



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 09/13

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

28. April – 14. Mai 2013

1. Israels Luftangriffe auf Syrien

Innerhalb von 72 Stunden hat die israelische Luftwaffe Anfang Mai zwei Angriffe auf Ziele in Syrien geflogen. Medienberichten zufolge galten die Angriffe iranischen Waffenlieferungen, die für die libanesische Hisbollah-Miliz bestimmt waren. Bereits im Januar hatte Israel einen ähnlichen Angriff durchgeführt.

Israelische Regierungsquellen betonten, dass Israel keine Eskalation im Konflikt mit Syrien und der Hisbollah wünsche und sich nicht in den syrischen Bürgerkrieg einmischen wolle. Ungeachtet dessen hatte die Regierung in der Vergangenheit wiederholt klargestellt, Waffenlieferungen aus Syrien bzw. Iran an die Hisbollah unter keinen Umständen zu dulden.

Im Gegensatz zu früheren Angriffen, bei denen es keine offiziellen Stellungnahmen gegeben hatte, reagierten die Regierungen in Damaskus und Teheran scharf auf die jüngsten Offensiven und bezeichneten die Angriffe als eine "Kriegserklärung" und "eklatante Verletzung internationalen Rechts".

Gleichzeitig mehren sich die Beweise, dass im syrischen Bürgerkrieg Chemiewaffen zum Einsatz gekommen sind. US-Präsident Barack Obama hatte dies vorher als "rote Linie" bezeichnet, die eine amerikanische Reaktion nach sich ziehen würde. Bisher blieb diese jedoch aus.

Exercise discretion

"In such a complex situation, there is increased risk that strategic weapons, such as ground-to-ground and ground-to-air missiles, would be transferred to Hezbollah. Given the risk of further escalation that might include another war in Lebanon, there is a place for exerting pinpointed and straight-forward force, without unnecessary verbal provocations.

Force must be used with discretion. The Israeli government must make sure that its military operations

will not spark an escalation that could set the whole region aflame."

HAA 06.05.13 Editorial

Assad and the Arab Spring's pincer

"Until recently, Israel has opted to avoid preemptive attacks on weapons convoys lest such a move trigger a painful Syrian retaliation. [...]

The new approach Israel has subscribed to [...] was motivated by the new window of opportunity presented by [...] the Syrian revolution. [...] After all, the Syrian military is in decline and has lost some of its firepower. [...] Thus, its ability to retaliate in the face of an Israeli strike has been severely compromised. [...]

It appears it is actually Hezbollah that faces a dilemma. By introducing new rules, Israel hopes to disconnect [Hezbollah] from the Syrian oxygen tank."

Eyal Zisser, IHY 06.06.13

Hezbollah bogged down in Syria

"Two years after the outbreak of war in Syria, the Shia movement [the Hezbollah] is a significant force fighting alongside the Damascus regime. They see it as a holy war against extremist Sunni organizations, which form the strike force of the rebels fighting Syrian President Bashar Assad. [...] For Nasrallah, this is an all-out war within Islam not a struggle between this or that regime.

For this reason, Hezbollah is in no rush to threaten action against Israel [...].The complication of a confrontation with the IDF would deflect from the strategic choice to save their man in Damascus. [...]

Assad has Hezbollah's best fighters by his side and Iran and Moscow supplying weapons and diplomatic support. Together with them, Assad thinks he has a chance to win the battle of his life and he also feels secure enough to rile the US."

Jacky Hougy, GLO 06.05.13

Message to Assad

"That fact that Israel has been identified as the responsible party could carry negative ramifications. The Assad regime is now seeking to exploit the raids to tie the rebels to 'the Zionist entity.' The regime may succeed in tricking Arabs in the region into believing that Syrian opposition forces are receiving Israeli support and thus delegitimize the rebels.

Already, there are cracks in what was once a broad Arab consensus against the Assad regime. [...] And with no sign that the Assad regime is about to fall, pressure is growing to force an end to the conflict, even if Bashar Assad remains in power."

JPO 05.05.13 Editorial

Falling into Assad's trap

"Assad [...] will not rush to direct his missile launchers towards Israel. But the strike will definitely stabilize him in the eyes of his people. At times of an external crisis, the inclination of a nation – any nation – is to unite around its existing leader. [...]

