



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 13/12

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

15. – 27. Juli 2012

1. Anschlag in Bulgarien

Am 18. Juli, dem Jahrestag des Anschlags auf das jüdische Gemeindezentrum in Buenos Aires im Jahr 1994, kam es in dem bulgarischen Badeort Burgas zu einem Selbstmordattentat auf einen israelischen Touristenbus, bei dem sieben Menschen ums Leben kamen und zahlreiche verletzt wurden.

In der Vergangenheit waren eine Reihe von ähnlichen Anschlagversuchen im Ausland vereitelt worden. Geheimdienste gehen davon aus, dass die libanesisch-iranische Hisbollah bzw. der Iran als ihr Auftraggeber dahinter stecken, die sich damit für das Attentat auf Imad Mughniyeh rächen wollen. Das führende Hisbollah-Mitglied war 2008 ermordet worden. Premier Netanyahu machte den Iran für den Anschlag in Bulgarien verantwortlich und versprach, dass Israel mit „großer Kraft gegen iranischen Terror“ vorgehen werde.

Will Israel respond now?

“The [...] burning question at this time is how Israel will respond to the attack. [...] Netanyahu promised to do it ‘in force’ [...].

However, given the current situation in the Middle East, which is both uncertain and sensitive, much thought should be invested here.

The elements that require reconsideration are the Iranian nuke issue [...], including the possibility of a military operation; a possible collapse of the Syrian regime, which greatly concerns Hezbollah and Iran and may prompt both to act in an unpredictable manner; and, of course, the still unstable regime in Egypt [...]. All of the above require Israel to carefully consider whether to respond now, or wait for an opportune time and then settle the score with the perpetrators via a surgical strike.”

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 19.07.12

Time for good judgment

“Despite the pain and the anger, Israel must not repeat the mistake that led it to launch two wars (in Lebanon) following terror attacks. The issue of dealing with the Iranian nuclear program must not be influenced by the attack in Burgas.”

HAA 20.07.12 Editorial

Don't ask why Hezbollah attacked

“Referring to ‘retaliation’ for specific actions is a big mistake on behalf of the press. Just as Mughniyeh was targeted for his lifetime of plotting and committing mass murders of Western ‘infidels,’ and to prevent him from continuing to do so, Hezbollah took aim at a group of Israelis boarding a tour bus [...] as part of a comprehensive strategy to annihilate and/or subjugate Jews and Christians the world over. This is as much its stated goal as that of its patron sugar daddy, the Islamic Republic of Iran. [...] It is Israel's existence that causes soldiers in Allah's army to strap explosives to their bodies [...] This was the case long before Mughniyeh got his just desserts. [...] It is this truism that Netanyahu has been trying to convey to his counterparts in Europe and America, with shockingly little success.”

Ruthie Blum, IHY 20.07.12

The terrorists stick to their formula

“Europe has little tolerance or patience for terror attacks. In pointing the finger at Hezbollah and Iran, Israel wishes to take advantage of this attitude, to sear into European minds who the good guys are and who the bad guys are. Israel seeks to do this for both tactical purposes (fighting terror) and to meet strategic goals (fighting the nuclearization of Iran).”

Yoav Limor, IHY 20.07.12

A summer for security, not for protest

“Yesterday's events are worrying because of the region's increasing lack of stability. Assad's regime hangs in the balance, Iran is allegedly responsible

for killing Israelis abroad, and Israel is approaching decision time on the Iranian nuclear threat. In view of all this, the chances that this summer we'll be able to focus on the social protest and on drafting the ultra-Orthodox are dwindling.“
Amos Harel, HAA 19.07.12

No answer to terrorism

“There is no answer to terrorism. [...] Those who initiate terror always have an advantage over those who try to defend against it. It's impossible to protect every Israeli and every Jew anywhere in the world.
[...]

This is our life, and until we find a way to live with the Arab world, we shall have to learn to sustain such blows, but mostly to prevent them.”
Eitan Haber, JED 19.07.12

Cooperating against terror

“Over the past year, Iran has tried repeatedly to carry out a deadly terrorist attack against Israelis traveling or working abroad. [...] Cities like Bangkok, Burgas, New Delhi and Tblisi lack Israel's security capabilities. Only through closer international cooperation can future attacks conceived by the Islamic Republic be prevented.

