



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 01/11

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

20. Dezember 2010 – 02. Januar 2011

#### 1. Erneute Eskalation zwei Jahre nach Gaza-Krieg?

*Zwei Jahre nach dem Krieg im Gazastreifen kam es am Weihnachtswochenende 2010 zu einer neuen Eskalation in dem Gebiet. Nachdem eine Qassam-Rakete und Granaten auf israelisches Gebiet abgefeuert worden waren, bombardierte die israelische Luftwaffe Ziele im Gazastreifen. Auch in der folgenden Woche kam es zu vereinzelt Schmarmützeln. Dabei wurde ein Palästinenser getötet und mehrere verletzt.*

*Quellen in der israelischen Armee zufolge teste die in Gaza herrschende Hamas aus, wie weit sie gehen kann, indem sie bewaffneten Gruppierungen wie dem Islamischen Jihad Angriffe auf Israel erlaube. Die Hamas selbst rüste sich kontinuierlich weiter mit neuen Waffen aus. Ein Sprecher der Hamas, Abu Obeida, gab an, dass die Hamas hoffe, den inoffiziellen Waffenstillstand mit Israel fortzusetzen.*

*In Israel wurde indes kritisiert, dass die Bevölkerung in den an den Gaza-Streifen angrenzenden Gebieten weiterhin nicht ausreichend vor Raketenangriffen geschützt ist. So gibt es immer noch viele Kindergärten und Schulen in Gebäuden, die nicht ausreichend verstärkt worden sind, um einem Qassam-Einschlag standhalten zu können.*

#### Israeli message to Hamas

"Officials in Israel view the recent escalation on the Gaza border as unusually severe. For the first time in a long while, Hamas is playing an active role in firing rockets and mortar shells at southern communities. [...]"

It appears the group changed its conduct for various reasons: The long period of time (two years) that has elapsed since Operation Cast Lead. Israeli officials estimate that its deterrent effect had been

eroded as result. Hamas' buildup through the acquisition of long-range rockets and anti-tank missiles, [which] [...] boosts the organization's self-confidence. [...] Pressure exerted by radical groups [...] to operate against Israel, and their claims that Hamas abandoned the struggle. [...]"

Although the attacks are still not approaching the level that prevailed before Operation Cast Lead, we are seeing a clear quantitative change."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 22.12.10

#### Stop the escalation

"The firing of Qassam rockets and mortars at the communities in the south and the air force bombings of the Gaza Strip are troubling. Two years after Operation Cast Lead the conclusion is that military solutions are able to provide only a temporary reply to a threat whose solution is political. [...]"

The military solution turned into a double-edged sword which, along with the calm it brought, fatally undermined Israel's international standing. [...]"

The calm that was achieved during the past two years had been offered to Israel long before Operation Cast Lead. Hamas proposed a tahadiyeh (lull) in the fighting. [...] Hamas is not a partner for political negotiations, but when the interest of both sides requires that calm is preserved [...], it is possible and necessary to stop the deterioration and take action toward such a long-term cease-fire."

HAA 29.12.10 Editorial

#### Learning the Gaza lesson

"For the time being, there is no answer to the Qassam rockets. It also doesn't seem like we'll have an answer anytime soon. Meanwhile, the Iron Dome anti-missile venture is slowly emerging as an expensive screw-up. It is unable to intercept primitive mortar shells. [...] When IDF forces were deployed on the outskirts of Gaza City and Rafah,

western Negev residents were much safer and happier. Yet one day the State of Israel decided to get out of there [...]. Instead of controlling the territory, Israel set up fences around it.

Again, we are learning the hard way that there are no technological substitutes to primitive control of territory."

Hagai Segal, JED 24.12.10

### **Hamas indeed has time on its side**

"Hamas [...] has revealed its new strategy. Its medium-term goal is consolidating its hold on the area. [...] The group rejects both negotiations [...] and all-out war [...]. The medium-term effort is to win broad support from Gazans by improving their lives (with Western aid money), then using this base to go to war with Israel (thus making their lives much worse). [...]