Why did the Israeli government decide now of all times to attack the weapons, which according to foreign reports are not the most dangerous arms to be transferred over the years from Iran to Hezbollah? [...]

A threatened leader usually acts out of madness rather than out of reason, and so Israel's military activities in Syria could easily turn into the match that will ignite the next war, even if that was not our intention."

Orly Azoulay, JED 06.05.13

Time to foment war in Syria

"The constant refrain that 'Israel is not interested in escalation' will only guarantee [...] further escalation. [...] The problem is that Iran, Hezbollah and Syria may all conclude that they could get away with a very limited strike on Israel [...] and then with lightning speed try to issue their own version of 'Syria is not interested in escalation.' [...]

There is a way to deter Syrian retribution: Start to realize (out loud, that is) that this might actually be an opportune moment to provoke a war. [...]

The paradoxical bottom line: only by convincing Assad and his allies that Israel is actually itching for a fight can we successfully deter Syrian retribution, now and in the future. If, on the other hand, Israel continues to stress that it only wants to return to quiet, this only encourages Assad to engage in small-scale retaliation."

Cameron Brown, HAA 09.05.13

Who dares, wins

"It has been proven once again that if Israel does not implement a policy of military deterrence in the

face of enemy states, no one will do it for us. [...]

Strikes of this kind [...] prompt a degree of fear that is central to our power of deterrence. [...]

The latest attacks [...] took the wind out of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's keffiyeh. [...] If we are wise to continue patiently with this tack as long as necessary, we could very well write a new chapter to the books on fighting terror, and spearhead a process that could prevent Islamist nations, like Iran, from using terror organizations as proxies."

Zvika Fogel, IHY 05.05.13

An embarrassment of threats

"Hezbollah has thousands of missiles, and they haven't been fired at Israel since the Second Lebanon War. [...] The destruction of Syria's missiles hasn't reduced the threats Israel faces one bit. What we need now is to hope that the really big threat, the Israeli government's decision-making process, won't lead to the ultimate explosion."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA 08.05.13

First Syria, Mr. President – then Iran

"The truth is, this is just a pilot run. Israel is prodding U.S. President Barack Obama, catching him in his use of the words 'red line,' challenging and provoking him to reach the real thing: bombing Iran. Israel wants to reveal the president's nakedness on the Syrian matter in order to present him as naked on the Iranian issue. Perhaps he won't bomb Syria, as Israel requested; the key thing is that he should bomb Iran. This policy of manipulating the American president, at the expense of Syrians' blood, perhaps will pan out in the short run. But it will also make Israel even more loathed in Washington."

Gideon Levy, HAA 02.05.13

2. Erneuerung der Arabischen Friedensinitiative

Auf einer gemeinsamen Pressekonferenz mit US-Außenminister John Kerry hat Katars Premierminister Scheich Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani die Friedensinitiative der Arabischen Liga wiederbelebt. Die Initiative von 2002 sieht vor, dass alle arabischen Staaten Israel anerkennen und die Beziehungen normalisieren werden, sobald ein israelisch-palästinensisches Friedensabkommen unterzeichnet wird, das einen palästinensischen Staat mit Ostjerusalem als Hauptstadt garantiert.

Hinzugefügt wurde der Initiative ein wichtiger Passus: Ein palästinensischer Staat könne demzufolge auf den Grenzen von 1967 mit "geringen Änderungen" und "minimalem Gebietsaustausch" basieren. Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu kommentierte die erneuerte Offerte nicht, seine Berater zeigten

sich jedoch wenig optimistisch. Justizministerin Tzipi Livni hingegen, die mit den Verhandlungen mit den Palästinensern beauftragt ist, begrüßte die Ankündigung in einem Gespräch mit Kerry. Der US-Außenminister wird in den kommenden Wochen nochmals nach Jerusalem und Ramallah reisen, um zu versuchen, die Friedensgespräche wieder anzustoßen.

Waiting for a call from Bibi

"Ever since the initiative was first presented, most Israeli decision-makers, as well as the public, have regarded it with doubt and suspicion. This was not the result of a rational consideration [...]; it's an emotional reaction. [...]"

The story of the Arab Peace Initiative is the story of Israel repeatedly missing an opportunity. [...] The gauntlet has been thrown down to Israel. It's about time we picked it up."