One of the ways to enhance such cooperation is via international forums, such as the recently established, US-sponsored Global Counter-terrorism Forum.

Unfortunately, [...] when the forum had its first formal meeting in Istanbul, Israel was conspicuously excluded from the list of participants [...]. Apparently Turkey was opposed to Israel's participation, and the US acquiesced or refrained from intervening on Israel's behalf. [...]

During its long battle against terrorism, Israel has become a leading expert in counter-terrorism. Now the US must decide whether or not it will take a stand against Turkey and other Muslim countries and make Israel a full-fledged member of its Global Counter-terrorism Forum.”
JPO 19.07.12 Editorial

2. Kadimas Regierungsaustritt

Nachdem keine Einigung über ein neues Gesetz zum Militärdienst für ultra-Orthodoxe gefunden werden konnte, hat Kadima die Regierungskoalition verlassen. Die Partei hatte sich der Regierungskoalition erst vor zwei Monaten unter dem Vorsitz von Shaul Mofaz angeschlossen und damit eine Einheitsregierung geschaffen. So waren vorgezogene Wahlen verhindert worden. Kadima

hatte die Einführung der Wehrpflicht für mindestens 80% der ultra-orthodoxen Männer gefordert, Netanyahu lehnte diesen Gesetzesvorschlag jedoch ab. Auch andere Koalitionsziele wie eine Reform des politischen Systems oder eine Wiederaufnahme von Friedensgesprächen wurden nicht erreicht. Nach dem Regierungsaustritt drohten 4 Kadima-Abgeordnete zunächst mit einer Abspaltung von der Partei, um sich dem Likud anzuschließen. Die dafür erforderliche Zahl von 7 Abgeordneten konnten sie jedoch nicht erreichen.

The mask has fallen

“All the expectations and hopes that a broad coalition with the participation of Kadima would bring about changes in the [...] policy of the right-wing [...] government have been proven false. [...]

Netanyahu was given a rare opportunity to free himself from [...] his 'natural partners' from the extreme right and the ultra-Orthodox camp, and to make progress on matters of national interest, such as improving relations with the United States, reviving negotiations with the Palestinians [...]. But Netanyahu chose to throw aside the political gift he had received from Mofaz. [...]

With no possibility of approving a budget or formulating a new law on the draft within the existing political structure, new elections must be held early.”
HAA 19.07.12 Editorial

Mofaz's 15 minutes of fame

“As quickly as Kadima joined the coalition, it withdrew. [...]

It was obvious that Mofaz never intended to legislate a mandatory ultra-Orthodox military draft or to reform the system of government. His only goal was to extricate his party from the certain doom that awaited it in the imminent election — originally scheduled for September 4. Mofaz needed time. [...] The negotiations between Kadima and Likud over the last two weeks were nothing more than a charade.”

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY 18.07.12

Prepare for early elections

“Should the elections be moved forward, and it appears this will happen, Kadima is expected to experience an impressive collapse. [...]

Netanyahu is still [...] the only figure around here perceived by the public as a premiership candidate. In other words, as long as Ehud Olmert is out of the game, Netanyahu is the only alternative.

[...] However, we should keep in mind that Netanyahu also lost points, and possibly Knesset seats. Some two months ago he was en route to

elections, while dictating most of the agenda unrivaled. Yet Kadima's entry into the government and the intensive preoccupation with the draft law and the unwillingness to quarrel with the haredim created a significant headache for Netanyahu."

Attila Somfalvi, JED 18.07.12

Splitting Kadima: An embarrassing maneuver

"In exchange for crossing the aisle from the opposition to the coalition, [Netanyahu] offered four Kadima MKs positions of deputy minister, complete with a car and office. This is a dirty, stinking maneuver that is unfair to Likud ministers and MKs alike. [...]"

It is unclear why Netanyahu got entangled in this mess. What good will seven additional Knesset members, who vote yay or nay depending on the daily price in the political bazaar, do him? [...] The government in its current incarnation already has a stable majority, and even if that majority is insufficient to pass the next budget, salvation will not come in the form of seven renegade Kadima members."

Dan Margalit, IHY 24.07.12

Kadima's weather-vane politicians

"Kadima's disintegration was entirely foreseeable. This group of people with a handful of shared interests could no longer keep it together the moment those interests played themselves out. Political parties cannot survive without a vision and a clear path. [...]"

