign off on a two-year budget in order to break that promise. Netanyahu is not sacrificing the government in order to save the economy, he is sacrificing the economy in order to remain in power. (...) Netanyahu's Israel is fleeing from a budget and searching for an additional election adventure. It is breaking all of the budget guidelines and apportioning money in a populist manner. The loss of trust in Israel's promises could cost it a reduction in its credit rating. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 04.08.20

Netanyahu vs. Gantz: A budget battle that has nothing to do with economics

(...) From his very first "Netanyahu is good for the Jews" election campaign back in 1996, our self-centered prime minister has devoted his entire political career into dividing Israeli society and fomenting hatred of the other. Now, with his court case looming on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, Netanyahu is launching a last-ditch campaign against the levers of civil society, in particular the judiciary, the police and the role of the free press, in a desperate battle to escape the consequences of his actions. The (...) current political dispute with Defense Minister Benny Gantz over the former's insistence the government passes only a one-year budget this year (which effectively would be a budget for only November-December, given the legislative timescale), and not a combined budget for 2020 and 2021 as agreed to in the coalition agreement with Blue and White, has nothing to do with economics and everything to do with his own personal survival. For the narcissistic Netanyahu, the cost to the country of such irresponsible leadership is immaterial. If throwing the country into a fourth round of elections in the space of two years, in the midst of the most destabilizing pandemic in modern history, is the price Israel has to pay for providing Netanyahu with a chance of escaping justice, then the prime minister will make the country pay the price in the blink of an eyelid. Netanyahu knows that if the current coalition government stays firm and passes a budget later this month for this year and next, the clock starts ticking ever faster to the beginning of his scheduled court appearances, three times a week, in January. For as long as Blue and White have control over the Justice Ministry, and a veto over government legislation, there is no way for Netanyahu to wriggle out of his legal predicament. Elections, on the other hand, provide the possibility of a clear victory for the right-wing bloc and the chance to pass legislation providing Netanyahu with immunity, as a sitting prime minister, from prosecution. For Netanyahu, this, and not the deadly destabilizing effect of COVID-19, is the most pressing issue facing the nation. (...)

Jeff Barak, JPO, 09.08.20

Pass the budget

(...) new elections would harm an economy that has already been severely damaged. (...) any further delay in passing the budget could prompt international credit agencies to downgrade Israel's ranking, which would have serious repercussions on the

state's ability to raise capital overseas. Israel currently has a solid international credit rating (...) the failure to pass the budget would (...) endanger Israel's international fiscal standing – something that it cannot afford to risk during the worst economic crisis it has experienced in its 72-year history. (...) It's time for the country's two leaders to put aside their budgetary dispute and focus on the primary war in which Israel is engaged – fighting the spread of coronavirus and its devastating consequences. We urge Netanyahu and Gantz to bury the hatchet, and for the sake of the country, expedite the passage of the state budget – for the sake of all Israelis.

Editorial, JPO, 10.08.20

Another election will smash what little faith we have left

Don't take us there, to a fourth election in under two years. (...) this two-headed government – which promised to bandage the wounds and heal the schisms and fractures, to set up a cabinet of "reconciliation" and restore a bit of sanity and normality and reminds us that alongside the warring tribes in Israeli society there is also the "tribe of Israel" – is threatening to abandon the field and deny its purpose and its promise. (...) the primary responsibility for what happens (...) rests on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Not only on him, but on him first of all. (...) Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Prime Minister-Designate: don't choose to hold elections now. Each of you has made a huge political concession, and paid a heavy political price, for us to finally have a government that will serve us, the citizens, in one of the toughest times Israel has ever known. Holding an election now is a betrayal of us, the voters. It would mean you were putting politics before what really matter, the individual before everyone. Sit down together. Fix what is wrong. (...) A fourth election will smash what little faith people have left in you. A fourth round now is not a choice, it is an escape.

