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1. Justizreform vor dem Obersten Gerichtshof

Nach monatelangen Massenprotesten gegen den umstrittenen Umbau der Justiz nahmen die 15 Richter_innen des Obersten Gerichtshofs in Jerusalem die Anhörungen zu mehreren Petitionen auf. Im Zentrum steht zunächst die sogenannte Angemessenheitsklausel. Im Juli hatte die rechts-religiöse Mehrheit in der Knesset für eine massive Einschränkung der Klausel im Grundgesetz „Die Justiz“ entschieden, die dem Obersten Gericht die Möglichkeit gab, Entscheidungen der Regierung und einzelner Minister für „unangemessen“ zu erklären. Doch dagegen wurden acht Petitionen eingereicht, über die nun die Obersten Richter_innen befinden müssen. Bereits zum Auftakt der Anhörungen warnte Parlamentspräsident Amir Ohana: "Die Knesset wird es nicht dulden, mit Füßen getreten zu werden." In der Geschichte des Staates hat der Oberste Gerichtshof noch nie ein Grundgesetz aufgehoben. Der Gerichtsentscheid muss bis spätestens Mitte Januar 2024 veröffentlicht werden.

G-d save us from anarchy

Fourteen rabbis lined up last week to declare a preliminary winner in the heavyweight parliamentary coalition vs Supreme Court showdown, declaring the governmental “majority” the only legitimate authority in the country. Did G-d tell them this? Did they find a Talmud ruling to support their declaration? (...) They are angry about the delay in the draft law, which

could ultimately put an end to exemptions for Haredi men. Those rabbis (...) actually invoke G-d in their reasoning, explaining that those studying Torah and praying to G-d, from the safety of their yeshivas, can protect Israel as well as fighter pilots and intelligence officers. They don't actually care one way or another about the Supreme Court or even the possibility of a dictatorship, as long as they get their extortionate coalition agreement demands met. (...) Bibi's coalition members have elevated themselves to the status of savior. They are above the law, not beholden to anyone. They do not believe they need to answer – not to the Supreme Court, which is the voice of secular, democratic law, nor to the true majority of Israeli voters, who, at least in polls, have expressed waning faith in this government. (...) these Knesset members, starting with Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, darkly hint at an apocalyptic, all-hell-breaking-loose, biblical kind of anarchy. (...) Not one of our leaders, not even one of those 14 rabbis, not even on twitter, has received a personalized message from G-d telling him how to run the country. (...) we need to hold our leaders accountable on normal human terms, on the precepts of democracy, and not on those of messianic religious faith.

Judy Halper, TOI, 10.09.23

Judicial reform is not a magic solution

The smoke hadn't even cleared from the stun grenades used to quell the violent clashes with Eritrean

migrants in south Tel Aviv (...) before politicians vigorously pointed to the alleged culprit: the Supreme Court. This Pavlovian response has followed every recent crisis. An ongoing wave of murders in the Arab community? The justice system is to blame. A wave of terrorism? It's the fault of the Supreme Court, which supposedly prevents the demolition of terrorists' homes (it doesn't). A total lack of governance in the Negev? The Supreme Court yet again. Protection rackets all over the country? You already know who's responsible. But government spokespersons would have us believe that redemption is just around the corner if only the judicial overhaul were passed. The truth is, even if it were passed, none of Israel's chronic problems would be solved. Judicial reform is a smokescreen for the government's ongoing failure to effectively address the challenges Israel faces. These challenges have been around for years and it is the government's responsibility to overcome them, not the justice system. (...) The government has the power to enact policies that will deal with the challenges above. The problem is the lack of will to enact these policies, not judicial interference. (...) Supporters of reform routinely claim that the government's capabilities would grow dramatically if only the reform were passed. The reality is that the government already has these capabilities. (...)

Shuki Friedman, IHY, 10.09.23

Israeli ministers must commit to obeying the High Court

(...) out of the 33 ministers comprising this coalition's inflated government, only three would commit publicly to following the High Court of Justice's decision (...). Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not among those three.

