



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 21/12

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

14. – 26. November 2012

#### 1. Militärische Eskalation zwischen Israel und Hamas

*Acht Tage lang dauerte die neuste Eskalation zwischen Israel und der im Gazastreifen regierenden Hamas. Während die israelische Luftwaffe Regierungsgebäude, Waffenarsenale und Medienanstalten angriff, schossen die Hamas und andere radikale palästinensische Gruppen Raketen auf Israel.*

*Eskaliert waren die Kämpfe am 10.11. durch den Beschuss einer Militärpatrouille auf israelischem Gebiet durch Hamas-Aktivisten sowie die am 14.11. gezielte Tötung von Ahmed Jabari, Chef des militärischen Flügels der Hamas, durch Israel. Zuvor hatten die Raketenangriffe auf Südisrael, die nach dem Waffenstillstand von 2009 eingedämmt worden waren, zugenommen. Neu an der Eskalation war, dass die palästinensischen Raketen erstmals auch den Großraum Tel Aviv und Jerusalem erreichten. Allerdings konnte das Abwehrsystem Iron Dome einen Großteil der Raketen abfangen. Während der von Israel Operation "Pillar of Defense" genannten Militäraktion wurden ca. 170 Palästinenser und sechs Israelis getötet.*

#### Preserving our unity

"I am [...] newly privy to the pronounced feeling of national solidarity which binds Israelis together in times of war. [...]"

We are aware that despite our manifold internal divisions, enemy fire seeks us Israelis indiscriminately. [...] If we can sublimate our fears and anxieties around an external enemy into determined action against our long-term domestic enemies – societal division, intolerance for the other, and pettiness – then we will have done good."

Hannah Blustin, JPO 21.11.12

#### Netanyahu kept his word

"[Netanyahu] has restored for us, residents of the south and the area around Gaza, a sense of securi-

ty, protection and quiet from terrorist attacks.

I have no doubt that we are all filled with satisfaction and pride that the IDF and the government have taken back the reins and that they will go to war to eliminate the Gaza terror. We deserve to live in peace and tranquility. Our children have the right to grow and develop as other children in the world do, without fear and anxiety."

David Buskila, IHY 15.11.12

#### Swallow your pride, leave south temporarily

"Our leaders [...] are doing us an injustice by not telling us flat out: Get out of the line of fire and temporarily relocate to a community that is out the rockets' range. [...]"

Even if the south's residents leave in droves, out national morale will be rehabilitated quicker than a family that has lost a loved one. [...] Residents of the south are more than welcome to stay in a small apartment in Nahariya where a journalist (smoker) lives with her two children and two dogs. Many other families are willing to host residents of the south. This is also a kind of national morale."

Ariana Melamed, JED 17.11.12

#### Staying here to tell the world

"I [...] have decided to stay, like others, in order to show to ourselves, to the rest of the citizens of Israel, to our allies and enemies all around the world – that the home front is stable and strong.

Even in those moments when the sirens sound in the south of Israel, my home is here, in Beersheba, and I'm not going anywhere.

[...] National morale is actually important to me and it calls the shots in my game.[...] The citizens of Israel, who are being targeted by rockets from Gaza, are strong and stable. We've been through worse, we'll survive this, and we're not going anywhere."

Assaf Farhadian, JED 18.11.12

### **Bankrupting terrorism – one interception at a time**

"Iron Dome is a game-changer that [...] completely undermines the military doctrines of all of Israel's enemies. [...]"

The number of rockets per Israeli fatality has risen from 50-75 (Lebanon and Gaza pre-Iron Dome) to 300 in 2011 (75% interception) and around 500 in 2012 (90% interception), despite Hamas using more lethal rockets.

The strategic implications are that the current rocket-based terror strategy of Hamas and Hezbollah has been rendered both ineffective and economically unsustainable. I estimate it is currently costing Hamas (and thus its patron Iran) around \$5m. (500 rockets at \$10,000 each) to murder a single Israeli." Akiva Hamilton, JPO 24.11.12

### **Time to thank Amir Peretz**

"When Ehud Olmert appointed him defense minister, people said he was forsaking Israel's security. [...] When he left office shamefacedly, people said that Israel's security had been restored and that the appointment of a citizen for such a position would never happen again. [...]"