Hamas is not planning to launch new attacks. Why should it? It is enough to let Islamic Jihad and others fire mortars or rockets and send squads across the border in terrorist attacks. If Israel retaliates too much, Hamas will run crying to the Western media and governments to protect it. Barry Rubin, JPO 26.12.10

### **Remember Cast Lead**

"Some analysts believe that Hamas is losing popularity among the Palestinians, who may be internalizing the destruction their Gaza government brought down upon the Strip by goading Israel into military action two years ago. Some argue, too, that Gazans are beginning to look across to the West Bank, where stability and economic coordination with Israel are producing a much-improved day-to-day climate. [...]

Whatever the accuracy of these assessments, however, there are no significant signs that Hamas's grip on Gaza is loosening. Having capitalized on ballot-box support to engineer its violent takeover, Hamas will not willingly relinquish control."

JPO 21.12.10 Editorial

### **Rockets are a terror weapon**

"Although finally, Operation Cast Lead in 2008 substantially decreased the number of rockets launched at Israel, the people in the south still receive an almost daily dose of rockets and mortar shells from terrorists in the Gaza Strip. The operation was stopped before the job was completed, and Hamas is now increasing its stock of ballistic missiles, preparing for the next round. [...]

Acceptance of this intolerable situation should not be the answer.

There are things that can be done to decrease the dimensions of the danger [...]. They include steps of a defensive nature, of an offensive nature and of a deterrent nature."

Moshe Arens, HAA 28.12.10

### **Cast Lead got job done**

"Operation Cast Lead achieved effective deterrence vis-à-vis Hamas, and others. The capabilities displayed by the IDF in the Strip erased to a large extent the difficult impression left by the Second Lebanon War. Mostly, deterring Hamas granted Gaza-region residents two years of relative quiet and unprecedented economic prosperity. [...]

The burning question now is what Israel will do next time, once the deterrence vis-à-vis Hamas fully collapses. The fact that the IDF is ready to again enter the Strip does not guarantee the next operation's success, especially on the diplomatic front."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 30.12.10

## **2. Kontroverse um Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman**

*Am 26. Dezember hielt Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman vor israelischen Diplomaten eine Rede, in der er sich klar von der Regierungslinie abgrenzte. So warf er der türkischen Regierung "Lügen und falsche Versprechungen" vor und forderte mit Bezug auf die Verhandlungen über eine israelische Entschuldigung für den Tod von neun türkischen Aktivisten, dass sich die Türkei bei Israel entschuldigen müsse und nicht umgekehrt. In der selben Ansprache zweifelte er den Friedenswillen der Palästinenser an und bezeichnete die Positionen von Premier Benjamin Netanyahu in den Friedensgesprächen als unrealistisch.*

*Während in mehreren Medien Liebermans Entlassung gefordert wurde, zeigte Netanyahu sich jedoch nicht gewillt, seine Koalition zu gefährden. Er sagte, Lieberman vertrete seine eigene Meinung, die jedoch nicht die Position der Regierung sei.*

### **Lieberman gives Netanyahu no choice**

"Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman presented an outlook that contradicted the prime minister's thinking and actions in both the Palestinian and the Turkish arenas. [...] Netanyahu's initial response was strikingly muted. [...] Lieberman – not for the

first time, but notably starkly and resolutely – has now detailed his own conflicting outlook. No self-respecting prime minister can afford to tolerate a foreign minister so publicly at odds with him on such central areas of policy. And Israel cannot afford to live with the confusion."  
JPO 28.12.10 Editorial

### **Lieberman not at fault**

"The truth is that Lieberman isn't at fault. Even if we don't like it, these are his views, this is his personality, this is the way he conducts himself, and this is what his voters like. [...] But just as it's not a good idea to appoint a pacifistic lecturer as defense minister, we must not appoint a thug lacking minimal tact as foreign minister.

Hence, the main and possibly only culprit is the prime minister. Netanyahu is indeed halfheartedly trying to minimize Lieberman's damages, yet to begin with he should not have appointed him. [...]

At this point in time [...] the only way open to Netanyahu in order to prevent long-term damage to the state is to immediately fire Lieberman from the post of foreign minister."