(...) Instead, he has suggested that if the court interferes with a basic law, it would exceed its authority. According to this argument, it would not be the government violating the rules of the game if it disregarded a court decision in this matter; rather, it would be the court overstepping its boundaries. But this is faulty reasoning. (...) While it is crystal clear in the rules that govern Israel that everyone must obey the law, meaning everyone must listen to the court, there is no such clarity regarding whether the court can challenge a basic law. This is a somewhat murky area. Just because the court has never done this before does not mean it is forbidden. In fact, if the court were prevented from striking down basic laws or amendments to them, then any government could pass any law it desired as a basic law, thereby

precluding any judicial review. That situation, obviously, is untenable. Equally untenable is a government that does not listen to the court. (...) it opens the door to anarchy (...). If government ministers do not recognize the supremacy of the law, then there are no rules to the game (...).

Editorial, JPO, 12.09.23

The Most Important Supreme Court Hearing in Israel's History

(...) the Supreme Court will hold the most important hearing in Israel's legal history. The court will consider the validity of an amendment to the Basic Law on the Judiciary that abolished its power to overturn cabinet or ministerial decisions it deems unreasonable. The court must ignore the crude threats against it by members of the governing coalition and act as it always does, professionally and fearlessly. Effectively, it must rule, for the first time in its history, that the constitutive powers granted the Knesset aren't unlimited, and winning an election isn't a blank check that allows the government to change the fundamental characteristics of Israel's democratic system. (...) In Israel, the legislative process for quasi-constitutional Basic Laws is no different than the regular legislative process. There's no requirement for a special majority. (...) There's no ratification by two houses of parliament, since Israel has only one. There's no ratification by referendum or elections. And because the Knesset makes wholesale use of amendments to Basic Laws, it's self-explanatory that the court, over the years, has developed doctrines for reviewing Basic Laws as well. The amendment that abolished use of the reasonableness doctrine dealt a mortal blow to the heart of Israel's democratic identity. (...) Without these rules, the government could use state resources for electoral purposes. (...) The time is now. The court must do its duty.

Editorial, HAA, 12.09.23

Israel will be torn apart without a judicial reform compromise

(...) No matter what one's position on the legislation is, the hearing should only be seen as a celebration of Israeli democracy at its finest. (...) The court can be divided along the lines of conservative and liberal ideologies, encompassing competing judicial philosophies and worldviews – a cornerstone of any vibrant functioning democracy. That's why it's perplexing and worrisome that coalition leaders are doing everything possible to delegitimize the court (...) we've witnessed Israel's government being invaded

by parties and ministers who, without the checks and balances safeguarded by the court, could very well enact such odious legislation. That's the reason why hundreds of thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets every Saturday night (...). It could take weeks or months for the justices to arrive at a ruling. And when that eventually arrives, one thing is sure – half of Israel will not be satisfied. Members of the coalition have already said they will not honor a court ruling that strikes down the judicial reform's reasonableness standard law, which would launch Israel into an unprecedented constitutional crisis. Likewise, if the court upholds the law, the protests could intensify, and events on the ground could spin out of control. Now is the time, before either of those scenarios rears its ugly head, for the political parties to reach a compromise on the judicial reform debate and enable the country to start healing. We urge them to do so without delay.