But now, [...] one thing is clear: Amir Peretz was one of the most important and influential defense ministers the State of Israel ever had, if only for one important decision [...] – developing the Iron Dome defense system, which changed the rules of the game and is saving the lives of many Israeli citizens as we speak."

Avi Shushan, JED 18.11.12

### **The limits of technology**

"The bragging over the performance of Iron Dome [...] is not a substitute for policy that Israelis should be thinking about. One cannot indulge in the delusion that a way has been found to maintain the diplomatic stalemate at a bearable price. [...] A new regional order will be attained only through a balance of interests [...] between the sides. Iron Dome needs to make it possible for the creative minds under its protection to find the proper formula." HAA 19.11.12 Editorial

## **2. Ägypten und USA als erfolgreiche Vermittler**

*Die Türkei, Katar, der UN-Generalsekretär Ban Ki-Moon oder der deutsche Außenminister Guido Westerwelle – eine ganze Reihe von internationalen Akteuren bemühte sich um ein schnelles Ende der*

*Kämpfe. Die maßgebliche Rolle fiel jedoch den USA und Ägypten zu. Präsident Barack Obama telefonierte persönlich mit dem ägyptischen Präsidenten Mohammed Mursi und mit Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu. Außerdem entsandte er Außenministerin Hillary Clinton in die Region.*

*Die Waffenstillstandsverhandlungen stellten damit das Verhältnis der USA und Ägyptens nach Ende der Diktatur Hosni Mubaraks auf die Probe. Mursi, dessen Muslimbruderschaft eng mit der Hamas verbunden ist, hat den Test als Vermittler erfolgreich bestanden. Der Waffenstillstand trat am Abend des 21.11 in Kraft.*

### **The Sunni axis**

"The ceasefire negotiations in Cairo were multinational. [...]"

When Hamas will analyze the gains and losses of the latest round of violence, international recognition of the organization and its needs will be high on the list of gains. Diplomatically, Hamas came out stronger from this round of fighting. [...]"

The operation in Gaza was the first test of the relations between the new regime in Egypt and Israel. [...] The Netanyahu government and the Morsi government – facing each other as well as the American administration - are maneuvering cautiously. [...]"

Morsi is the only one who can claim victory at this point. He established his position as a regional player and a partner of the US administration. He improved his chances of receiving billions from the West."

Nahum Barnea, JED 23.11.12

### **Discovering Mohammed Morsi**

"Operation Pillar of Defense managed to bring Morsi and the White House closer together. [...]"

But Morsi did not really have a choice. Cairo needs \$2 billion of annual aid from Washington. On Tuesday, 24 hours before the announcement of a ceasefire, the International Monetary Fund announced that it would approve a \$4.8 billion loan to Egypt. It's all tied together."

Boaz Bismuth, IHY 23.11.12

### **Egypt embraces Gaza without alienating Israel**

"The points that Morsi lost in recent months when it emerged that he could not stabilize Egypt's economy in short order as promised, he is winning back in foreign affairs. It is enough to look at the impressive solidarity package assembled for Gaza' residents. [...]"

Morsi has shown that it is possible to take a step in favor of one of the sides in the military confrontation without losing the other side. He has succeeded in hugging the residents of Gaza while simultaneously making Israel appreciate him more."

Jacky Hougy, GLO 19.11.12

### **Promises vs. reality**

"The first appeal to Barack Obama came from President Shimon Peres. This is the direct result of Netanyahu's wrong bet, favoring Mitt Romney over Obama in the US presidential election.

The prime minister's associates explained that, contrary to what commentators may think, Obama does not hold a grudge against Netanyahu. But I have a different explanation: Obama did not come to Netanyahu's rescue. He came to Israel's rescue."

Shimon Shiffer, JED 21.11.12

### **Obama's triple crown**

"The cease-fire agreement [...] is a triple-crown foreign policy achievement for U.S. President Obama [...]: 1. It strengthens the moderate posture of Egypt and cements Washington-Cairo relations; 2. It helps extract Israel from a strategic trap of its own design and enhances Obama's stature in both Israel and America and 3. It marks a dramatic return of the U.S. to Middle East diplomacy. [...]

But the main reason why Obama felt it necessary to send someone as senior as Clinton to the area was to prevent the absolute worst-case scenario: an Israeli ground incursion that might have sparked a regional chain reaction that could de-stabilize the Middle East and damage American strategic interests."