Dror Zeevi, JED 29.12.10

### **PM-FM blow up: Confrontation or mechanism?**

"Typical of the Lieberman-Netanyahu dialectic, when the prime minister speaks of the nation's commitment to the US-brokered peace process, the foreign minister will assert the futility of the talks and disparage the legitimacy of Israel's Palestinian negotiating partners. Some have suggested that far from presenting a dysfunctional point-counterpoint between prime minister and foreign minister, Lieberman has served the PM well by placing into the public debate cautions and concerns Netanyahu himself doesn't dare to utter for fear of upsetting a delicate balance with his American patrons. [...] It's no-doubt irritating to the anti-Lieberman crowd that, like it or not, the Moldovan émigré offers plans rather than ad hominem attacks to back up his positions. This, of course, fuels speculation that his outbursts are more coordinated with the Prime Minister's Office than is let on. [...]

Veteran Israeli political junkies will probably dismiss this entire thesis, opting instead to be entertained by predictions of the perfect political storm that will blow away the current government. But stripped of political theatre, what is laid bare could be a [...] system of injecting new ideas into an un-accepting culture of conventional wisdoms. And new ideas –

regardless of how they enter the system – trump stagnation."

Michael Friedson, JPO 27.12.10

### **Lieberman's core issues**

"Lieberman is a good politician, a hardworking minister and in utterly the wrong job. [...]

That Lieberman is still under investigation as we kiss 2010 good-bye says a lot – none of it good – about both the minister and the exceedingly slow pace of the Israeli legal system. [...] Perversely, the ongoing police inquiries might actually add to his appeal among potential voters who feel 'the system' is against them. They do not, however, do anything for his standing in the international arena. [...]

Lieberman [...] doesn't so much pick his battles as pick fights. As fast as Netanyahu can perform a juggling act and either divert attention from an issue or at least relieve the tension, Lieberman is creating a new crisis.

But for a man who says he is 'unwilling to tolerate falsehoods,' it seems strange he should have put himself (and kept himself) in a position in which he is meant to present a foreign policy with which he clearly does not agree."

Liat Collins, JPO 01.01.11

### **One of their own**

"No mainstream leader of the Israeli center is warning against Lieberman. Netanyahu is afraid of him. MK Tzipi Livni is counting on him. [...]

Lieberman really can feel like one of their own at the Kremlin. His worldview is Putin's worldview. His value system is Putin's value system. Lieberman is as democratic as Putin, as enlightened as Putin and as delicate as Putin. [...]

Lieberman [...] sabotages his homeland, weakens it and turns it into an international laughingstock. [...] Lieberman's public image is that of an arch-patriot. But the truth is that Lieberman is no patriot. If he were, he would not undermine the government, cleave society and endanger the alliance with the United States. [...]

First, he will swallow Netanyahu, then he will pulverize Livni. Later, he will become prime minister."

Ari Shavit, HAA 30.12.10

### **The leftist media putsch**

"A radio news announcer slammed Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's speech in a way that is usually reserved for Iranian leaders. On Channel 2,

Lieberman was presented as one who 'adds more fuel to the fire with Turkey.'

Never before had such hysterical style of expression been directed at Israeli foreign ministers. [...] This style is reserved for ministers in governments that the Left refuses to recognize and insists on dissolving prematurely.

Lieberman uttered trivial statements this past week in respect to Turkey and the Palestinians. Yet his words were presented as if they were the mad statements of a pyromaniac only to delegitimize the Israeli government, not because of a frank concern for Israel's foreign relations or proper administrative procedures."

Hagai Segal, JED 01.01.11

### **The foreign minister versus the government**

"There is a [...] possibility [...] that Lieberman is right and the current government cannot present a plan for a final peace agreement with the Palestinians out of concern that the coalition will immediately break up. Lieberman says that Netanyahu cannot make good on his commitment to two states for two peoples, and has no chance of achieving a diplomatic breakthrough. If that is the case, Netanyahu should either reconfigure his coalition or go to new elections."

HAA 28.12.10 Editorial

### **Yvet's government**

"Lieberman [...] doesn't want to break up the government but he does want to prove to Netanyahu who's boss.

His methods vary; sometimes a carrot, other times a stick. Until a few weeks ago Lieberman was careful not to stretch the rope too far, out of fear that Netanyahu might throw out Yisrael Beiteinu in favor of Kadima. Today he knows for sure that this isn't an option. Kadima won't be a part of this government."