Kadima's disintegration is an important nail in the Center's coffin. The citizens of Israel are no longer impressed with weather-vane politicians."

Haim Shine, IHY 25.07.12

A vacuum on the political map

"Since it lacks a position and since the surveys give it zero chance of success, there is no more point in Kadima's continued existence.

The disintegration of Kadima leaves an ideological vacuum in the heart of the political map. [...]"

Israel is in need of a political body that will present an ideological and practical alternative to the destructive policies of Netanyahu [...]. The prime minister's repeated attempts to buy a little more time in power by means of dubious coalition deals show that he is afraid of losing the support of the public despite his good standing in opinion polls. This provides us with an opportunity to fill the vacuum being created by the embarrassing disappearance of Kadima from the arena."

HAA 24.07.12 Editorial

Two-party politics

"The latest in a series of political crises afflicting Kadima has made the problems of being a centrist party in our political system abundantly clear.

The two veteran parties, the Likud and Labor represent the two mainstream positions on cardinal issues such as security and socioeconomics. The ideological room between them is simply too narrow and insubstantial to allow for a third party. [...]"

The differences between Yechimovich's social-democratic platform and Netanyahu's more conservative stance are not so marked. [...] Kadima has never fully articulated a distinct socioeconomic platform. [...] On security issues, Kadima has not brought to the political discourse any new ideas either. [...]"

A Knesset resting on two strong political parties – one Center-Left and one Center-Right – would foster a more stable political environment while at the same time give expression to two clear political agendas.

With talk of early elections in the air, serious thought should be given to taking the steps necessary to make a quasi-two-party system a reality."

JPO 23.07.12 Editorial

3. Der Konflikt in Syrien und die israelische Reaktion

In Syrien erschütterte ein Bombenanschlag, bei dem mehrere hochrangige Militärführer getötet wurden, das Regime von Präsident Bashar Assad. Damit könnte sich im Bürgerkrieg eine Wende zu Gunsten der Rebellen eingestellt haben. Im UN-Sicherheitsrat scheiterte indes eine weitere Resolution gegen die Assad-Regierung an einem russischen Veto.

In Israel werden die Entwicklungen in Syrien aufmerksam verfolgt. Sorge bereitet dabei insbesondere Assads Drohung, im Falle einer „ausländischen Aggressionen“ Chemiewaffen einzusetzen.

Als Reaktion auf die Gewalteskalation in Syrien verstärkte Israel inzwischen seine Grenzbarrieren im Norden des Landes.

Assad's days are numbered

"The attack on Syria's emergency cabinet session gravely undermined the regime's ability to function and suppress the uprising. [...] The blow may be so grave that Assad won't be able to recover. [...]"

[...] The expected chaos would mean [...] turning into a failed state where local leaderships or tribes manage affairs while engaging in bloody battles among themselves.

The threat posed to Israel under such state of affairs is that many terrorists affiliated with the Global Jihad [...] will exploit the chaos in order to establish themselves near the Golan Heights border and carry out attacks from there.”

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 20.07.12

Turning point for Syria

“This attack dealt a painful blow to the regime's morale. On the other hand, the Free Syrian Army got the biggest morale boost of the last 17 months. [...]

On Thursday, Assad woke up to a new reality. He understands that he won't be like his father, who was president for life, and that if he doesn't escape in time, he may be joining his father much sooner than he had planned.”

Boaz Bismuth, IHY 19.07.12

Assad is on his way out, but when?

“The assassination [...] appears to be the opposition's most significant achievement yet in the bloody struggle to bring down Bashar Assad's regime. [...]

The rebels penetrated Assad's inner sanctum. [...] This indicates that an insider from the security forces was working for the opposition. [...]

Israel is probably concerned by another point as well. If Assad's regime falls soon, the international community's attention will shift to Syria and to the efforts to stabilize the alternative government in Damascus. This will almost necessarily come at the expense of increasing the pressure on Iran to stop its nuclear program. Thus, the events in Syria could have an indirect impact on the possibility of a confrontation between Iran and Israel.”

