



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 15/10

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

26. Juli – 08. August 2010

1. Zwischenfall an der Grenze zum Libanon

Am 3. August kam es an der Grenze zwischen Israel und dem Libanon zu einem Gefecht zwischen israelischer und libanesischer Armee, bei dem ein israelischer Offizier, zwei libanesische Soldaten und ein libanesischer Journalist getötet wurden. Eine israelische Einheit hatte in Absprache mit UNIFIL, der UN-Friedenstruppe im Südlibanon, Bäume auf der anderen Seite des Grenzzauns beschnitten. Die libanesische Armee eröffnete daraufhin das Feuer. Nach Angaben eines UNIFIL-Sprechers befanden sich die Bäume jedoch auf israelischem Territorium, da der Zaun nicht überall dem tatsächlichen Verlauf der Grenze entspricht.

Der israelische Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak nannte den Vorfall eine „Provokation“. Der libanesischer Informationsminister Tarek Mitri gab jedoch an, dass der Libanon den Grenzverlauf in diesem Gebiet nicht anerkenne.

Der Zwischenfall war die schwerste Krise an der Nordgrenze Israels seit Ende des Libanonkrieges im Sommer 2006.

Restraint is not weakness

“The serious firefight that developed Tuesday between Israel and Lebanon is like a match that can ignite a blaze. [...]

The government and the IDF have for several months been preparing the Israeli public for the possibility of a war in the north. They are aware of the tremendous political tension in Lebanon. [...] This awareness should have led the government and the IDF to consider more carefully when to cut down a tree near the border. [...] When such an operation can trigger a war, the benefits must be weighed against the risks. [...] Employing restraint and waiting at such a time are not an expression of weakness, but of wisdom and political sensitivity.”

HAA 05.08.10 Editorial

Israel's eroded deterrence

“Our enemies, which possess sensitive detectors, apparently sensed that things are changing. [...] Even the Lebanese army dares to provoke the IDF. [...] We no longer scare our enemies. [...] They interpret Israel's political and diplomatic weakness in the international arena as military and security weakness. [...] Deterrence needs to be maintained, boosted, and occasionally demonstrated. [...]

Policy makers must be debating between a policy of containment and restraint, and a policy of boosted deterrence. This isn't a crisis yet, and there's time to plan, take wise decisions, facilitate the political and media infrastructure, and prepare public opinion in order to restore our deterrent power.”

Shmuel Gordon, JED 04.08.10

Lebanese question mark

“So why did the Lebanon border skirmish take place? To be honest, this very question is being asked not only in Israel. Many are asking it in Lebanon as well. [...] With the passage of time it appears that the accurate sniper fire directed at IDF forces was a local, well-organized initiative, rather than a mad outburst by a crazed soldier. Apparently, field commanders endorsed the attack. [...]

The other important question is whether the incident was related to the immense pressure building up in Lebanon ahead of the international indictments over the assassination of late PM Hariri. [...] On the one hand, the incident is apparently unrelated. After all, Nasrallah and his people, who are facing the pressure, did not initiate the border skirmish. [...]

Yet beyond all these questions, one question mark must concern everyone – the Lebanese army. [...] As it turns out, it is unclear to what extent this army adheres to orders from Beirut.”

Roe Nahmias, JED 04.08.10

Attacked by Lebanon

“It's far from certain [...] that this was exclusively a local initiative. What is certain is that an ambush

was prepared, with members of the press invited in advance to view the attack. [...] UNIFIL forces did not raise, much less use, their weapon to foil what was obviously outright aggression.

For Israel, this still further undermines UN Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted to end the 2006 Second Lebanon War. The resolution utterly failed to prevent Hizbullah rearmament [...] but Israel has taken comfort in the fact that both a much-enlarged UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces are deployed in south Lebanon.

But on Tuesday, UNIFIL proved impotent. [...] Lebanon's military is increasingly Shi'ite [...] and overtly sympathetic to Hizbullah, if not actually in active cahoots with it.

Hence sporadic attacks are only to be expected from the very force Israel wanted to believe would stymie such attacks."

JPO 05.08.10 Editorial

Right and wrong in Lebanon

"Another deadly exchange along the border like that and we could have the Third Lebanon War on our hands. So here are a couple of suggestions on how to prevent it – how to lower the tension on the border.

