

Offener Brief von Yossi Beilin an Präsident Machmud Abbas

Tel Aviv

In seinem Offenen Brief an den palästinensischen Präsidenten Machmud Abbas würdigt Yossi Beilin die Ergebnisse der Osloer Vereinbarungen von 1993 und 1995. An ihrem Zustandekommen war Beilin, der damals als stellvertretender Außenminister für Shimon Peres und gemeinsam mit dem Rechtsberater Uri Savir die Geheimgespräche mit der palästinensischen Delegation unter Leitung von Achmed Qureia („Abu Ala“) in Oslo und in anderen Städten Europas führte, maßgeblich beteiligt. In der Literatur wird Beilin deshalb oft als „der eigentliche Architekt von Oslo“ bezeichnet.

Beilin beklagt, dass die Gegner von Oslo für das Scheitern gesorgt hätten; ohne Namen zu nennen, weist er die Schuld dem Amtsnachfolger Yitzhak Rabins, Benjamin Netanjahu, und den Islamisten zu. Ansonsten wäre, so Beilin weiter, ein Staat Palästina in den Grenzen von 1967 mit einem Gebietsaustausch sowie mit beiden Hauptstädten in und um Jerusalem entstanden – mit einer symbolischen und wirtschaftlichen Lösung des Problems für die palästinensischen Flüchtlinge entlang der „Genfer Initiative“, die israelische und palästinensische Teams unter Führung Beilins und Yasser Abed Rabbos ohne offiziellen Auftrag, aber in ständigem Kontakt mit Ministerpräsident Ariel Sharon und PLO-Chef Yasser Arafat Ende 2003 vorstellten. Für die Logistik sorgte während der fast dreijährigen Vorbereitungen die Schweizer Außenministerin Micheline Calmy-Rey.

Gleichzeitig kritisiert Beilin den Präsidenten dafür, dass dieser sich dem Druck Barack Obamas gefügt habe, am Status quo festzuhalten. Er laufe darauf hinaus, dass Israel seinen Charakter als jüdischer und demokratischer Staat und die Palästinenser die Chance für einen unabhängigen Staat verlieren würden. Deshalb fordert er Abbas auf, die Autonomiebehörde aufzulösen und die Verantwortung erneut auf Israel zu übertragen.

In beschwörenden Worten schreibt Beilin abschließend: „Zögern Sie keinen Moment! Akzeptieren Sie nicht die Aufforderung von Präsident Obama, der vor dem Wahltag [am 04. November 2012] lediglich unbehelligt bleiben will. Lassen Sie nicht zu, dass sich Ministerpräsident Netanjahu hinter dem Feigenblatt der Palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde verschanzt – [sondern] übertragen Sie ihm erneut die Verantwortung für das Schicksal von 4 Millionen Palästinensern. Bleiben Sie der Chef der PLO, die Ihnen die Autorität für die Führung der politischen Verhandlungen übertragen wird, wenn und wann sie wiederaufgenommen werden.“

Aber um Ihres eigenen Volkes willen und um des Friedens willen können Sie nicht zulassen, dass diese Farce eine Fortsetzung findet.“

I admit that I never believed the moment would come when I would have to write these words. I am doing so because U.S. President Barack Obama has convinced you not to announce, at this point in time, the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority's institutions and the "return of the keys" of authority for the Palestinian territories to Israel. Because there have never been serious negotiations with the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the last three years, and because you did not want to perpetuate the myth that a meaningful dialogue existed, you have been sorely tempted to declare the death of the "peace process" – but the American president urged you to maintain the status quo. It is a mistake to agree to Obama's request, and you can rectify this.

The Oslo Accords were a tremendous victory for the peace camps on both sides. And this agreement did not fail. It was thwarted. The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Palestinian terrorism, and the political victories of the opponents of the agreement – both on the Palestinian side and on the Israeli side – have turned the agreement into a device that has allowed the parties to block a two-state solution.