Chemi Shalev, HAA 22.11.12

### **Operation rectification**

"The greatest achievement was on the international front. [...] Obama dared not utter a word of condemnation. [...] Erdogan [...] did not dare to open his big mouth. And Egypt's Mohammed Morsi proved that he is not only a believing Muslim president but also a pragmatic and responsible one. Israel exercised its power in a measured way this time, earning legitimacy at home and abroad and causing the global coalition of moderates to act with it, not against it."

Ari Shavit, HAA 22.11.12

## **3. Waffenstillstand zwischen Hamas und Israel**

*Eine Entsendung israelischer Bodentruppen in den Gazastreifen und eine daraus folgende weitere Eskalation konnte durch einen mit Hilfe der USA und Ägyptens ausgehandelten Waffenstillstand verhindert werden. Am 21.11. hatte ein Attentat auf einen Bus in Tel Aviv Befürchtungen geschürt, dass Israel nun Bodentruppen entsenden würde. Die Waffenruhe trat jedoch noch am selben Abend in Kraft.*

*In Gaza wurde das vorläufige Ende der Gewalt als Sieg gefeiert. In Israel zeigten sich Medienkommentatoren eher skeptisch, da unklar blieb, inwiefern die Militäraktion die Schlagkraft und den Kampfeswillen der Hamas eingedämmt hatte. Die Vereinbarung zwischen den Parteien sieht weitere Verhandlungen über die Hauptstreitpunkte vor. So erwartet Israel eine strikte Einhaltung der Waffenruhe und ein Ende des Waffenschmuggels nach Gaza. Die Hamas verlangt das Ende israelischer Militäraktionen im Gazastreifen und die Aufhebung der Blockade.*

### **Using a cease-fire to our advantage**

"If the international community manages to broker a cease-fire, its breach, whether by Hamas or some other group that fires rockets on Israel, will have broken a promise made toward the West and the Arab World, creating legitimacy for Israeli action.

In other words, the unofficial truce that appears to be in the works in Cairo will serve as the foundation for the next IDF campaign. The agreement will try to make it very hard for terrorists to act against Israel from the Gaza Strip and will provide Israel with significant international backing."

Yoav Limor, IHY 20.11.12

### **In praise of Netanyahu**

"The Israel Defense Forces killed and wounded many fewer innocent civilians this time around, and therefore, Israel's international standing also suffered far less damage. [...]

The cease-fire could well herald the onset of a new era, if Israel learns the right lessons: Reliance on military force alone can't solve anything; the new Egypt is a responsible and suitable interlocutor; and even Hamas is a partner when the right opportunity arises."

HAA 23.11.12 Editorial

### **Only time will tell**

"The apparent sense of bitterness among Israel's public following the Cairo announcement of a ceasefire is unjustified. There is a good chance that Operation Pillar of Defense will improve Israeli residents' security. [...]

After the Second Lebanon War, we saw Hezbollah chief Nasrallah worshipped by the Arab world while sitting in a bunker, and the Iranians sending supervisors to ensure that he refrains from engaging in nonsense again. Nasrallah celebrated, but we have had six years of calm so far."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 22.11.12

### **Shaky truce**

"While many Israelis might be angry that the military operation has been stopped, many also heaved a collective sigh of relief that our soldiers' and civilians' lives would not be endangered further. [...]

Everything rests on whether the cease-fire lasts. [...] We call on our leaders to make the most of the period ahead to build up our relations with the outside world, and stand together in a united front against terrorism.

Hamas, Hezbollah and other terrorist groups funded by Iran must know that they dare not attack Israel with impunity again. Next time, the government in power may not let them off the hook so quickly."

JPO 21.11.12 Editorial

### **The head says yes, the stomach says no**

"Our brains support the agreement but our stomachs are uneasy about it.

Our brains are fans because Hamas took a major hit. Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari left the arena forever and most of the long-range rockets Hamas could launch were destroyed. [...]

But our stomachs are churning because even if we won, it was not a decisive victory. In the world of imagery in which we all live, the sense of victory is no less important than the win itself. We must admit that the operation ended with Hamas raising its head. We would prefer to see the operation end with a headless Hamas."

Boaz Bismuth, IHY 22.11.12

### **Lasting truce**

"Israel cannot agree to a cease-fire at any cost. [...] Hamas is also demanding that Israel remove the naval blockade on Gaza. Obviously, Israel cannot agree to such demands as long as Gaza is ruled by a terrorist organization."