First, the international community, such as it is, has to tell the Lebanese Army to back off. [...]

If this is not the time for Ban Ki-moon, Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy and other world leaders to speak out clearly and decisively, then when is?

But world leaders like to be even-handed, so here's another suggestion: Let them also tell Israel to stop flying spy planes over Lebanon just about every day. That is also a provocation – not a lethal one, but an invasion of airspace that we would never tolerate from any country, which makes it completely wrong for us to do to Lebanon."

Larry Derfner, JPO 05.08.10

Only we are allowed

"Now that we've recited ad nauseum the explanations of Israel Defense Forces propaganda for what happened Tuesday at the northern border, the facts should also be looked at. [...] UNIFIL asked the IDF to postpone the operation, because its commander is abroad. The IDF didn't care. [...]The Lebanese and UNIFIL soldiers shouted at them to stop. In Lebanon they say their soldiers also fired warning shots in the air. If they did, it didn't stop the IDF. [...]

After all, order must be maintained: We're allowed to fly in Lebanese airspace; they are not permitted to shoot. [...] For months now the drums of war have been beating here again. [...] No one asks why and wherefore [...].But a UN report published this week held Israel fully responsible for creating this dangerous tension.

In this overheated atmosphere the IDF should have been careful when lighting its matches. [...] The work should have been postponed."

Giedon Levy, HAA 05.08.10

2. Direkte Friedensgespräche?

Die Arabische Liga hat sich für eine Aufnahme von direkten Friedensgesprächen zwischen Israel und Palästinensern ausgesprochen. Dies widerspricht der Position von Präsident Mahmoud Abbas, der nur unter bestimmten Voraussetzungen zu direkten Verhandlungen bereit ist: Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu müsse dem Prinzip zustimmen, dass ein palästinensischer Staat auf den Grenzen von 1967 gegründet werden würde. Gebietsaustausch und dadurch entstehende leichte Veränderungen des Grenzverlaufs seien möglich, müssten aber von beiden Seiten akzeptiert werden. Außerdem verlangte er die Fortsetzung des Siedlungsbaustopps im Westjordanland.

Netanyahu hatte Abbas bereits mehrmals zu direkten Gesprächen aufgefordert und genießt dabei die Unterstützung von US-Präsident Barak Obama. Bisher haben die Palästinenser lediglich einem Treffen der Chefunterhändler zugestimmt. Allerdings steht Abbas unter großem Druck, direkte Verhandlungen zu beginnen, seitdem Obama ihn vor Konsequenzen für die Beziehungen zu den USA warnte.

Burden of proof

"The Arab League resolution on Thursday supporting direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was an important step on the path to renew talks to establish a Palestinian state. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas now must decide whether to bow to American pressure and accept Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's invitation to begin high-level discussions.

It is incumbent upon Abbas to answer in the affirmative because there is no benefit [...] in more pointless delays that perpetuate the intolerable situation in the territories."

HAA 01.08.10 Editorial

Step up, Mr. Abbas

"It was a patently reluctant Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu who, late last November, announced a 10-month freeze on new building starts at settlements in the West Bank. [...]

Rather than capitalize on the unprecedented Israeli government moratorium, enter direct talks, and make a serious effort to confront the thorniest issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, PA President Mahmoud Abbas allowed the months to slip by unutilized. [...]

Israeli-Palestinian peace will not be reached via indirect negotiations involving a Palestinian leadership that cannot bring itself into face-to-face contact with Israel. [...] That direct framework, with US mediation, is the only realistic game in town. [...] Unfortunately, the PA continues to drag its feet. [...] Netanyahu is highly skeptical of Abbas's peacemaking intentions. Unsurprisingly, Abbas is deeply skeptical of Netanyahu's. The Israeli prime minister, however, is ready and willing to put such skepticism to the test, hoping to be proved wrong. It's long overdue for Abbas to do the same."

JPO 01.08.10 Editorial

The primacy of proximity talks

"We are in dire need of a reality check. The political process of the 1990s [...] was based on the premise that both sides had legitimate representatives who could negotiate, sign, ratify and implement agreements. But reality has changed since then, and a dramatic shift has occurred on the Palestinian side. [...] Pushing the Palestinian polity into making historic decisions at a time of unprecedented weakness is tantamount to playing with fuel by a bonfire. [...] In other words, premature attempts to pin down a two-state solution may likely result in its permanent demise.