Yossi Verter, HAA 28.12.10

## **3. Zur Aussöhnung mit der Türkei**

*Die Verhandlungen über eine politische Aussöhnung zwischen Israel und der Türkei sind offenbar festgefahren. Sowohl Außenminister Avigdor Lieberman als auch Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak lehnen eine Entschuldigung für den Tod von neun türkischen Aktivisten an Bord der Mavi Marmara, deren Fahrt in den Gazastreifen von der israelischen Armee aufgehalten worden war, ab. Der türkische Außenminister Ahmet Davutoglu sagte indes, "widersprüchliche Signale" aus Israel würden*

*die Verhandlungen erschweren. Er verlangte außerdem eine finanzielle Entschädigung für die getöteten Aktivisten. Die Türkei hatte ihren Botschafter nach dem Vorfall im Mai aus Israel abgezogen. Zuletzt hatte die türkische Hilfe beim Löschen Brandes im Karmelgebirge Hoffnungen auf eine baldige Aussöhnung geschürt. Nachdem Davutoglu jedoch behauptete, Israel hätte der Türkei in einem Notfall nicht so schnell beigestanden, bezichtigte Lieberman ihn der Lüge und gab an, die türkische Regierung habe kein echtes Interesse an einem Ausgleich.*

### **Ankara's clear signs**

"If Turkey truly wished to resolve the ongoing tension between the countries over the *Mavi Marmara*, it could do so in an atmosphere of mutual respect, sensitivity and trust. Instead, Ankara has insisted that Israel issue a humiliating apology and provide compensation in a way that might expose IDF soldiers to international legal action. [...]

And for all of Israel's genuine desire to heal relations with what was hitherto a vital regional ally, meeting those terms would be self-defeating. Apparently, that is Ankara's intention.

Ahead of national elections slated for 2011, Turkey's ruling Islamic party, the AKP, seems to have an interest in capitalizing on widespread anti-Israel sentiment among the more religious rural population which makes up a large portion of its constituency."

JPO 26.12.10 Editorial

### **Lieberman got it right**

"Netanyahu [...] believes we should bow our heads and ignore the ongoing harassment. [...] Lieberman believes that we should not show restraint, but rather, actively counter the anti-Israeli Turkish regime and expose its dangerous nature. I believe that the second approach is the proper one in this special case. [...] Should Israel show restraint and pretend that all is well, the ruling Islamic party will only benefit from it, as it will be paying no price for its belligerence towards Israel. [...]

We should first and foremost condemn Turkey vis-à-vis the new American Congress, in the hopes it would curb future arms deals and consider whether Turkey can even remain a member of NATO. We are dealing with an Islamic regime that decided to boost its position by slamming Israel, and a sovereign state cannot agree to this."

Guy Bechor, JED 30.12.10

### **The price of an apology**

"How can we be right and smart – right in our stance that the violence was aimed at our soldiers who were forced to respond, and smart in recognizing the importance of ties with Turkey and the political direction its leadership is taking? [...]

Acknowledging the tragedy in which nine people met their deaths and paying reparations to their families is one thing. Apologizing for killing them is something else entirely. Furthermore, if we admit that our soldiers committed a wrong, we would be endangering those soldiers, their well-being and their freedom of movement in the world. [...]

Will we receive warm relations and wide cooperation in return? Or will we go back to the cold ties that existed on the eve of the flotilla incident? Is there a place for Israel on Turkey's map of interests where it seeks rapprochement with the West?"

Dalia Itzik, JPO 25.12.10

### **Israel is a victim of Turkey's transformation**

"Even if a formula is found that would satisfy Turkey's demand for both an apology from Israel and compensation for casualties of the Gaza flotilla incident, we will still be facing Turkish policy that is fundamentally problematic.

Turkey today is not the same Turkey we once knew. The country has experienced a major internal change, reflected in its foreign policy: [...] Turkey has transformed into a country that follows an independent policy line - to the point of defying Western interests, flirting with radical forces and displaying hostility toward Israel. [...]

Israel has been a natural victim of this Turkish transformation. Fires engulfed relations between the two countries following Israel's Operation Cast Lead, as a result of widespread pro-Palestinian sentiment in Turkey; and the fires continue to burn thanks to the stalled peace process. Israel is not devoid of errors, but the Gaza flotilla incident was a result of a crisis in relations, not its cause."