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 23.08.20

Israel must hold fresh elections at once

(...) Netanyahu and his cronies paved the way over the weekend for the final way out of this impasse - elections. Why should we go to elections? Because of the despair that more than half of the people are experiencing, and because of the complete lack of governance to which we have been exposed since this government's first day on this Earth. A prime minister who conceals peace talks from his defense and foreign ministers on the grounds that he sus-

pected they'd leak the secret to the Iranians, can't expect them to pretend as if everything is okay. Netanyahu completely ignores Defense Minister Benny Gantz, the Blue & White leader, at times. There is no reason to fear that the election would drain billions from the state coffers. Democracy costs money. The demonstrations outside the prime minister's official residence in Jerusalem and on every bridge across the country requires us to turn to taxpayers and the hundreds of thousands of unemployed and once again ask them if they want another failed Netanyahu attempt to run an ungovernable government. (...)

Shimon Schiffer, YED, 23.08.20

Anti-Netanyahu protests miss the point if they exclude Arabs

(...) There's a saying in Arabic: The revolution is planned by the smart ones, carried out by the brave, and its fruits are plucked by the opportunists. That's why the present need is to extricate the protest from the jaws of the "hitchhikers." Without a massive recruitment of Arabs to the protest, it will slowly turn into a testing ground for the spoilers from the right of the political map. (...) Arabs have the sensitivity to prevent the protest from trickling into dark and dangerous alleyways – not because they are Arabs, but because they are the most deprived group in the country. And the most deprived, as history teaches, hold the moral compass that keeps a demonstration pure. Anyone who is concerned about the welfare of the protest must always ask about the opinion of the Arabs, who are the deprived, and to ensure that they are part of the protest and active in planning its path. (...) Where are the divisions of Nazareth, Sakhnin, Tamra, Umm al-Fahm, Rahat, Taibeh, Tira and others? The Arab public leadership, whether in the Knesset, the Arab Higher Monitoring Committee, or the committee of local authority leaders, must bring all of its weight to bear on this very important issue: preventing the continuation of Netanyahu's rule. Although Netanyahu is an individual, he symbolizes all the evil in the country, and in particular the evil towards the Arabs. Ousting him is the start of the disintegration of the regime of hatred and incitement and exclusion of Arabs. The Arabs are the "cardamom," without which the coffee that is gradually cooking around Balfour Street remains tasteless and inauthentic, and one's head remains crooked after sipping it.

Odeh Bisharat, HAA, 30.08.20

3. Erneute militärische Auseinandersetzungen an zwei Fronten

Nach Schüssen auf israelische Soldat_innen an der Grenze zum Libanon griff die israelische Armee Ziele im Nachbarland an, darunter Posten der extremistischen Hisbollah-Milizen. Im Norden Israels bestand für kurze Zeit eine Ausgangssperre für die Anwohner_innen. Mehrere Straßen wurden gesperrt. Seit dem letzten Krieg 2006 besteht zwischen den beiden Staaten ein Waffenstillstandsabkommen. Trotzdem kam es in der Vergangenheit wiederholt zu Zwischenfällen im Grenzgebiet. Zu neuen gewaltvollen Auseinandersetzungen kam es auch im Süden des Landes. Nach anhaltenden Angriffen aus dem Gazastreifen, bei denen Palästinenser_innen mit Brandsätzen bestückte Ballons oder Drachen nach Israel schickten, griff die israelische Luftwaffe Einrichtungen der islamistischen Hamas an. Zudem reduzierte die Armee die Fische-reizzone vor der Küste Gazas von 15 auf nur noch acht Seemeilen und beschränkte die Warenexporte in den belagerten palästinensischen Küstenstreifen auf wichtige humanitäre Güter. Die Hisbollah wie auch die Hamas werden von der EU als Terrororganisationen gelistet.