JPO 20.11.12 Editorial

### **Israel has handcuffed itself**

"The conclusion of Operation Pillar of Defense didn't meet expectations. [...] We are left with the feeling that an opportunity was missed, if not worse. [...] Israel once again proved it doesn't have the determination or the patience required to win. [...]

Not 120 hours had passed and world leaders who are practically our enemies — Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi is the brethren of Hamas and Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan [...] have become mediators between Israel and a terrorist organization. Furthermore: An Egyptian president is supposed to be the 'arbiter' when Hamas and its colleagues violate the cease-fire agreement.

In other words, Israel has put its own hands in handcuffs. [...] Israel has yet again repeated itself with a partial military success but a diplomatic failure."

Ron Breiman, IHY 22.11.12

### **Mission not accomplished**

"If the mission of Operation Pillar of Defense was to free the civilian population of southern Israel from the recurrent threat of rocket attacks by terrorists from the Gaza Strip, this mission was not accomplished. They are today, after the cease-fire, as exposed to this threat as they were before. [...]

Was there really no alternative at this time to a cease-fire [...]? To bring about a real change in the security situation in the south the rocket arsenal of the Gaza terrorists and their rocket manufacturing facilities would have to be destroyed, and the renewal of supplies through the Sinai would have to be blocked. [...] This [...] would require an incursion into the Gaza Strip by IDF ground troops. [...]

Such an operation would, no doubt, involve losses. But it is high time that soldiers replace the civilians in the front line."

Moshe Arens, HAA 26.11.12

## **4. Der Machtkampf zwischen Hamas und Fatah**

*Der Krieg in Gaza könnte das Machtgefüge zwischen der Hamas und der Palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde unter Präsident Mahmoud Abbas zu Gunsten der radikalislamistischen Partei verschoben haben. Durch die von Ägypten geführten Waffenstillstandsverhandlungen und Solidaritätsbesuche arabischer Politiker erhielt die Hamas neue Legitimation. Auch in der Westbank kam es zu Solidaritätsdemonstrationen. Als die Waffenruhe in Gaza gefeiert wurde, bejubelten Anhänger von Abbas'*

*Fatah den vermeindlichen Sieg ebenso wie Mitglieder von Hamas und Islamischem Jihad. Abbas steht indes als Verlierer da. Zwar plant er weiterhin, die UN-Generalversammlung am 29.11. um Anerkennung Palästinas als Nichtmitgliedsstaat zu ersuchen. Die Hamas zeigte sich angesichts von Abbas Bemühungen skeptisch. Ein Versöhnungsabkommen zwischen den beiden palästinensischen Fraktionen war Anfang des Jahres gescheitert.*

### **Gaza and the West Bank – Hamas and Fatah**

"Hamas committed a historical mistake by not using the 2005 Israeli total withdrawal [...] and evacuation of all settlements from the Gaza Strip for peace and nation-building. [...]"

They severely damaged the Palestinian cause in the West, weakening the perception of Mahmoud Abbas as a Palestinian leader and potential peace partner. [...]"

Our strategic choice should be to strengthen the West Bank and the leading Fatah group. Instead, by defining Gaza and Hamas as the strategic threat to a powerful Israel, we are also, through this operation, strengthening Hamas in the eyes of the Palestinians and other Arabs."  
Uri Savir, JPO 22.11.12

### **How to break the cycle**

"The military operation against Hamas [...] during which IDF attacks [...] also local government institutions, is indicative of a basic flaw in the thinking of Israel's political and military leaders.

This failure [...] is due to the fact that policymakers in Israel do not distinguish between those on the other side who perpetrate acts of violence against Israel, [...] and those who might [...] lead to the establishment of a stable government – even if not necessarily sympathetic to Israel.

The social and political institutions that Hamas built in the Gaza Strip since its establishment, moreover, gave its residents a minimum of services, and since June 2007, Hamas also manages to impose a public order, even if it is one that Israel finds unsatisfactory. Destruction of these institutions now will leave the Gaza Strip in governmental and social chaos which, in the long run, may exacerbate the risks to Israel."