Oslo's opponents, on both sides, were initially startled by a process that promised to lead to a partition of the land in a few years. They later turned Oslo into a tool to prevent partition by prolonging the interim agreement, claiming that, as long as it is not replaced by a permanent agreement, it must continue and be binding to both sides. Oslo's adversaries have turned the interim agreement, which was supposed to last not more than six years and serve only as a pathway to a final solution, into an arena where they can continue to build settlements or spin their dreams of an Islamic empire, without the world putting serious pressure on them to put an end to the conflict.

The extremists' gutting of the Oslo agreement has been complete. They have uprooted the permanent-status negotiations – where the two sides pledged to tackle core issues such as the status of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees, and the future of Israeli settlements – from the peace process. They have succeeded in preventing the creation of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 lines with land swaps, the establishment of two capitals in the current area of Jerusalem, the formulation of appropriate security arrangements, and a fitting symbolic and economic resolution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees – as was proposed in the Geneva Accord, in which you were involved in all of the details. Their aim is to perpetuate the interim process indefinitely, and every single day that passes plays into their hands.

One simply cannot continue with an interim arrangement for almost 20 years. This was not the intention when we spearheaded the Oslo process in late 1992 – you from Tunis and I from Jerusalem – or when we assiduously worked on what subsequently became known as the “Beilin-Abu-Mazen Agreement”^{*} between 1993 and 1995.

You and I both understand that the current situation is a ticking time bomb. From my point of view, what is at stake is the loss of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. From yours, it is the loss of the chance for an independent Palestinian state. And from both of our points of view, the failure of the two-state solution risks a renewal of terrible violence.

^{*} „Abu Mazen“ ist in der palästinensischen Umgangssprache der üblich verwendete Name für Machmud Abbas. Als diese informelle Vereinbarung geschlossen wurde, gehörte Abbas zum Führungskader der PLO in Tunis. Das „non-paper“ mit Leitlinien für eine Endregelung des Konflikts scheiterte, weil sich Abbas durch Indiskretionen aus den eigenen Reihen politisch diskreditiert fühlte. Er selbst soll behauptet haben, dass er von einem solchen Dokument nichts wisse. Zu vermuten ist, dass auch die israelische Regierung den Alleingang Beilins missbilligte.

Anyone who believes these things must take action. You can do it, and for this step you do not need a partner. A declaration of the end of the Oslo process – justified by the fact that the path to a permanent-status agreement is blocked – is the most reasonable, nonviolent option for putting the subject back on the world's agenda, with the aim of renewing genuine efforts to reach a conclusive solution.

Dissolving the Palestinian Authority and returning daily control to Israel would be an action nobody could ignore. It is not at all similar to a demonstration in front of the Municipality of Ramallah, nor is it similar to appealing to the United Nations for member-state status. This is a step that only you can take, and a step that will demand a response.

I know how difficult it is. I know how many tens of thousands of people depend on the Palestinian Authority for their livelihoods. I am able to appreciate all that you and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad have accomplished – establishing Palestinian institutions, growing an economy in impossible conditions, and fostering security in the West Bank.

After all these endeavors, however, you still need to beg the government of Israel to release your money from customs, you still need to beg the Republicans in the U.S. Congress to transfer funds to the Palestinian Authority, and you still need to stand, day after day, before your Palestinian critics and explain why your political efforts are failing. Please don't let this be the way you end your political mission – a mission that seeks to achieve Palestinian independence without the use of violence.

Do not hesitate for a moment! Do not accept the request of President Obama, who merely wants to be left undisturbed before election day. Do not let Prime Minister Netanyahu hide behind the fig leaf of the Palestinian Authority – impose upon him, once again, the

responsibility for the fate of 4 million Palestinians. Remain as the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which will give you the authority to lead the political negotiations if and when they resume.

But for the sake of your own people, and for the sake of peace, you cannot let this farce continue.

It is possible, of course, that Oslo's demise will not be followed by the birth of more substantive peace talks. But if that occurs, then at least it will not be you – the man who stood beside the cradle of the Oslo process – who is responsible for failing to prevent the complete and utter distortion of that process by its Palestinian and Israeli opponents.

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