Editorial, JPO, 14.09.23

2. 30 Jahre Osloer Prinzipienklärung

„Klein aber jüdisch“, so lautete das erklärte Ziel von Israels Ministerpräsident Yitzhak Rabin, als er im September 1993 den Handschlag mit seinem Erzfeind Jassir Arafat, Chef der Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisation (PLO), rechtfertigte. Eine Trennung der beiden Völker, soweit sie möglich war, sollte Terror und Gewalt beenden. Die Palästinenser erhofften sich das Ende der Besatzung durch Israel und eine Eigenverwaltung, die schließlich in einen selbständigen Staat münden würde, wiewohl im Abkommen von einem palästinensischen Staat keine Rede war. Die Osloer Prinzipien sahen einen schrittweisen Rückzug Israels aus dem besetzten Westjordanland und dem Gazastreifen und die Gründung der palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde vor, der die Verwaltung des Westjordanlands und des Gazastreifens innerhalb von fünf Jahren übertragen werden sollte. Dazu kam es jedoch nie. Eine brutale Terrorwelle, die von der Hamas orchestriert, von Jasser Arafat jedoch stillschweigend zugelassen wurde, führte zum Stillstand des Prozesses und zu israelischen Militäraktionen. Der Ausbruch der zweiten Intifada im September 2000 und Israels militärische Reaktion, insbesondere die „Operation Schutzschild“ im März 2022, die zur Wiederbesetzung der unter palästinensischen Autonomieverwaltung stehenden Städte führte, waren der letzte Nagel im Sarg des Oslo-Prozesses. Zudem schuf Israel mit dem Siedlungsbau im besetzten Westjordanland sukzessive Fakten, die die Idee von einer

Trennung in zwei Staaten heute zunehmend als Utopie erscheinen lassen.

Reading the Minutes from the Israel-Palestine Oslo Accords Is Depressing

(...) It's astounding to see how prophetic were the members of Yitzhak Rabin's government – aside from Arye Dery, who said he didn't see the Palestinians posing any security risk, even though memories of the first intifada were still fresh. His colleagues warned that Hamas might well take control of the territories, that it had an election at one university and was popular in the Gaza Strip. They discussed the problematic nature of Israel's chosen partner, but recognized that it was preferable to the alternatives and that Israel's strategy had changed. Now it needed this partner, the PLO, to be strong. One thing is depressing about these minutes. The accord was clearly pro-Israel. It didn't require Israel to evacuate settlements, discuss Jerusalem, let Palestinian refugees return or commit to a Palestinian state. Yet most of the ministers, including Rabin, thought they had given too much. The false propaganda of the 1980s had affected them, just as that of the '90s tied the hands of Ehud Barak's government when it sought to negotiate a final-status agreement. (...) Without Oslo I, there would have been no peace treaty with Jordan. And without the peace treaty with Jordan, it's difficult to say what Israel's security situation would have looked like over the past 30 years. (...)

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 05.09.23

How the Oslo Accords Failed Palestinians and Israelis

(...) Do we recognize that the Oslo process was ultimately a huge failure? (...) If the hilltop youth are now the masters of the occupied territories, and if Bezalel Smotrich is the person responsible for security there – then it was definitely a huge failure. There is no other way to describe the governmental and ideological turnabout that occurred here between 1993 and 2023. (...) Oslo's clear failure (...) derived from the two sides' contrasting expectations. The PLO leaders were sure their recognition of Israel would lead to its return to the 1967 borders. But they had no chance of achieving this objective as long as the disputes continued among the Palestinian factions and the terror attacks did not abate. (...) I don't know how things would have turned out had Rabin not been assassinated. (...) What I do know is that whenever we entered the cabinet meetings, we understood the magnitude of the responsi-

bility we bore. We listened to the concerns raised by the military figures, and each person there was free to carefully weigh his own position. It was and still is clear to me that Rabin led a serious, responsible, excellent government. The “fully right-wing” government we have now is the total antithesis of the Rabin and Peres governments. It celebrates the collapse of the Oslo process while leading Israel to an unprecedented existential crisis.

Uzi Baram, HAA, 05.09.23

The Palestinian peace process was meant to increase terrorism

(...) The Oslo Accords led to 30 years of continuous, horrific, Palestinian terror under the leadership of the newly formed Palestinian Authority. Suicide bombings, shootings, knifings, car rammings and other terror attacks were enabled by the Accords. Many mourn the lost peace that they thought was merely a breath away, wondering what caused the Oslo peace process to fail. (...) Since its inception, the PA leaders have been declaring their terror goals for the Oslo process, but Israeli leaders made the astonishing decision to believe what the PA leaders told them in private, over what they told their own people in public. (...) Looking back at 30 years of continuous PA-promoted, -glorified, and -rewarded terror, what is so shocking about the Oslo deception is that the PLO, which in 1993 was still a terrorist organization, needed to do nothing to deceive the eager Israeli leaders. They just had to come to the table and sign a piece of paper. There was no Trojan Horse, there were no dummy parachutes flying from the sky, and there were no false leaks by Palestinian diplomats to convince Israelis that the PLO terrorists had reformed. There was no trial period. There was no attempt to wait for the reeducation of Palestinian youth raised on hatred of Jews and Israel. (...) Oslo's Trojan Horse succeeded because there were Israeli negotiators and leaders who were so anxious to have a peace agreement that they ignored all caution and let themselves be deceived. (...) One could summarize the Oslo Accords by declaring them a major success for the PLO, but a dismal failure for Israel. But there is a much deeper truth. The peace process that Israel imagined didn't fail. It never existed.