Avraham Sela, JED 25.11.12

### **The 3-state option**

"Arab powers are engaged in a major campaign aimed at empowering the Hamas terrorist movement, thus considerably shifting the power balance

and putting a tangible end to the idea of a single state for the Palestinians.

In this situation, it may be time to start advocating for a three-state option, which would effectively see Palestinian populations ruled by two separate governments. [...]"

Since Hamas maintains in its charter the call for the destruction of Israel and gains a major slice of its credibility by being perceived as a main actor in the so-called 'resistance' bloc, any compromise on its position toward the Jewish state is highly unlikely especially if receiving the backing of a regional superpower. [...]"

A push by the Israeli government for enhanced negotiations over a settlement of issues between Israel and the West Bank may lead to a much needed new design in peace talks. [...]"

Such a deal should no longer be attached to the situation in the Hamas-ruled Gaza strip."

Riccardo Dugulin, JED 11.11.12

### **It's all connected**

"The policy of 'divide and rule' that Israel has adopted in the two parts of the Palestinian Authority can no longer guarantee quiet and stability, or surrender and political obedience from the Palestinians. [...]"

The key to thwarting terror is primarily in the peace process and not in the use of force. As long as Israel relies on Iron Dome as an alternative to a peace initiative, as long as Israel threatens the elimination of the Palestinian leadership [...], it channels the Palestinian protest into demonstrations, riots and terror attacks."

HAA 22.11.12 Editorial

### **Try talking to Hamas**

"It has already become a tradition in our enlightened and democratic country to assassinate any strong Palestinian figure. [...] The Israeli government is doing everything in its power to destroy any possibility for the creation of a real Palestinian leadership. [...]"

You have tried out all the weapons in the world. The only thing you haven't really tried out is the simple, required dialogue. Now is your chance if you still wish to remain relevant in our eyes."

Avner Fainguelernt, JED 19.11.12

### **Hey there, suckers**

"Netanyahu doesn't want to talk to Abbas because he's too moderate and logical. But he has conducted indirect talks with Hamas, turning the organization

into a legitimate political organization that in effect won international recognition. [...] Hamas also scored points in the intra-Palestinian struggle. It is now seen as a courageous organization that fought a mighty army and didn't crumble. [...]

Abbas, meanwhile, is the biggest loser in the operation. Maybe now he regrets that he declared he wouldn't use violence. Maybe he now understands that Netanyahu and Israel only understand force."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 23.11.12

### **Weaken Hamas through diplomacy**

"The most critical injury Hamas could sustain would be if it were cut off from its base of public support. [...]

Offering the Palestinians a political alternative to the militant path offered by Hamas requires speaking to the Palestinian public in the language of diplomacy. When the Palestinian people realize that it is politics, not explosives, that produce results on their behalf, they will stop supporting Hamas. [...]

The most effective move would be moderate support for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' request to the UN General Assembly for recognition of the PA as a non-member state. [...] The fighting has created an opportunity for a diplomatic move undertaken from a position of strength. [...] Supporting Abbas would make it clear to the Palestinian people that diplomacy is the way toward hope and progress."

Ami Ayalon, HAA 19.11.12

## **5. Auswirkung auf die Wahlen**

*Am 22.01.2013 stehen in Israel Parlamentswahlen an. In den Medien wird über den politischen Hintergrund sowie Folgen der Operation "Pillar of Defense" spekuliert. Rechtsgerichtete Parteien, darunter Netanyahus Likud, erfuhren in Kriegszeiten stets einen Aufschwung. Es zeigt sich jedoch, dass Netanyahu und Außenminister Lieberman, die auf einer gemeinsamen Wahlliste antreten, durch die Vermeidung einer Bodenoffensive und Zustimmung zum Waffenstillstand an Unterstützung eingebüßt haben. Nachdem bereits 90% der jüdischen Israelis die Militäroperation vorbehaltlos unterstützten, ist nach dem Waffenstillstand eine Mehrheit der Meinung, dass diese halbherzig war. Sie glauben, dass die Ziele der Operation nicht erreicht wurden. Nur die Arbeitspartei, Meretz und die arabischen Parteien unterstützten die Entscheidung. Andere Parteien, auch die moderaten des sogenannten politischen Zentrums sowie eine Vielzahl von Anhängern des*

*Regierungslagers sprachen sich gegen diese Entscheidung und für eine Fortsetzung der Kämpfe aus.*

### **No room for disappointment**

"The first 24 hours after the cease-fire went into effect belonged to public sentiment. At every street corner, one could hear expressions of disappointment. [...] It is true that Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman promised during the 2009 elections to smash Hamas' heads in. The public can settle the score with them for breaking their promise. [...]