Hamas is playing its extortion games again

With the explosives and incendiary balloons being flown anew from the Gaza Strip (...) Hamas was signaling its dissatisfaction to the pertinent parties – Israel, Egypt, the UN, and chiefly Qatar. It seems as if there is a direct link between the resumed launch of airborne explosives and the lack of clarity for the future of the financial aid that Qatar has been transferring to the Gaza Strip each month for the past two years. Although the launch of airborne explosives is carried out by alleged civilian sub-units, they are operated behind the scenes by Hamas and under the organization's approval. (...) The Hamas threats coincide with the deadline for the transfer of the monthly Qatari aid to the Gaza Strip, and the group does not see any intention or initiative to resume the transfer of the funds at this stage. Qatar in March extended the transfer of the funds for an additional six months, which is due to expire in September. It seems that Hamas has decided to increase pressure on the border because the organization's leadership believes it will push Qatar to further extend the aid and break the current stalemate on the issue. (...)

Elior Levy, YED, 09.08.20

Hamas incendiary balloons are ecoterrorism

(...) Rockets and mortars are very obvious dangers, but there is a risk of underestimating the threat from the clusters of balloons, inflated condoms and kites laden with incendiary and explosive devices (...). These are weapons, and their use is a war crime. Hamas releases these balloons indiscriminately. (...) Tragically, children in the South are now being taught from the earliest age to associate balloons with danger and to never touch a balloon if they find one. (...) So far, miraculously, there has been no loss of human life to the fires, but the danger is very real. In addition, there is a constant threat to wildlife and unique habitats and ecosystems. (...) More pressure must be applied on international NGOs and governments to condemn these attacks. Animal rights organizations and environmental associations must issue condemnations and make it clear that such fires – like all other forms of terrorism – are not acceptable. This is not only a potential human disaster, it is an ecological disaster. The use of fire balloons and kites cannot be considered a legitimate form of protest. (...) The world needs to condemn it. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 16.08.20

Once Beirut shock fades, Hezbollah will likely intensify provocations against Israel

The shock waves from the explosion of the chemical depot at the Beirut port will continue to reverberate in Lebanon and Hezbollah's ears for a long time. They embarrass and will weaken the Shiite organization, which was already weakening due to the coronavirus and health care crisis, and Lebanon's dire economic condition. (...) Calls for the organization to be disarmed are already being heard. This mounting public sentiment and the shell-shocked feeling pervading the country may temporarily dampen the group's appetite for provoking Israel, but the deadly blast is not likely to fundamentally alter the organization. Hezbollah's entire raison d'être is "resistance" to Israel. (...) The two recent attempts to infiltrate Israel's borders with Lebanon and Syria were clearly not based on some random whim, or any desire by Hezbollah or some other Shiite proxy of Iran to avenge this or that Israeli strike in Syria. There are signs indicating a change in strategy by Hezbollah, which feels that it is casting off the burden of its involvement in Syria and aspires to renew the friction with Israel. (...) Lebanon may be in a state of profound crisis, but Nasrallah knows that Israel also has its economic travails and he smells the political weakness of Netanyahu's

government. Once the effects of the devastating blast at the Beirut port start to wane, Hezbollah will likely seek to resume the friction with Israel on the Lebanese and Syrian borders alike. Israel's conciliatory response is only whetting his appetite. (...) Right now there is a balance of mutual deterrence. Neither side wants war. But the odds are growing that, once the shock of the blast in Beirut fades, Hezbollah will intensify its provocations and try to wear Israel down.