Elie Podeh, HAA 13.05.13

Modified Arab League stance offers peace chance

"When the Saudis presented their 2002 Peace Plan, it served as a way to sell to America and the West the idea that they wanted peace. Saudi Arabia was at the time receiving a lot of flak for its ties to 9/11 [...] and sought to ensure it would not be on the 'wrong' side of the President Bush's War on Terror. [...]"

Consequently, for years Israel and its supporters (the writer included) have dismissed the initiative as a ploy [...] while keeping a safe distance from actually having to commit to supporting tough negotiations. [...]"

No [...] the Arab countries have affirmed that they are willing to [...] endorse a peace process based on the API but with minor land swaps.

This breakthrough puts the ball back into both the Israelis' and the Palestinians' court. Israel now has to take the Arab countries seriously due to their endorsement of essentially a mirror image of America's framework for negotiations."

Brian Reeves, JPO 06.05.13

New initiative; same old tune

"Not only was this declaration neither dramatic nor historic, it heralded absolutely no change in the Arab attitude toward the conflict with Israel. [...] Among other things, it is important to recall that the initiative also included the insistence on the Palestinian right of return, even if the wording was a little vague. [...]"

The 'window of opportunity' touted by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will most likely remain closed as long as the Palestinian leadership and the Arab

League, including all its members, refuse to accept Israel's existence."

Zalman Shoval, IHY 02.05.13

Israel against peace

"The crisis in Syria and the Iranian threat, require the American president to expand the circle of partners and include the leaders of Arab nations. It turns out that the Arab leadership [...] has never given up on its hope to advance negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. [...]"

The Arab leaders [now] made an important addition: agreement to minor border corrections and the exchange of territory between Israel and the Palestinians. In doing so the Arab League adopted the position of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and provided him with critical support for a limited concession on territory. [...]"

Israel still insists on holding negotiations on all the core issues at once and rejects Abbas' demand to negotiate on borders and security issues first. In doing so the government strengthens its rejectionist image at the same time the territories are starting to heat up. Such a government is a threat to its citizens."

HAA 03.05.13 Editorial

Holding a referendum

"It is highly unlikely that the new Arab League peace initiative will lead to substantive and direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Too many obstacles stand in the way, not the least of which are the unceasing incitement in schools and in official Palestinian media against Israel and Israelis and the split in leadership between Hamas-controlled Gaza and the Fatah-controlled West Bank. But if and when a peace agreement is formulated, it can only be implemented if it receives broad and unequivocal support from Israelis. [...] Only a referendum could provide the legitimacy for the implementation of territorial compromises and other aspects of a future peace agreement with the Palestinians."

JPO 30.04.13 Editorial

The imaginary invalid

"There would be a land swap, meaning that some Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories would remain a part of Israel. It sounds tempting, as long as you ignore the uncompromising accompanying stipulation that the Palestinian right of return would be honored inside the Green Line, and that the Palestinians would not recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

In other words, if you agree to commit suicide, you will get a land swap as a reward."

Stop saying no to the best deal ever

"Since March, 2002, the Arab Peace Initiative has provided the most strategic and hopeful framework for a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israel conflict. [...] And yet official Israel remains at best lukewarm – if not downright indifferent. [...]

Inescapably, therefore, it appears that those who claim that this Netanyahu government, like its predecessor, really doesn't want to advance on the path to peace may be right. [...] In this way, it is not only compromising Israel's character as a democratic state and the homeland of the Jewish people, it is also threatening its ultimate survival."

Naomi Chazan, TOI 05.05.13

Arab initiative - so what?

"John Kerry asked that the speech include a statement regarding the Arab League's agreement to 'minor' land swaps as part of any peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians, and the Qatari PM complied. The 'gesture' illustrates the Arab League's desperate need to divert international attention from the Arab Spring. [...]

But [...] the Arab League failed to establish peace between the Arabs, so what are its chances of establishing peace between Israel and the Palestinians? Its peace initiative is aimed at weakening Israel just before Syria is blown to smithereens and drags the neighboring Muslim states [...] to the bonfire.

According to the Arab peace plan, we will withdraw to the 1967 borders in exchange for regional peace – only to wake up the next morning and find out that the region does not exist anymore."

Hagai Segal, JED 04.05.13

3. Einschnitte im Staatshaushalt

Die israelische Regierung hat den doppelten Staatshaushalt für 2013 und 2014 beschlossen. Das Budget muss nun bis Ende Juli von der Knesset verabschiedet werden, sonst kommt es zu Neuwahlen.