Against this backdrop, proximity talks should be seen as the optimum - not a fallback. [...] Direct negotiations that seek a permanent agreement as the means of realizing the two-state solution may be the paradigm that requires a shift. The real recipe for progress may be the exact opposite: proximity talks that lead to an interim arrangement and a reframing of the political process."

Gidi Grinstein, HAA 08.08.10

Don't get your hopes up

"While the Palestinians debate whether to enter direct negotiations with Israel, we would do well to again ask the following question: Are their peace intentions genuine? [...] In the few historical

junctions where the Palestinian national movement was called upon to make a decision regarding a possible historic compromise with the Zionist movement, the Palestinian leadership's reply was unequivocally firm and determined: There would be no compromise. [...] Over the years, the PA's leadership adopted techniques and skills that enable it to fully exploit its situation to its economic benefit. This transitional political situation, a twilight-zone government facing no scrutiny, is a political heaven for them made up of bottomless barrels of money. Who needs an actual state that would get into trouble sooner or later and be declared a failed state?

Palestinian society is not ripe for the great change planned for it by Barack Obama. [...] A historical compromise is off-limits."

Moshe Elad, JED 07.08.10

Is Bibi becoming a dove?

"Even the Arab League appeared to side with Netanyahu; it urged Abbas to move quickly to direct talks and put no conditions on that advice [...]. Netanyahu has deftly outmaneuvered Abbas and scored major public relations victories. [...]

Netanyahu is riding high today [...]. But once those talks begin, he will have to make some very difficult – and historic – compromises and decisions. He will have to live up to his own rhetoric and show that he is ready to make peace, not just talk about it endlessly. He can't keep depending on Abbas and the Palestinians to keep missing opportunities to make peace."

D.Bloomfield, JPO 04.08.10

Hamas' violent message

"On Thursday, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas received the Arab League's blessing to resume direct negotiations with Israel. On Friday, Hamas launched an Iranian Grad rocket from Gaza that struck southern Ashkelon [...] The attacks are evidently Hamas's reaction to new hopes, no matter how slim, for peace and stability between Palestinians and Israelis. [...] The attacks on Ashkelon and Sderot underline the complexities of seeking peace with the Palestinian people split between Gaza and the West Bank. The US and Europe might manage to muscle Abbas into peace talks with Israel. [...]

But with Hamas running the show in Gaza, the chances of success in any peace endeavor may well be slimmer than they used to be."

JPO 01.08.10 Editorial

The West Bank illusion

“The negotiations Abbas is clinging so hard to are producing not results but only disappointment among the Palestinians. The Abbas administration has neither democratic backing nor political legitimization. [...] The green light for negotiations with Israel was given by the Arab League and not by elected representatives of the Palestinian public. [...] Abbas' assumption that U.S. President Barack Obama will give him the Palestinian state on a silver platter without the Palestinians having to fight for their liberation has not been proved and is on the verge of collapse.”

Menachem Klein, HAA 04.08.10

Obama's carrots and sticks

“With his policy on the Israeli-Palestinian diplomatic process currently focusing on exerting massive pressure in a bid to launch direct talks, US President Barack Obama aims to rectify the grave mistakes he made thus far. [...] Obama simultaneously worked vis-à-vis Netanyahu and Abbas, while combining carrots and sticks for both sides. [...]

A conflict such as the Israeli-Palestinian one makes it very difficult for the sides to secure agreements without the help of a third party – however, the question is which kind of help we're talking about. [...]

There is an even greater problem when such third party threatens to present its own peace plan and force it upon the sides. Parties who enter forced negotiations believe that this does not serve their vital interests, and therefore have no interest in seeing the talks succeed. [...]

The parties to a forced agreement would tend to sabotage its implementation in every possible way.”
Eytan Gilboa, JED 03.08.10

3. Immigranten in Israel

Nachdem die Entscheidung über ein Jahr hinaus gezögert worden war, hat die israelische Regierung Anfang August beschlossen, 400 der 1200 ausländischen Kinder, die ohne Aufenthaltsgenehmigung in Israel leben, abzuschicken. In Israel leben etwa 300.000 ausländische Arbeitnehmer. Aus Sicherheitsgründen hatte die Regierung in den 90er Jahren begonnen, Arbeitsvisa an Ausländer zu vergeben, um palästinensische Arbeitskräfte zu ersetzen. Die Visa berechtigen jedoch nur zu einem befristeten

Aufenthalt – in Israel geborene Kinder erhalten keine automatische Aufenthaltsgenehmigung.

