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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

25. August – 21. September 2013

1. USA erwägen Angriff auf Syrien

Nachdem es am 21. August zu einem Giftgasangriff auf Siedlungen der syrischen Region Ghuta nahe Damaskus gekommen war, bei dem hunderte von Menschen getötet wurden und für den Syriens Präsident Baschar al-Assad verantwortlich gemacht wurde, rechnete man in Israel mit einem amerikanischen Angriff auf Syrien. US-Präsident Barack Obama hatte den Einsatz von Chemiewaffen zuvor als "rote Linie" bezeichnet. In der israelischen Bevölkerung wurde befürchtet, dass eine amerikanische Intervention zu syrischen Schlägen gegen Israel führen würde. Andererseits waren sich alle Kommentatoren einig, dass nun eine militärische Reaktion der USA unumgänglich sei, falls Obama seine Glaubwürdigkeit nicht verlieren wolle. Die israelische Führung hielt sich jedoch bedeckt und kommentierte die Möglichkeit eines US-Angriffes nicht, auch nicht nachdem Obama ankündigte, den Kongress über einen Angriff abstimmen lassen zu wollen. Die amerikanische Pro-Israel-Lobby AIPAC warb jedoch bei Kongressmitgliedern für einen Angriff.

In Israel wird der Umgang mit Syrien immer wieder in Zusammenhang mit dem iranischen Atomprogramm gebracht. So sagte Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu, die Entschlossenheit, die die internationale Gemeinschaft gegenüber Syrien zeige, werde direkten Einfluss auf den Iran haben.

Obama to Congress: Thank you for sharing

"By saying he'd act only with congressional authorization, [Obama] instantly shared the risk. [...] Suddenly they have to think about options, consequences and scenarios [...]. Back in session, they're faced with dilemmas they don't understand and that cross party lines. [...] Because of President Obama's politically-brilliant decision to share responsibility for

military action with Congress, the legislative branch got the wish it had hoped for — but also the responsibility. [...] Welcome to democracy."

Walter Reich, TOI 10.09.13

The buck stops elsewhere

"From my couch in Tel Aviv, I swear I could hear Assad laughing from his Damascus palace. Even if the U.S. still ends up striking Syria in a few weeks, the message of deterrence will resonate less than if it had been delivered now [...].

If the new standard is going to be that Congress has to give prior approval to limited airstrikes that involve no troops on the ground, then tyrants around the world have reason to celebrate. With Congress already barely functional in the U.S. domestic sphere, I cannot imagine it will be able to effectively handle an increase in foreign affairs duties."

Barney Breen-Portnoy, IHY 02.09.13

An opening in Syria for Obama

"Many people worldwide, and of course in Israel as well, criticized Obama's chronic hesitation and reversals and volunteered to give him advice. And indeed, it's hard to forge a coalition, either at home or abroad, when the leader is stammering.

Nevertheless, there's something refreshing in a leader who isn't happy about rushing into battle, and keeps examining all the alternatives until the very last moment."

Aner Shalev, HAA 11.09.13

Weak and unreliable ally

"The fact that Obama blinked first while staring eye to eye with the axis of evil, should be a wake-up call to US allies such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Egypt that they are alone facing Iran and other jihadists and that Obama does not have their back. These Arab countries must put their past

hatred and differences with Israel aside and join together with it to protect their own self-interests and future survival against Iran."
Shoula Romano Horing, JED 07.09.13

Iran is testing Obama in Syria

"Assad might have some incentive to test Obama's seriousness about his redline, but Iran has even more reason, as the regime finds itself in a very critical situation. Its military nuclear program is reaching a dilemma: Having a bomb or not. Iranian officials [...] dream of having a nuclear bomb and believe Obama is not as serious as he should be, that he will avoid military conflict at any cost. The US president repeats constantly that a nuclear Iran is his redline, but what if the hardliners demonstrate that Obama is not serious about his redlines? If he doesn't react to Assad, hardliners in Iran consequently receive confirmation: Obama is weak and will avoid any military confrontation. The immediate consequence and the first action to be taken will be the acceleration of the military nuclear program in Iran."

Saeed Ghasseminejad, JPO 09.09.13

Emasculating America

"Why has Obama so wantonly and care-freely allowed America's international reputation and awesome global power to waste away? The answer is that Obama is clearly out to emasculate America; to doggedly drag it down, purposefully so. [...]"

From day one, Obama has not been comfortable with American leadership in world affairs. He explicitly views America's past global performance to be arrogant and high-handed; to be militaristic and not completely moral. [...]"

His path, then, is to 'fundamentally transform' America's place in the world; [...] to strip the United States of its superior position."