Itamar Marcus, JPO, 07.09.23

The Lessons of Oslo

(...) The Oslo Accords assumed that a fundamental change had taken place in the attitude of the Palestinian National Movement toward the State of Israel.

Nevertheless, to this day, recognition of the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people was not granted. Moreover, Palestinians continue to use violence against Israel. (...) According to the Oslo Accords, Israel transferred territories to the exclusive control of the Palestinians, hoping the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA) would become a good neighbor and prevent terrorism. That did not happen, and the PA is having difficulties functioning as a state. (...) Unfortunately, Israel lives in a region, where peace between countries does not prevail, and using force is an alternative that comes to mind for resolving conflicts between neighbors. (...) Israel must internalize that it will have to live on its sword for a long time. Its security needs require military control of the entire territory of the Land of Israel – from the river to the sea. That means Israel will continue to monitor the area where many Palestinians live. Israel has no choice but to explain to itself and the world that the Palestinians are hostile to Israel and that Palestinian groups act violently against the Jewish State. (...) It is a pity that the learning process required the bloodshed of Israelis. At first, the terrorists' victims were called by Oslo supporters “victims of peace.” Over time, it was recognized that the casualties resulted from Palestinian terrorism motivated by abysmal hatred of the Jewish state. Abundant Jewish blood was needed to shed away a beautiful but unrealistic dream. (...)

Efraim Inbar, TOI, 12.09.23

New Nakba: Oslo led to Israeli apartheid over occupied Palestinians

(...) it is time to stop and admit that the Declaration of Principles signed at the White House 30 years ago has become a new catastrophe for the Palestinians. This new Nakba (Arabic for “catastrophe”) divided the West Bank into three areas (...). The number of settlements and settlers has tripled, the ground is ripe for annexation, and east Jerusalem is totally isolated from the rest of the occupied territories. If settlement growth has been the worst result of the Oslo Accords, the fate of Jerusalem is the second worst. In the last 30 years, the 350,000 Palestinians living in Jerusalem have been totally separated from their surroundings. Using the Oslo Accords as an excuse, Israel has legally, politically, and financially, with the help of a 25-foot-tall cement wall, left Palestinian Jerusalemites as political orphans. (...) From day one of the talks, the Palestinian negotiators in Washington complained that the most important elements missing from the Declaration of Principles were a settlement freeze and a

mechanism to ensure that the five-year interim period did not become the status quo. Thirty years later, there are no negotiations or any sign that either marriage or divorce will be the outcome of this complicated relationship. A divorce would mean an end to the occupation and the creation of an independent Palestinian state, while a marriage would merge the two peoples into one state, with all citizens having equal rights. (...) With no negotiations and no political horizon, it is no wonder that Palestinians are choosing to revolt in various ways. (...) perhaps the most refreshing development since has been the recent protests in Israel against judicial overhaul. While these Israeli protests have focused mostly on domestic policies and the role of the Supreme Court, the fact that they are centered on the concept of the rule of law gives some hope. People can dream that this newly realized Israeli people power will also translate into a serious discussion about the occupation and the future of relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Thirty years after Oslo, the choice is clear. Either an amicable divorce, giving both sides independence and freedom from each other, or an agreed marriage with equal rights and responsibilities. Anything short of that, such as these catastrophically toothless Oslo Accords, is doomed to fail.