Der von Finanzminister Yair Lapid entworfene Haushalt sieht eine Reihe von Sparmaßnahmen vor, die vor allem die Mittelklasse betreffen werden – obwohl sich Lapid's Partei Yesh Atid gerade deren Wohlergehen auf die Fahnen geschrieben hat. So sind unter anderem Kürzungen beim Kindergeld und bei der Nachmittagsbetreuung für Schulkinder vorgesehen. Auch sollen Einkommenssteuer um gleichmäßig 1,5 Prozentpunkte und Mehrwertsteuer von 17% auf 18% Prozent erhöht werden. Insgesamt sollen die Staatsausgaben 2013 um 2% und 2014 um 3% gesenkt werden.

Angesichts der angestrebten Sparmaßnahmen sind Tausende von Menschen landesweit auf die Straße gegangen. Eine Protestbewegung wie im Sommer 2011 hat sich aber bisher nicht gebildet.

Netanyahu's boomerang

"Lapid, as opposed to the label people are trying to attach to him, is [...] an ideological finance minister: He says he has a vision he seeks to fulfill during his term. A vision focused on improving the standard of living of the working Israeli and his reciprocal relations with the State. [...]

Lapid's approach towards the budget as a tool for fulfilling his vision is accepted by the large majority of his supporters and voters. [...] His public indecisions are not perceived as zigzagging, but as real misgivings. The painful steps he is about to take are not affecting, according to additional surveys, his reliability."

Sever Plocker, JED 07.05.13

Lapid is in love

"Lapid is lucky [...]. He became finance minister during a serious budget crisis that can only get better from here. The deficit is enormous, but it also represents an enormous opportunity; Lapid can implement reforms and structural changes that would have been impossible under different circumstances. Indeed, revolutions come only in times of crisis, and they are what make or break politicians. [...]

And so Lapid shouldn't worry too much about being criticized and vilified for making budget cuts. [...]

Lapid also got lucky with the makeup of the government. We've never had such a right-wing government, [...] so many ministers who support a market economy, competition, breaking monopolies, destroying pyramids. And all of these together can lead to significant growth."

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA 10.05.13

National priorities

"A state budget should reflect the priorities of the state. [...] In our case, it's budget first, according to narrow political interests, and thereafter fiscal constraints and preferences are turned into policy. [...]

The new state budget should reflect [...] necessary priorities – peace, education, social justice, democracy and economic reform, and lead to: a substantial cut in defense spending; [...] the settlement and yeshivot budgets; [...] in all ministries except education, health and social services [...]; an increase by 1 percentage point of the income and value-added taxes [...].

Given the high deficit, stringent measures must be taken now while redirecting the economy to new

directions – to a free economy, a socially empathetic economy and a peace economy. Only a reform of policies can lead to a healthier, vibrant and fairer economy."

Uri Savir, JPO 09.05.13

Sharing the burden

"All of these measures will hit the poor disproportionately hard and the middle class will find making ends meet increasingly difficult. [...] Many of Israel's largest and most profitable businesses hardly pay any taxes at all. [...]

Therefore, the discriminatory and distorted aspects of our tax system need to be replaced with a clearer, simpler and fairer tax code. [...]

Perhaps when Israelis see that big business is also being forced to share the burden to ensure that the State of Israel remains strong, the bite of tax hikes and budget cuts will be a little easier to bear."

JPO 07.05.13 Editorial

Unpopular, yet responsible

"Now people will say that the budget harms the middle class. [...] But [...] there is really no way to deal with a deficit of some NIS 40 billion [...] with a budget that will be applauded. [...]

The budget is indeed depressing, but it's depressing mainly because things are bad, and when things are bad you cut back. [...]

It's clear that Lapid submitted a responsible budget rather than a popular budget which would have put the economy in danger. [...] If there is something Lapid is paying the price for now, it's not the budget he is submitting – it's the illusion he created during the election campaign, that the deficit could be overcome just by cutting back on haredi stipends."

Hanoch Daum, JED 10.05.13

Lapid succumbs to compromise

"The old politics prevail, even when Yair Lapid sits in the finance minister's office. Deals, compromises, and tactics are part of the job. [...]

Declarations like, 'acting against coalition money and against the special interests' sound like something straight out of Yesh Atid's campaign brochure.