Avi Issacharoff, HAA 19.07.12

Syrian nightmare for Israel

“[According to the CIA] the rebel leadership was massively infiltrated by radical Muslim Brotherhood elements. Some of the rebels have a radical agenda, both politically and religiously. [...]

[...] Not only will there be no new, modern Syria, there is a chance it will be a very old Syria, similar to the current Egyptian model or to the Iraqi model, where nobody knows who controls what. The states who offer financial and military support to the rebels have no idea who they're supporting. [...]

For Israel, the day after Assad is a critical matter. Muslim Brotherhood on the Egypt border, Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza, Muslim Brotherhood on the Syria border, Hezbollah on the Lebanon border – this is a nightmare that could materialize.”

Alex Fishman, JED 26.07.12

Strike Syria if needed

“The fall of President Bashar Assad's regime, the government's collapse and the expected chaos in the Syrian state will require Israel to do its best to ensure that the non-conventional arms held by the Syrian military will not end up in the hands of non-state actors.

And if the above requires the use of force in sovereign Syrian territory, so be it. [...]

Initiating military action, crossing the border of a sovereign state and harming it is not pleasant in under such circumstances, yet it would be terrible for Israel to be forced to respond after these awful non-conventional weapons are used - much worse for us, and even worse for our enemies.”

Ariela Ringel-Hoffman, JED 23.07.12

Listen to the IDF chief

“Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz injected a dose of sobriety into the public debate about Syria's stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons. [...] Gantz' [...] main argument is that Israel 'is liable to find itself in a wider conflict than it planned' if it takes military action in Syria. [...]

The test of the IDF sometimes means engaging in action and sometimes refraining from action. In the frenetic atmosphere surrounding Israel's political leadership, Gantz's measured voice has an important contribution to make.”

HAA 26.07.12 Editorial

Israel's Syria dilemma

“Israel has no interest in going to war with Syria — especially a war that could strengthen Assad and extend his days in power — and thus, the relevant option right now is a pinpoint strike.

The estimation is that a precision strike on a convoy could pass 'under the radar' and wouldn't force the other side to respond. [...] They would understand that Israel is serious about its predefined red lines, but also that it wishes to avoid all-out war.”

Yoav Limor, IHY 25.07.12

No reconciliation with the butcher of Damascus

“I must express my profound outrage regarding the behavior of the Western powers, Turkey, the Arab League and Kofi Annan, all of whom are still debating the likelihood of finding a political solution to end the merciless butchering of the Syrian people by the Assad regime.

[...] The time has come for a coordinated military intervention, with or without Russian consent.

[...] Such a course of action will provide the West a momentous opportunity to extract Syria from Iran's

belly, which might force Iran to rethink its regional strategy as well as its nuclear ambition.”
Alon Ben-Meir, JPO 18.07.12

Assad needs loyal officers

"Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement that 'Assad won't be ousted by force gives him breathing room to decide whether to adopt a scorched-earth policy [...] or to begin planning a retreat that would at least ensure his and his family's future. [...]"

That presents the Western powers with a dilemma of their own: Is now the time for military intervention, or is it better to let the parties continue fighting now that the Free Syrian Army is demonstrating improved operational capabilities?

Thus the attack that killed those top defense officials may end up postponing international intervention.”
Zvi Bar'el, HAA 19.07.12

Ramadan in Syria

“The situation inside Syria will get much worse before it can begin, slowly, to get better. Whenever Assad is overthrown the period of rebuilding and recovery will be extremely challenging. Instability in Syria and uncertainty about who is in charge will linger, threatening the Syrian people and neighboring countries. [...] Syrians will forever remember the savagery of the Assad family. They also will remember how the world, especially organizations and individual nations that claim to stand for human rights, abandoned them in their hour of need.”

Kenneth Bandler, JPO 23.07.12

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 den verarmten Kleinunternehmer **Moshe Silman**, der sich während einer Demonstration gegen soziale Missstände am 14. Juli selbst verbrannte und später an seinen Wunden verstarb:*

To each his own desperation

“Israeli governments have in past decades pulled the plug on social services. [...] Each government has cut budgets drastically. [...]"

Much has been written [...] about the ordeal endured by Silman in the bureaucratic labyrinth of the National Insurance Institute, the legal system and the Housing and Construction and Welfare and Social Services ministries. [...]"