Daoud Kuttab, JPO, 13.09.23

The Oslo Accords: Not a total failure

(...) the fact is that in the framework of peace negotiations in 2000 and again in 2008, Israel offered the Palestinians a state in the equivalent of all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with a corridor through Israel to connect them. That was what the Palestinians said they wanted. (...) However, the Palestinians rejected both offers, and their leaders, Yasser Arafat and then Mahmoud Abbas, stopped the negotiations. So the Oslo Accords peace process (...) didn't bring peace. Clearly, that's a failure. Instead, the three decades since the signing on the White House lawn in Washington have been marred by violence, with Palestinian terrorist attacks and Israeli military operations. (...) Since 1993, more than a thousand Israelis have been killed in Palestinian attacks. On the other hand, the Palestinian death toll is much higher than Israel's. Palestinians suffer the daily humiliation and sanctions of Israeli occupation, as well as the frustration of living under a corrupt Palestinian regime that has been labeled with various epithets, including "kleptocracy." (...) When implementing an initial part of the Oslo agreement, Israel withdrew its forces from the main Palestinian

population centers in the West Bank and Gaza. That means Israeli soldiers are no longer posted inside Palestinian cities and towns. (...) The settlers who were evacuated have faced hardships and trauma, partly as a result of their refusal to cooperate with the government in relocating them. But to paint their lives in Gaza before the pullout as quiet and peaceful is a distortion of reality at best and a politically motivated lie at worst. (...) If there had been no Oslo Accords, there would be no security barrier. There would have been no withdrawal from Gaza City, Jabalia, Nablus or Ramallah. (...) There's no end to this without a political solution, and Oslo was the first attempt at that. The results are not all negative. (...) It's not all Israelis hoped for, but it's worth recognizing as positive.

Mark Lavie, JPO, 13.09.23

3. Ausschreitungen in Tel Aviv bei einer Veranstaltung der eritreischen Botschaft

Bei heftigen gewaltvollen Auseinandersetzungen im Süden Tel Avivs zwischen eritreischen Flüchtlingen und Anhängern der eritreischen Ein-Parteien-Diktatur sind Berichten zufolge rund 150 Menschen verletzt worden, darunter auch zahlreiche Sicherheitskräfte. Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu berief eine Sondersitzung des Kabinetts ein, um „schnelle Maßnahmen“ einzuleiten. Dazu gehören die Abschiebung von eritreischen Regierungshänger_innen, die schließlich, so Netanyahu, nicht behaupten könnten, auf der Flucht zu sein. Die Unruhen in Tel Aviv waren im Umfeld einer von der eritreischen Botschaft initiierten Veranstaltung ausgebrochen. Die Polizei setzte nach eigenen Angaben scharfe Munition ein und nahm einige Dutzend Menschen fest.

Eritrean asylum seeker clashes are unacceptable – don't make them

(...) This was not a spontaneous riot. Both the opponents and the regime supporters were dressed for the protests, wearing blue and red T-shirts, respectively. (...) The anti-regime protesters claim that the Eritrean embassy, representing the government of President Isaias Afwerki, is spying on those who fled the dictatorship and are seeking asylum abroad. (...) At a time when tensions within Israeli society are particularly strained over the judicial reform and the protest movement, the intra-Eritrean violence naturally was seen in the context of this divide. Much of the impetus for the government's proposed reform stems from the High Court's overturning of Knesset

laws designed to handle the issue of illegal migrants – including deportation or imprisonment in the Holot detention center. The police must examine for itself why it was so unprepared for the level of violence despite early intelligence and the experience from the migrant community and police abroad. But Netanyahu is correct in saying that the violence is absolutely unacceptable – and ultimately the blame lies with the protesters themselves. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 04.09.23