Polls [...] indicate that the public's disappointment has weakened the joint Likud-Yisrael Beytenu party significantly, but not irreparably. It showed that Labor Chairwoman Shelly Yachimovich lost votes, but can also recover. It suggested that former Kadima Chairwoman Tzipi Livni's popularity has overtaken current Kadima Chairman Shaul Mofaz's and has bankrupted newcomer Yair Lapid. [...]

Perhaps the poll also indicated that Meretz needs to learn that even the Zionist Left don't like the eternal 'anti, anti, anti' mantra against using military force."

Dan Margalit, IHY 23.11.12

### **Casualty of War**

"Within a matter of days – the election 'agenda' reverted back to the same security issues that have informed previous decades and a steady polarization of the Israeli electorate. [...]

It should be different. In the summer of 2011, one in seven Israelis took to the streets to express their dissatisfaction with the way Israeli society was going. [...] This should have informed the elections campaigns of all political parties.

For these elections might have been about the kind of society we want in Israel. [...]

Human lives were not the only casualties of the missiles that fell in Beersheva and the air force sorties in Gaza. Rather we may have lost that unique opportunity provided by democracies to discuss the kind of society in which we want to live and what we might do to make sure that it does not remain a dream."

Alon Tal, TOI 22.11.12

### **Operation Peace for Netanyahu**

"If there is no war against Iran, how can we arrange things in a way that suits an election campaign by the right wing coalition partners [...]? So here, with perfect timing, organized precisely now, just two months before the elections, comes an escalation in the south. [...] The war had a transparent political

aim: To inflame the public atmosphere and in this way get more votes in the Knesset elections. [...] War always was [...] a very powerful tool for wiping social problems off the table."  
Tamar Gozansky, HAA 16.11.12

### **Operation Pillar of Unity**

"The axiom has it that only the right can make peace for Israel, because middle Israel will only believe that the deal is as good as it can be if it has been negotiated by a skeptical, hawkish leadership. Operation Pillar of Defense would suggest that only the left can make war for Israel, because the international community will only accept that a resort to force was unavoidable if it is reluctantly championed by our peace-loving moderates.

The conclusion is as familiar as it is unrealistic. Facing the immense challenges that now confront it, Israel desperately needs to be governed, at least in the short-term, by a consensual, middle ground coalition — one that works toward creating a climate in which negotiations can move forward, without deluding itself about the intentions of the other side and without neglecting Israel's day-to-day and long-term security needs. [...]

Instead, in two months' time, we seem likely to choose ourselves another deeply fragmented parliament, peopled by small groups of warring politicians. [...] Or maybe, just maybe, they can recognize the gravity of the hour [...] and mount a political Operation Pillar of Unity."

David Horovitz, TOI 25.11.12

### **Operation Peace for Election**

"Netanyahu and Barak know they are now at the height of their achievements. There has been an impressive hike in their public approval ratings [...]. Forty-two percent of the public would be happy to see Barak continue as defense minister after the election, and we're talking about someone who, until a week ago, was flirting with failing to meet the electoral threshold.

The right has also seen its electoral prospects go up, with a solid majority over the center-left. Who needs a ground operation when the political map looks so favorable?

[...] Netanyahu and Barak would be pleased to get unwritten 'understandings,' unsigned and unofficial, regarding a short cease-fire - say, two months and two days, until January 22."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 20.11.12

### **What's wrong with election considerations?**

"The claim that 'election considerations' were behind the decision to launch an operation is common [...]. The problem is that this claim shows a lack of understanding of democracy. [...] Like every Israeli, [Netanyahu] wants quiet, and like every politician, he wants to be reelected. His reelection depends on the people, so his actions are indeed colored by election considerations, not only now. [...]

In fact, election considerations in a democratic country are what ensure that the people's opinions are taken into account. [...] Thus, if the government launched the operation partly because it was considering the people's mood, this helps implement the general will. [...]

You can criticize Operation Pillar of Defense, but to say the main reason was election considerations is a cynical approach that misses the essence of democracy and the complexity of the conflict."

Avi Shilon, HAA 20.11.12

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