David M. Weinberg, JPO 19.09.13

Obama's strategy

"Obama's decision to seek congressional approval – rather than a sign of weakness of wishy-washy indecision – might instead be the wise move ahead of such a potentially volatile action. [...]"

Any force that could conceivably replace Assad would not lead to more stability in the region, and could bring about even more conflict and unrest. It's also unclear at this stage who could fill Assad's shoes. That's why the West has been – and continues to be – equivocal about getting involved militarily in Syria. [...]"

A decision by consensus in Congress, rather than a unilateral one by the president, would send that message more forcefully."
JPO, 01.09.13

Lights, camera, inaction at the White House

"From Israel's perspective, the implications of the collapse of the America-as-world-policeman system, coupled with the Iranian threat, are very serious. Having AIPAC join the congressional tussle could turn out to be a big mistake. Not only does AIPAC's involvement drag Israel into the eye of the media storm, making it difficult for Jerusalem to continue with the same low-profile policy it has led with until now, but such engagement also has the potential to evoke demons from the not-so-distant past. During the second Iraq War, Israel was accused, through no fault of its own, of prodding the George W. Bush administration into launching the offensive.

Involving AIPAC now could give Israel's enemies in Washington the chance they need to bring out the battering ram to wear at the foundations of U.S.-Israeli relations."

Abraham Ben-Zvi, IHY 11.09.13

AIPAC is not Israel

"Obama [...] is waging a desperate war [...] against the American majority that opposes military action in Syria. [...]"

In the context of this effort, Obama asked the American Israel Public Affairs Committee to use its influence with Congress to obtain approval for an attack on Syria. Members of the pro-Israel lobby unleashed a torrent of letters arguing for a strike. [...]"

As a result, a congressional veto or, alternatively, a poor outcome from a strike on Syria, will undermine not only Obama but also AIPAC. As U.S. citizens, AIPAC lobbyists are entitled to express their views to, and to try to influence, elected officials. [...] They must understand that AIPAC is not Israel, and it is not authorized to express Israeli policy. [...]"

Only the American people are sovereign to make decisions of war and peace regarding their country's army. Israelis and Israeli decision makers should give up any pretense of intervening."

HAA 10.09.13 Editorial

2. US-russisches Übereinkommen über syrische Chemiewaffen

Bevor der amerikanische Kongress über einen Angriff auf Syrien abstimmen konnte, wendete der russische Präsident Vladimir Putin eine US-

Intervention mit einer diplomatischen Offensive ab. Auf der Basis seines Vorschlages handelten amerikanische und russische Vertreter ein Abkommen aus, laut dem Syrien seine Chemiewaffen unter internationale Kontrolle stellen soll. Syrien kündigte daraufhin seinen Beitritt zur Chemiewaffenkonvention an. Einen amerikanischen Schlag auf Syrien schloss US-Präsident Obama damit vorerst aus. Laut eines Berichtes des Wall Street Journal hat Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu sich gegenüber US-Außenminister John Kerry für das Abkommen ausgesprochen. Sein Sprecher dementierte dies jedoch. Auf einer Pressekonferenz sagte Netanyahu, dem syrischen Regime müssen alle Chemiewaffen entzogen werden. Das russisch-amerikanische Übereinkommen müsse aber nach seinen Ergebnissen bewertet werden.

There is a new sheriff in town

"Putin utilized Obama's hesitation and his weakness, and at a time most convenient to him, pulled the rug from under Obama's feet.

[...] His unwavering support of Syrian President Bashar Assad [...] was meant to show the world that unlike Obama, Putin is loyal to his allies, and being under his protection pays off. [...]

Today, Putin is the world's strongman and its most influential person. That is bad news. While Putin's Russia is not a Soviet totalitarian dictatorship, it is still a far cry from being a democracy. [...] This is bad news for Israel as well. Putin does not have any of the ideological hostility to Israel that the USSR did, but he remained a steadfast ally to the axis of evil that includes Israel's archenemies Iran and Syria."

Uri Heitner, IHY 15.09.13

Putin's desperate attempt to save Assad

"Russia's compromise offer to disarm the Assad regime of its chemical weapons presents a great opportunity, but it is also very dangerous. [...]

Syria will be given time to hide a certain amount of its chemical weapons and the Russians will not agree to pop inspections by international monitors [...].

It should also be noted that in order to attack Israel, Syria would not need a large amount of chemical weapons. [...] In addition, should the negotiations on an agreement drag on, Syria will be able to transfer at least part of its chemical weapons arsenal to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Such a development would of course be of great concern to Israel. As far as the

Jewish state is concerned, this is the worst possible scenario."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 10.09.13

Spasibo, Moscow

"Mother Russia [...] has saved the world from an unnecessary war. [...]