Refugees in name alone

The violent riots by Eritreans (...) dumbfounded the nation. How did we get to this point that foreign gangs are wreaking havoc in our country, no longer content with such "small" crimes as bicycle theft, engaging instead in bloody fights with each other and the police? Only those who choose to be blind will deny the role of the Supreme Court and its crackdown on the fights against infiltration that has plunged southern Tel Aviv into lawlessness. As tempting as it is to dwell on the past, we must focus on the future to make sure we do not repeat the same mistakes. The government must immediately implement a determined, aggressive, and comprehensive policy to quickly remove the infiltrators within our borders, and at the same time place insurmountable obstacles in front of illegal immigrants who are planning to arrive in the coming years. (...) The vast majority of the infiltrators are not actually refugees, because they were never persecuted at home due to backgrounds, beliefs, or opinions. And most of them did not flee due to the war either. In fact, they are undermining the chances of actual refugees being saved. As such, the infiltrators must be presented with an immediate choice: leave voluntarily or be removed after staying at a detention center (...).

Arial Bulshstein, IHY, 04.09.23

After the Eritreans, It Will Be the Traitors' Turn for Detention Without Trial

The legal abuse of the Eritreans arrested (...) in Tel Aviv between supporters and opponents of the East African dictatorship is just the dress rehearsal for something much worse. (...) following criticism that police hadn't submitted enough evidence when they were arrested, it was decided to transfer 53 of the Eritreans into administrative detention – arrest without charges – and deny the Eritreans a proper hearing. Granted that the law limits such administrative detention to 60 days, but it can be repeatedly renewed, as the country's 1,201 Palestinians adminis-

trative detainees know. In such legal proceedings, the burden of proof is low, the state isn't obligated to provide the detainees with legal counsel and there is almost no right to appeal. In practice, their imprisonment can continue until they're expelled from the country. (...) Justice Minister Yariv Levin and Interior Minister Moshe Arbel are promoting a Basic Law on Immigration – another legal creation conceived in the poisonous womb of the government coalition agreements. If passed, it would authorize indefinite imprisonment of foreign migrants who aren't subject to deportation. (...) With the admission of the foreign migrants – to be followed perhaps by Arab citizens of Israel – to the administrative detention club, it wouldn't be outlandish to assume that even Jewish "rioters" could get a free ride on this demon train brought to us by Ben-Gvir & Co. Because what works against Eritrean "opponents of the regime" and Arab criminals can also be appropriate against Israeli "opponents of the regime," "draft resisters," "traitors" and other citizens who bother the regime. (...) It suddenly turns out that the separation fence between Israel and the territories, and the barrier along the Egyptian border designed to halt the entry of asylum-seekers, are just physical barriers designed to stop people, but they're not strong enough to stop Israel from becoming a country whose own citizens are its "enemies."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 06.09.23

Israel's Shameful, Xenophobic Detention of Eritrean Asylum Seekers

(...) Israel has been holding over 50 Eritreans in administrative detention. They were arrested following the violent clashes that took place on Saturday between asylum seekers who oppose the Eritrean regime, and its supporters. Their status is "held" – a detention unlimited in time and which does not require the state to provide them with legal representation, and which is laid out in the Entry into Israel Law. (...) Rather than release those against whom there is no evidence and charge those who broke the law, the ministerial committee decided to forego all that hassle and opt instead for administrative detention. (...) Immigration administrative detention – without an indictment – hasn't been used in many years. The state recognized an opportunity to do what the xenophobic right has always wanted to and the law prevented: To deport them back to their countries. The decision to detain the asylum seekers presupposes that there is a possibility to deport them, but there isn't. (...) It is shameful that Israel requires international reminders of the obvious:

Eritrean asylum seekers cannot be deported back to their country. The violent rioters should be tried criminally. Those against whom the police have no evidence should be released immediately.