These [bureaucrats] have internalized the spirit arising from the government for many years: every man for himself, anyone who needs help is an exploiter, a parasite and a liar. Anyone who wants to make it, can make it, and if he can't make it, that's a sign something is wrong with him; there's nothing wrong with us. We keep the budget trim.”

Merav Michaeli, HAA 18.07.12

Silman is no martyr

“Silman [...] should not become the symbol of a social revolution. [...]"

Things do need to change, but there is a difference between the flames of passion and setting the country on fire in a revolutionary zeal. That demonstrators [...] marched [...] chanting 'We are all Moshe Silman' and 'Let's burn ourselves' is somewhere between disturbing and disgusting. [...]"

Reform needs courageous, and selfless leaders, not martyrs – and certainly not a martyr like Silman. This was no visionary. He was sadly a man who dwelt on old grievances and did not see a future even for himself.

Those who try to exploit Silman's tragedy are doing neither him nor their cause justice. It would be more fitting and helpful to harness the compassion naturally felt when Silman brutally made his story known, rather than fan the flames of dissent and hatred.”

Liat Collins, JPO 20.07.12

*Über die von Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu angekündigten **Steuererhöhungen und Haushaltskürzungen**:*

Tax everyone

“A measured raise in taxes? Not a big deal. [...] But the government must be mindful of two factors that are bound to influence public opinion: First, while it is necessary to avoid overtaxing the rich so that they are not forced to leave the country, the reverence for money [...] must be stopped. Second, the country must start collecting taxes from the Arab and [ultra-Orthodox] sectors, and also from the billions in hard cash that passes through the hands of tradesmen and avoids taxation.

[...] If tax evaders are prosecuted and punished accordingly, billions of shekels will flow into the treasury. [...] All that is needed to collect this money is a few government-appointed inspectors.

Netanyahu, Fischer and Steinitz will succeed if they convince the public that the current financial decrees are being carried out in earnest, and most importantly without bias.”

Dan Margalit, IHY 26.07.12

Back to the old order

“Policy-makers in Jerusalem want us to believe that the new tax hikes and budget cuts were formulated out of pure economic necessity [...].

[But] they try to avoid touching the rich (and the companies tax), whether because of an ideology that says they create the growth that ultimately trickles down to the rest of the people; or because of the need to benefit a sector that knows how to return a favor [...]. The [ultra-Orthodox] will continue to fill the world of welfare payments, support, and give-aways, while being absent from the world of work, the army, and civil society. [...]

We are thus left with the poor and the middle class. Although they represent the majority, they are not the majority of interests in the Knesset.. [...]

The next time you use your credit card and pay more VAT, remember that this was not a decree from on high, or a pure economic policy. It was the policy of political deals.”

Shai Niv, GLO 25.07.12

Über die Ernennung des Colleges der Westbank-siedlung Ariel zur Universität:

Ariel as a showcase for Israel

„Ariel, the new university town, is the symbol of Israel and its true showcase. The settlement [...] was from the start intended to drive a wedge into the heart of the West Bank so that it would be impossible to establish a viable Palestinian state there. The way the college founded there was subsequently turned into a university is a direct continuation of this goal. [...]

The establishment [...] will also provide an opening and a pretext for a widespread international boycott. Until now, every attempt to boycott Israeli academic institutions has failed, thanks to the personal stature of Israeli scholars.”

Zeev Sternhell, HAA 25.07.12

Upgrading Ariel

“Ariel’s campus is graced with the presence of over 13,000 students [...] hailing from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. [...] There are members of the faculty who identify with a wide range of

political opinions. And though the university center is located in Samaria, [...] none of Ariel’s social science or humanities departments are any more politically slanted to the Right than parallel departments in one of our seven institutions with full university status is slanted to the Left. [...]

Some cowardly Israeli academics oppose the idea of forming an Israeli university beyond the Green Line because doing so might increase calls from international academia to boycott other existing and proven Israeli institutions. [...]

Instead of trying to appease Israel bashers or join their ranks, our academics should be protecting academic freedom. Why should a researcher be punished simply because he or she works at a university which happens to be in Samaria?”

JPO 16.07.12 Editorial

HAA = Haaretz; JED = Jedioth Ahronoth; JPO = Jerusalem Post; IHY = Israel HaYom; GLO = Globes; AS = Arutz Sheva

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