Yossi Melman, HAA, 05.08.20

Israel must respond to Hezbollah's bids to change status quo

(...) it is likely that the Shi'ite terrorist organization will again try to test the patience of Israel. In such a situation, the Israeli response should be different from what it was in the previous case. (...) Strategically, Israel has shown hesitation and weakness. (...) Hezbollah responds to every action taken by Israel in Lebanon, and therefore Israel refrains from operating in Lebanon, except for a very small number of rare covert operations (...). Following the Israeli drone attack in Beirut, Hezbollah's secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, declared a change in the equation and claimed that his organization would begin responding from Lebanon to any Israeli attack on Hezbollah operatives in Syria (...). The meaning of the latest incident on the Israel-Lebanon border, therefore, is Hezbollah's practical attempt to change the rules of the game while further eroding Israeli deterrence. (...) If Hezbollah succeeds in forcing Israel into a new equation, Israel will have to think twice whether to act against the organization in Syria, due to fears of Hezbollah reacting to any Israeli activity, similar to the Lebanon equation. Therefore, the next time, Israel should carry out a limited military operation (...), in which the IDF attacks Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon from the air. Such a limited operation may persuade Hezbollah to refrain from further attempting to change the current deterrence equation. (...)

Omer Dostri, JPO, 10.08.20

Beat Nasrallah at his own game

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, the man who has turned psychological warfare into an art form, is facing perhaps his darkest hour (...). But that is still not enough to spell his downfall. At this point, Israel should deviate from its policy of not intervening in the waves on unrest rattling the Arab world and it should make public (...) intelligence it has about additional Hezbollah weapons depots hidden under

residential neighborhoods, mosques, schools, and the Beirut airport. Israel must urge the Lebanese people to demand the immediate expulsion of Hezbollah from their country. Otherwise, the blast that reduced the Beirut harbor into rubble is just the beginning. (...) Hezbollah has literally turned Lebanon as a whole into a powder keg, and Israeli military intelligence can pinpoint those locations, something the Lebanese people can't do. (...) Hezbollah has been consistently involved in attempts to obtain and store ammonium nitrate for the purpose of carrying out terrorist attacks against Jewish and Israeli targets. (...) Israel must use the simmering unrest in Lebanon to deal Hezbollah a crippling blow in terms of psychological warfare. Not one bullet needs to be fired. This is also our moral duty vis-à-vis civilians being used as human shields by living in very close proximity to chemical warehouses and missile depots. Militarily speaking, the value of the intelligence Israel holds is lower than the impact it could have on Lebanese public opinion, especially when the voices asserting that Hezbollah is dooming the Lebanese people to death and destruction are growing louder. Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, IHY, 28.08.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Nachruf auf Rabbi Steinsaltz

The Rebbe, Reb Shlomo, Rav Steinsaltz, and Israel

If you never met the Lubavitcher Rebbe, you cannot imagine the combination of being an absolute genius and the height of humility he showed. No wonder people saw in him the Messiah. I will give you one example. And then another one. He planted everywhere 'representatives' of him, families who would pick up local Jews, plant Judaism around the globe, and forge relationships with Gentiles everywhere. They would found Chabad houses from where they would run their emissary work. Except ... in the Netherlands. The Rebbe said: WW II has all but destroyed Dutch Jewry. If we now plant Chabad houses there, we will overgrow the tiny communities left there. We will not do that. We will just support the communities that are still there. Such humility and respect for others. And now, with the departure of Rav Steinsaltz, I suddenly understand why the Rebbe never made aliyah. He was a staunch Zionist but never settled in or even visited the Jewish State. The solution is amazingly simple. We already had Reb Shlomo Carlebach and Rav Steinsaltz. That

was plenty. These were the finest of rabbis who had what it took to do whatever was needed in Israel. He was not going to be in their way or disturb their work. Only hindsight is 20/20.

Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 14.08.20

Adin Steinsaltz, a key player in Judaism's oldest conflict

Since the death in Jerusalem of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz last Friday at the age of 83, a debate has been raging in a corner of Jewish social media over who was bigger, Steinsaltz or Rabbi Elazar Shach, who predeceased him by 19 years. (...) Adin Steinsaltz was a key protagonist in a millenia-long debate within Judaism: Should access to its core texts be confined to an elite or to the masses? Is Judaism about conservation or innovation? What makes a rabbi 'great'? (...) Steinsaltz (...) was born into a secular Israeli family in Jerusalem. The son of a Communist volunteer with the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War, he drifted towards Orthodoxy in his teens, studying Torah in Chabad yeshivas, but also sciences at the Hebrew University. (...) he operated independently and (...) embarked on a vastly ambitious project to render the 1,500 year-old jumble of unpunctuated Aramaic and Hebrew covering 2,711 double-sided pages accessible to less experienced scholars by translating it into modern Hebrew, and then into English and other languages. (...) While it was wildly popular among students and many rabbis from diverse sections of Orthodoxy praised it, the hardcore of the "Lithuanian" elite shunned it. (...) there were Steinsaltz's modern flourishes, the little footnotes on matters of language and nature, added on the margins of his volumes. And then of course there was politics. (...) Steinsaltz single-handedly opened up the Talmud to popular study. Shach was pivotal in causing a seismic change in Israeli and Jewish society. Both men's work will have implications for generations, perhaps centuries, to come. The Shach-Steinsaltz controversy is (...) the oldest dispute in Jewish history, echoing back as early as the Bible, between those who insisted that the ancient tradition could only be protected by isolating it from the world and its influences, entrusting it to priestly and scholarly castes, and those who believed it would only flourish out in the open where as many students as possible could enjoy it. For all their comparative greatness, Shach and Steinsaltz were just two more avatars in a never-ending argument.

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 16.08.20

Die Explosion im Libanon sollte Israel eine Warnung sein

Learning from the Beirut disaster

(...) large amounts of hazardous and explosive materials were stored in a port near a major city. That is a reality in many countries, including Israel. The tragic disaster in Beirut is a reminder of the need for cautious, wise policy in the use of hazardous materials that are still essential in many industries. Hazardous materials pass through both of Israel's major ports, Haifa and Ashdod. Some of them are stored in the ports and some pass through them. (...) The risk to the people of these cities can be expected to increase with the significant expansion of the ports' activities in the coming years. In the case of Israel, the risk is associated not only with accidents but with security incidents, including rocket fire at these hazardous stockpiles. To deal with this situation, the state must expedite and institute a policy of risk management, which experts have recommended in surveys in a number of areas following the establishment of a committee that examined the situation after the Second Lebanon War. These are steps intended to separate concentrations of hazardous materials from civilian populations, or to improve protection of these materials, for example, by burying them instead of storing them in above-ground tanks. (...) The most important step is to stop the use of all non-essential materials and move to safer substitutes. The most outstanding example of this is fuels, which cause serious environmental harm and are a risk in case of fire or leak. The move to renewable energy will release Israeli society from at least some of the risks created by these fuels and prevent terrible disasters like the one suffered by our neighbor to the north.

Editorial, HAA, 06.08.20

Urteil für Yenti

Women are allowed to receive rabbinic accreditation, High Court rules

(...) the High Court of Justice gave the Chief Rabbinate 90 days to find a solution to allow women to take exams in Jewish law and receive state rabbinic accreditation.

(...) men who pass Chief Rabbinate exams can use these qualifications when applying for other jobs in government agencies, municipal authorities and other statutory bodies, and also receive salary benefits for them. (...) the refusal of the Chief Rabbinate

to allow women to sit for these exams was discriminatory and illegal. (...) there is no reason that women cannot take the tests that are otherwise given to men studying to become rabbis. (...) there are women scholars today who are no less knowledgeable and experts in Jewish law and texts than their male counterparts. Unfortunately, the Chief Rabbinate is still stuck in an anachronistic time capsule in which it believes that it can continue to control religion and strangle any attempt to create gender equality or advancement in Jewish life. (...) It is time for the government to intervene. Judaism is meant to be accessible to all of the Jews who live inside and outside the State of Israel. The way they practice, what they decide to learn and how they decide to conduct their religious observance is not up to a group of rabbis. (...) Jewish life is progressing; it is changing around the world and in Israel. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 08.08.20

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JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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