But the same words were spoken by the man who gave the political promise to his colleague Naftali Bennett that money will continue to flow to the settlements. [...] Lapid looks like just another man who prefers spin to reality; words over deeds; imagery over truth. We already have such politicians in the government. The question is why we need one more."

Avi Temkin, GLO 07.05.13

Back to Rothschild Boulevard!

"We've been blinded by Lapid's slogans and his war against the ultra-Orthodox. Maybe now the so-called middle class will finally learn that with these budget cuts it's on the way to being the underclass, and the war against the weak will provide no respite.

We must not leave Rothschild Boulevard empty. Get the tents ready!"

Oudeh Basharat, HAA 10.05.13

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 Entschluss des Wissenschaftlers **Stephen Hawking**, eine **Konferenz in Israel zu boykottieren**:*

Hawking's hypocrisy

"Hawking, by declaring his participation in the BDS movement against Israel, is engaging in pure hypocrisy. For it is only thanks to the Israeli, Jewish mind, can the paralyzed Hawking communicate with his surroundings. [...]

The famous scientist uses Israeli technology which serves as the basis for the computer software that helps him live his life. [...] We too, therefore, call on Hawking, if he still has an ounce of intellectual integrity, to also boycott and perhaps disconnect from the Israeli technology so crucial for him. [...]

They must stop using Israeli medicine and boycott computers and other high-tech equipment, all fruits of the Israeli mind. [...] If you want to boycott, sanction and divest, then do it all the way."

Yaakov Ahimeir, IHY 12.05.13

Mr. Hawking, you are late to the party

"For a second or two, Hawking's move worked. Pundits roared, Israeli academics protested, the public was outraged. For one second. And then, they moved on. [...]

He is much, much too late. [...] Over the course of the past several years, the occupation has become less and less of an issue for the vast majority of Israelis. We don't talk about it, we don't think about it. [...]

Outside of Israel, of course, it's a whole other story. People outside of Israel, Stephen Hawking probably

among them, find it difficult to understand how Israelis can just go about their business, dealing with internal problems like recessions or separation of religion and state."

Asher Schechter, HAA 12.05.13

*Über das **neue Design israelischer Banknoten**, auf denen nur europäischstämmige Juden (Ashkenazi), aber keine nordafrikanischen (Mizrachi) abgebildet sind:*

Money talks

"I [...] feel the sweltering heat of this endless battle for diversity in Israel's cultural landscape. [...] The answer to Sari Raz, who defended the committee's choice by saying it chose only poets whose works are taught in schools, is that the exclusion of such poets will not disappear unless there is a complete overhaul that would result in a new attitude toward the rich cultural heritage that each immigrant community brought with it. [...]"

I could go on and on and list all the Mizrahi poets who have been sidelined despite their glorious heritage.

Pundits and others in the field of poetry are going to lash out at me for letting the racial genie out of the bottle. I plead guilty as charged. The genie is alive and kicking inside the bottle. For goodness sake, let it out already. [...]"

I don't want a Mizrahi judge or a Mizrahi poet. I don't want a fig leaf that would cover the sheer nakedness of the Bills Committee; I want justice and truth to prevail."

Gabi Avital, IHY 30.04.13

Counterfeit culture

"Netanyahu, who was taken aback by the storm, pulled Rabbi Yehuda Halevy out of his hat as a worthy representative of Mizrahi poetry, and made an unauthorized promise to include him the next time the currency is redesigned. Netanyahu isn't really bothered by cultural discrimination; he was simply apprehensive that the 'ethnic genie' would once again come out of the bottle and wreak some political damage. [...]"

Therein lies the flaw in the current Mizrahi demand for equal representation. It makes an issue of symbolic representation on banknotes, rather than taking a swipe at the substantive exclusion – the one rooted in the educational system, which has kept, and continues to keep, Mizrahi culture at the margins of Israeli awareness. [...]"

But while the issue of Mizrahi representation caused public controversy, the total exclusion of Arab figures from Israel's currency generated almost no response. That some 20 percent of the state's popu-

lation is not represented in its system of national symbols is evidence of the institutionalized discrimination against them.

The storm over currency poses a much bigger challenge to Israel's educational and cultural leaders than merely a commitment to fix the injustice in a decade. It obligates them to reevaluate school curricula and fix the country's knowledge infrastructure."

HAA 30.04.13 Editorial

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