Mit dem Regierungsbeschluss wurden nun die Kriterien festgelegt, nach denen Kinder von ausländischen Eltern, die legal ins Land gekommen sind, in Israel bleiben dürfen. Diese schließen jedoch 400 Kinder, die noch nicht lang genug im Land sind oder keine Schule besuchen, aus. Bildungsminister Gideon Saar kritisierte den Regierungsbeschluss und plädierte dafür, allen Kindern das Bleiberecht zu gewähren, während Innenminister Eli Yishai für strengere Kriterien und die Abschiebung von weiteren Ausländern warb.

Handling the immigration challenge

“In the age of globalization, the perception that mass immigration is a threat to national identity may not be a uniquely Israeli phenomenon, but it has a particularly complex impact here. [...]

The Jewish state hosts between 250,000 and 400,000 foreign workers. And half of them are illegal, compared to just one-third in the US and less than that in the EU. [...]

Together with Arab Israelis, approximately 30% of the population (inside the Green Line) is not Jewish. Admittedly, 400 children and their families are not going to make or break the Jewish majority. [...]

But the crux lies elsewhere. Remarkably, and dismally, Israel, which faces such formidable demographic challenges is [...] the only Western democracy that still lacks an immigration policy. The old paradigm of Israel as a repatriation state for Jews is anachronistic. Transparent, coherent criteria for the naturalization of non-Jews [...] can help prevent future heart-rending situations.”

JPO, 02.08.10 Editorial

A new immigration policy

“The government must develop an immigration policy that is suitable for the 21st century. It must ask what is necessary for the economy. Maybe it's worthwhile to bring quality human capital to Israel that will boost export industries. Maybe it's correct to set up a process for naturalization as in developed countries. [...] There is no dilemma between being humane and Zionism, as Netanyahu would have us believe. The absorption of new Israelis who have opted to live here will bolster both goals. It will contribute to the immigrants' personal development, strengthen the Zionist enterprise and reflect Israel's maturity and its joining the group of developed countries.”

HAA, 07.08.10 Editorial

The Zionist transfer

“This Zionistic transfer passed by a 13-10 majority. Those who tilted the balance in favor of the decision included three ministers from Yisrael Beiteinu, who emigrated here from the former Soviet Union yet endorse the expulsion of children who were born in this country. [...]

The objectors to the decision, alongside a few righteous souls, included the Shas ministers – yet not because of the awakening of their Jewish heart and morality, heaven forbid, but rather, the other way around – in protest of the expulsion not being cruel and extensive enough. What a crazy government we have. [...]

As it turns out, this is the existential threat that was faced by the government of Israel on Sunday: A total of 400 Israeli-born children who may have, heaven forbid, ended up graduating high school and joining the army.

Uri Misgav, JED 02.08.10

Wonderfully scripted propaganda

“In the fall of 2009, the government was set to crack down on the increasingly chaotic situation surrounding the foreign workers, legal and illegal, living in Israel. Activist groups [...] began a campaign designed to change the debate from one about the 300,000 foreign workers, to one about the 1,200 children supposedly at risk for deportation. [...] Children don't arrive in Israel mysteriously by themselves. Their parents came, with or without the children and raised them here. That was the choice of the parents. [...] The face of the debate should be the parents, their lack of concern for their own children's future and their irresponsible wanton violation of the law.”

Seth J. Frantzman, JPO 03.08.10

Don't let emotions rule us

“Wisdom and sensitivity – these are the means required when looking at the heart-wrenching images of the foreign children who wish to stay in this country. [...] Deep inside, we understand that we cannot allow thousands of immigrants from poor states to flood Israel. [...]

There is no state in the world without immigration laws. [...]

The State of Israel is an island of western, democratic wealth amid a sea of poverty, ignorance, and backwardness. This is the reason why thousands of refugees arrive here every month, and this is why Asian foreign workers prefer to stay here at any cost.