More blood would have been spilled in vain and the Middle East would have endured another pointless bombardment, only to sustain the image of Barack Obama and the 'status' of the United States. [...]

The old world, in which the U.S. did whatever it wished [...] is approaching its end. [...] Welcome (back) to the world of multiple superpowers. [...]

Occasionally, it is a good idea to try diplomacy, too. Russia could play the constructive role it is playing in Syria in Iran as well. We need to encourage its involvement and not mark it as an enemy from the start."

Gideon Levy, HAA 12.09.13

Assad's future is looking bright

"Assad does not need to use his chemical arsenal to crush his rivals, nor does he need it to deter Israel. That is probably why his Russian patrons had agreed -- with his consent and approval -- to surrender Damascus' doomsday weapons, thus affording him immunity from the missiles the Americans had trained on him and that if fired, could have brought the Assad regime to its end.

The meaning of this deal is clear: After two years of soul-searching, Washington has decided that it wants to keep Assad in power. Much like Israel, the U.S. is trying to disguise its decision with tough rhetoric over the Syrian regime's crimes against its own people; and much like Israel, the U.S. wants to clip Assad's claws, so that while he will be able to maintain his grip on power and fight al-Qaida's operatives in Syria, he will be left weakened, unable to pose a real threat to them and their allies."

Eyal Zisser, IHY 15.09.13

Murder will only continue

"There is nothing surprising about this tempting and indecent proposal. [...] The civil war in Syria will end long before Assad will be fully disarmed of his chemical weapons stockpiles. He will stall for time, deceive the inspectors and, in the best case scenario, hand them only some of the stockpiles. [...]

The West does not really want to act, and it is willing to buy any Middle Eastern trick."

Hagai Segal, JED 12.09.13

Putin and Assad outmaneuver the West

"Let us say that the initiative gains momentum and somehow results in an international effort to force Assad to give up his chemical weapons, or put them under supervision. Trust him to water it down, and trust Putin to give him cover for his tricks. [...] If in the extreme scenario, Assad is forced to destroy his chemical weapons, trust him to keep back some toxins in good hands, for example, with his true friend, Mother Russia. After all, this crisis is also a confrontation between Moscow and Washington, and not just between Washington and Damascus."

Jackie Hougy, GLO 10.09.13

Netanyahu's strategic success

"The truth is that Israel, in contradiction to Netanyahu's belligerent declarations, does not want to attack Iran, not alone and not with the help of the United States. [...]

The disarmament agreement in Syria produces a result more effective than any bomb – even if it is not implemented in its entirety. [...]

Since Russia's status in the world has been strengthened as a result of the agreement, it is likely to join a similar move against Iran. [...] In addition, Obama's foot-dragging before the attack also reinforces the threat against Iran. Had the U.S. attacked in Syria [...] we can reasonably assume that the administration would have been too exhausted to embark on another campaign."

Avi Shilon, HAA 22.09.13

Farewell to chemical weapons

"The chemical disarmament of Syria will [...] give Israel the opportunity to revisit its position on the Chemical Weapons Convention. [...] The official stance is that as long as enemy countries possess these weapons, Israel will not ratify the convention. [...]

A show of 'ambiguity' with regard to chemical weapons serves no deterrent purpose for Israel. [...] Israel has other means of deterrence that can provide a response to chemical weapons. [...] The ratification of the convention will save Israel the costs of developing, manufacturing and storing chemical weapons, if it possesses them, and will show that the country is doing its part in the general effort to rid the region of weapons of mass destruction."

HAA 16.09.13

3. 40 Jahre seit dem Jom Kippur Krieg

Im September jährte sich der Jom Kippur-Krieg (nach dem Hebräischen Kalender) zum 40. Mal. In den israelischen Medien wurde dies zum Anlass genommen, um den Krieg und seine Auswirkungen zu reflektieren. Am 6. Oktober 1973 waren syrische und ägyptische Streitkräfte in die Golanhöhen und den Sinai einmarschiert, Gebiete, die Israel 1967 erobert hatte. Obwohl Israel die Angreifer schließlich zurückdrängte und der Krieg nach weniger als drei Wochen endete, wurde er in den arabischen Ländern als Sieg dargestellt, während ihn Israel, das vom Angriff überrascht worden war und eine sehr hohe Anzahl an Toten und Verletzten zu beklagen hatte, als tiefen Einschnitt und psychologische Niederlage empfand. Der Krieg führte somit bei Teilen der politischen Führung zu der Erkenntnis, dass Israel sich nicht nur auf militärische Mittel verlassen konnte. Fünf Jahre später wurde der Friedensvertrag mit Ägypten unterzeichnet.