Editorial, HAA, 07.09.23

4. Medienquerschnitt

Der lange Weg der Frauen zur Gleichberechtigung

Gender Equality Has Yet To Be Achieved In Israel

(...) Full gender equality is something that women in Israel still aspire to after 75 years of Israeli statehood (...). For a long time, only 10 percent of parliamentarians in the Knesset were women, and they were often regarded as mere tokens. Golda Meir was one such person, a strong woman in a world controlled by men. And for decades, Israeli cabinets had only one female member. In recent years, women have fared better. At last count, 77 men and 43 women comprised the Knesset's membership. But as the above figures show, women still have a way to go before real equality is achieved. (...) Sexism among men is certainly a major problem, but ultra-Orthodox resistance to equal rights is equally an obstacle. (...) The battle against ingrained sexism in Israel took a great leap forward with the passage of legislation in 1992 outlawing sexual harassment. Its detractors claimed that its sponsors were upending the existing order. Still other men complained that women who wore "provocative" clothes were to blame for their troubles. (...) Far too often, the agendas of political parties do not align with the objectives of women. And in the view of Ayelet Shaked, a former justice minister, some glass ceilings simply cannot be broken. For example: a woman has never been minister of defence. Tzipi Livni, the former leader of the centrist Kadima Party, came close to forming a government in 2009. But she failed because haredi parties would not back her. (...)

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 02.09.23

Saudi-Arabien auf diplomatischem Vormarsch

Saudi Arabia is the ladder that will allow Netanyahu to climb down from the tree of judicial reform

(...) If you want a historic agreement with Saudi Arabia that will win you a Nobel Prize, first keep it

quiet in your own backyard. The demonstrations in Israel and the reform do not help the promotion of normalization. You don't look good in the eyes of the Saudis and the Arab world, who wonder if there is a functioning Israeli leader. It seems Biden understands that the Saudi channel is perhaps his only way to help Netanyahu down from the tall tree of the judicial overhaul, and perhaps he is even taking advantage of Netanyahu's predicament a little. (...) there is a real desire in the Biden administration to achieve something with Saudi Arabia. The president really believes that there is potential here for a realistic diplomatic initiative. (...) It's no secret that the man who leads the contacts with the Biden administration on behalf of Netanyahu regarding the Saudis is Ron Dermer, along with Tzachi Hanegbi. The same Dermer who, on behalf of Netanyahu, is leading the negotiations for a compromise on judicial reform at the President's Residence in Israel. Dermer is pushing for a compromise because he knows it is needed, mainly to reach an agreement with Saudi Arabia.

Itamar Eichner, YED, 06.09.23

Helping Saudi Arabia go nuclear won't stop Iran from doing it

Saudi Arabia wants the Biden administration to help it build nuclear power plants and enrich uranium, which could bring the kingdom to the brink of building bombs. This is the quid pro quo Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud (MBS) is demanding for normalizing relations with Israel. Biden officials, eager to get Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel, are now twisting every which way to get to a nuclear yes. It's a bad bribe. (...) enrichment and reprocessing could bring Saudi Arabia within weeks of a bomb. (...) MBS, in fact, is already (...) threatening to get his nuclear help from China, to join China's economic orbit (...), to sell off Saudi holdings of US Treasury bonds, and to cut back on oil production. If Biden caves to MBS's nuclear demands, South Korea (...) and Turkey (...) will wonder why they don't deserve similar treatment. The UAE, whose nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States stipulates that Washington must reopen nuclear consultations if it affords more generous nuclear deals with any of the UAE's neighbors, will also want "adjustments." Egypt, America's second-largest recipient of foreign military assistance, is certain to want the same (...). In 1988 and 2007, the United States discovered that the Saudis had imported Chinese nuclear-capable missiles; and in 2021, that Riyadh was building a Chinese missile

factory. Yet, in each case, our intelligence agencies only found out after the missiles and factories were in place – too late to prevent their acquisition. A similar belated surprise came in 2020 when US intelligence discovered China was secretly helping Saudi Arabia process uranium. This, then brings us to an even more disturbing point. If MBS is true to his promise to follow Iran's nuclear lead, any nuclear power program, even one that excludes enrichment or reprocessing, will serve as a covert nuclear weapons technology conduit. (...) Unless sun-soaked, natural gas-rich Saudi Arabia has a truly compelling economic reason to develop civilian nuclear energy (and it doesn't), Washington should stay clear of helping it do so. Yes, Iran's nuclear program certainly is a worry; it needs to be rolled back. But that's not something that helping the Saudis go nuclear will accomplish – just the reverse.
Henry Sokolski, JPO, 08.09.23

HAA = Haaretz
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