In order to survive and maintain our Jewish-democratic character, we must safeguard our demography, which is problematic as it is. We need a policy.”

Yoaz Hendel, JED 02.08.10

Not our children

“Avigdor Lieberman and Yishai are competing over who is 'more Jewish' by using more hatred, expulsion and talk of expulsion. And at any rate, since the Israeli economy continues to import more and more cheap laborers to toil here under appalling conditions, the immigration police ought to keep a close watch on them and insist that they don't fall in love, don't get married, don't have children. They should just work hard and get out of here.”

Yitzhak Laor, HAA 07.08.10

4. Medienquerschnitt

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

*Über die **Hochzeit von Chelsea Clinton** und ihrem jüdischen Bräutigam Marc Mezvinsky:*

I envy Chelsea and Marc

“The royal wedding of Chelsea Clinton and her Jewish partner Marc Mezvinsky shows us that it's easier to be a Jew in America than in Israel. [...] Dear Chelsea and Marc were wed without their history being erased. Their royal wedding featured a priest and a rabbi. Yet they were not there to summon religion, but rather, tradition. [...] I was of course touched by this, for several reasons. Fifty one years ago I married a Christian woman, and we're still together. [...]

I envy Marc, who married Chelsea. Their son can be Jewish, but my grandson cannot, because his mother and grandmother are not Jewish according to [Jewish law]. [...]

I envy enlightened American Judaism, which allows people to be Jewish. In Israel too we have progressive, wonderful Jewish streams, yet they are being condemned by Jewish zealots [...]. Oh, how I

would wish to be like Marc, here in the land of the Hebrews, whose establishment I fought for.”

Yoram Kaniuk, JED 03.08.10

WASPs at last

“Aside from its religious ramifications, the Clinton-Mezvinsky wedding highlights the enormous sociological changes [...] that have taken place [in the US] in the decades that culminated in the marriage between a daughter of the group that discriminated against others and a son of a group that was discriminated against. For many Jews, Mezvinsky's acceptance into the bosom of this high-toned WASP family seems to set the final seal on the sociological process that the Jews [...] have undergone in America. [...]

On the other side, for those who have been fearfully following the process of assimilation and disappearance that the Jewish people has undergone in America [...] this ‘culminating event’ poured salt on open wounds. Some 90 percent of young Jews, according to recent polls, do not rule out marriage with a non-Jew.”

Israel Harel, HAA 05.08.10

*Über den **Mord eines Vaters an seinen drei Kindern**, die sich im Rahmen eines vom Jugendamt genehmigten Besuches bei ihm aufhielten:*

The Ben-Dror killings

“The mind resists contemplation. A father exploits the trust and vulnerability of his three young children to kill them in their sleep. [...]

The knee-jerk reaction is to blame the underpaid and understaffed welfare authorities. But they behaved in a reasonable way, basing themselves on a psychiatric opinion issued upon the release of the father, Itai Ben-Dror, from the Lev Hasharon Mental Health Center. [...]

We seek to place blame because the truth is often much more difficult to accept – and the truth in this context is that there are bona fide evil individuals like Ben-Dror wandering around among us, and sometimes we can do nothing to stop them. [...]

One thing that can be done is to make sure that Ben-Dror is not allowed to hide behind the claim of ‘insanity.’ [...]

But if the man was fit enough to be allowed full visitation rights, he should be fit enough to be held responsible for his actions.”

JPO 26.07.10 Editorial

Rituals of death

“Words fail us in the face of a father who murders his three children. [...] And after all this has been said, it is impossible not to wonder at the rituals of death that are once again being enacted. These very private disasters [...] have been expropriated and turned into national disasters, making cynical use of pornographic death dances, a mixture of kitsch and death. All proportion is lost as everything gets dished out in exaggerated, crude helpings that go on endlessly, or at least until the next disaster. [...] The people of Israel will forget these two disasters and move on to the commercials. Then we will wait for the next disaster, looking ahead toward the next ritual of death, which will one again demand its pound of cheap emotion and cause us to forget all the real national disasters, about which we speak so little.”

Gideon Levy, HAA 29.07.10

HAA = Haaretz
HZO = Ha Tzofe
IHY = Israeli HaYom
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth
JPO = Jerusalem Post
MAA = Maariv
GLO = Globes

Veröffentlicht im: August 2010

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