Michael Herzog, HAA 20.12.10

## **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 **Verurteilung des ehemaligen israelischen Präsidenten Moshe Katsav wegen zweifacher Vergewaltigung und sexueller Belästigung:***

### **The shame and the praise**

"The conviction [...] is a milestone - for the legal system and the government in Israel. It wasn't only the private matter of citizen Katsav that was weighed in the scales of justice; so were equality before the law and the ability of the investigative, prosecutorial and court systems to handle the rarest of cases, that of the highest level of officials. [...]

Katsav served as a mayor, a member of Knesset, a minister and, finally, as president of the country. [...] He took advantage of his high status [...] to molest women under his authority. He thus brought shame not only on himself, but also on the office from which he was forced to resign [...].

In this court case there is shame, but there is also praise. The police investigators did their work devotedly [...]. The judges were not to be daunted by Katsav's public relations onslaught.

Katsav's disgraceful loss is a victory for the complainants and for law enforcement in striving for justice and for Israeli society, which atones for its flaws even when those accused are found at the highest levels."

HAA 31.12.10 Editorial

### **Katsav's fall**

"It is a bitter end to Katsav's 'rags to riches' story of a poor Iranian immigrant turned president. He had been a trailblazer for ambitious young men and women from Sephardi families who hoped to reach positions of power in what had been an Ashkenazi-dominated political world. [...]

The unanimous conviction on all the major charges [...] raises serious questions about the professionalism of the offices of the attorney-general and the state attorney. In 2007, both had been willing to remove the most severe charges of rape against Katsav within the framework of a plea bargain. [...] It was only the hubris of Katsav, who demanded to be cleared of all the charges against him, that paradoxically resulted in justice being done."

JPO 30.12.10 Editorial

### **A crime against all of us**

"Beyond the revulsion and fury provoked by the despicable crimes committed by Katsav the person, our civilian soul is having trouble sustaining the sense of betrayal and humiliation caused by the number one citizen. [...] Moshe Katsav managed to taint forever the noble institution he was leading, and on top of it, managed to do something that we did not think could be done: Further taint what was left of our innocence. [...] An Israel that chose such man as its president will look absolutely dreadful in the eyes of the world."

Zvi Lenchner, JED 02.01.11

*Über die mögliche Rückkehr in die Politik des ehemaligen Vorsitzenden der Arbeitspartei Amram Mitzna, der in den letzten fünf Jahren Bürgermeister der Stadt Yeruham im Negev war:*

### **The orphaned Israeli left**

"The Labor party has been orphaned (for quite a while now ). A reserve general, glorified for his courageous protest during the first Lebanon war and the impressive years he spent doing good work down in Yeruham, is now its Great White Hope. He comes in place of the other general who disappointed, the one who has nothing whatsoever in common with the left.

But the reception given the honest and humble Amram Mitzna indicates that it was premature to crown him the next savior. MK Eitan Cabel has already warned him not to 'get near' the party. Minority Affairs Minister Avishay Braverman, of course, came out against 'tilting too far to the left.'"

Gideon Levy, HAA 19.12.10

### **Whither Amram Mitzna? Whither the Labor Party?**

"Those who wish Mitzna well are advising him to keep away from Labor. [...] Undoubtedly, Mitzna will have to carefully consider his options, given the dismal state of the political Left in general, and that of Labor in particular. [...]

The question is not whether Mitzna – an outspoken dove – has any chance of winning an election, since no leader of the Left today has any chance of winning an election. The question that must be asked is whether he is the right man to wean the Labor Party ministers from office [...], to reestablish the party as a living body, with a clear-cut ideology and program, and to try to unite all the enlightened left-wing forces in the country under a single roof,

that will offer the public a real alternative, if and when it is ready for it.

Another question is whether what remains of the Labor Party establishment will let him do all these things. Many will answer in the negative."

S.H. Rolef, JPO 27.12.10

### **Amram Mitzna, Labors new-old, great white hope**

"If the Labor Party wants to survive, only Amram Mitzna! [...] What happened? How did this come about? Why now? And why him, of all people?

Because Mitzna went to Yeruham and settled there for five years, and by doing so proved to all those who are now supporting him that he isn't them. [...]

They come in pretending to be concerned and stay on for reasons of power. [...] They are in favor of him because they are opposed to themselves. They want him because he symbolizes for them what they aren't. They are stuck, but he managed to move; they're addicted to power, he isn't."

Alon Idan, HAA 24.12.10

HAA = Haaretz

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JPO = Jerusalem Post

GLO = Globes

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