National tshuva

"The lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War were radically divergent for the Left and the Right. [...] For the Left, the lesson to be learned from the high price paid to win the Yom Kippur War, which included the death of nearly 2,700 soldiers, was that Israeli society must not fall into complacency and a false sense of invincibility. Instead, Israel must actively pursue peace and be sensitive to opportunities for reconciliation with our neighbors. [...]

The Right's conclusion from the Yom Kippur War, in contrast, was that there was a need to combat the feeling of weakness and vulnerability that pervaded Israeli society after the war. Gush Emunim was formed in the wake of the war and the push to build Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza began in earnest only in 1974."

JPO 12.09.13 Editorial

The false 'fiasco' of the 1973 war

"An unprecedented victory, salvation of the state thanks to the bravery of the soldiers and officers [...] is the true narrative of that war. But in practice, a false, manipulative narrative has taken over the Israeli mind – the fiasco narrative. [...]

After 40 years of self-chastisement, it is time to free ourselves of the shell shock that's been undermining our self-confidence, and even our way of life. We should cast off the false narrative and adopt a balanced, optimistic narrative that believes in the histor-

ic destiny of the Jewish people and its inalienable right to self-determination in the Land of Israel." Israel Harel, HAA 13.09.13

Then as now

"It is 40 years since that war, and once again Israel is preoccupied with it. But mostly we wallow in the failures in intelligence, in battlefield maneuvers, [...] in remembering the dead. [...] Israel continues to turn away from what is most important: that Israel bluntly and brazenly ignored attempts to reach a diplomatic solution in the years before the outbreak of the war. That is the greatest of all sins. [...]

The spirit of the times has not changed: Israel is convinced it will live by the sword forever, that it cannot change its situation, that its ostracism is the world's fault, not its own, and that the only way is by force of arms."

HAA 13.09.13 Editorial

The children of winter 1973

"Militarily, [...] Israel won the Yom Kippur War. From a surprise attack on two fronts, with lacking intelligence and many casualties, the IDF moved to a sophisticated offensive and concluded the war with Damascus and Cairo in jeopardy. [...]

Psychologically, on the other hand, we lost a slow and creeping defeat for the past 40 years. It is not the occupation from 1967 that is destructive, but the fervent skepticism which grew within us in 1973. [...]

The children of the winter of 1973 were born into a country where there is no faith in the leadership [...]. A country where one must not talk about victory and decision, because in the battlefield there are only losers and commissions of inquiry. [...]

We have developed in all fields, we're just stuck with the psychology. We have overcome the war, but not the price of its self-examination."

Yoaz Hendel, JED 13.09.13

Six years of utter blindness

"I was a part of the collective blindness that prevailed between 1967 and 1973. [...]

[After the war] I recognized how insane it was to believe that schools in the Golan Heights could protect schools in the Galilee. We quickly retreated from the Golan Heights. The Syrian army reached Kibbutz Gadot in the Hula Valley and the IDF's withdrawal was actually delayed because our soldiers were defending the civilians and their children living in those settlements. The settlements became an impediment to security. [...]

My life changed that October in 1973. Though I was infuriated by our rather smug leadership, I was angrier with myself, that I had been a part of the herd. [...] I was angry that I had trusted the very people who spoke with total confidence about security, policy, the economy and society."

Yossi Beilin, IHY 20.09.13

Israelis don't forgive Golda

"After the war, [then Prime Minister Golda] Meir was full of sorrow. [...] But she did not feel bad about the flawed policy moves she had made before the war. And she also did not understand why the nation was not rejoicing over the brilliant military victory. In the four decades since that victory, there have been no further wars between the IDF and regular Arab armies and the Arabs have been forced to rely on terrorist gangs and rockets. [...]

Most Israelis belatedly understand that the Yom Kippur War was a big victory. While remembering the many fallen, the average Israeli not only sees depressive darkness, but also the light of reality."

Dan Margalit, IHY 13.09.13

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 ein **Urteil des Obersten Gerichtshof**, mit dem ein Gesetz aufgehoben wurde, das die **Langzeithaftierung von illegalen Einwanderern** ermöglichte:*

Court sees African migrants for what they are: people

"The heart of Monday's [...] ruling, which overturned a law allowing asylum seekers to be jailed for three years without trial, was the spotlight it trained on Israel's unacceptable policy: On one hand, the state recognizes that most of the people held under this law can't be deported, yet on the other it refuses to examine their asylum requests. Instead, it treats them like criminals. [...]

As for the state's claim that most of these asylum seekers are labor migrants rather than refugees,

[...] this claim is dubious as long as the state both refuses to examine their asylum requests and refrains from deporting them. [...]

It must be hoped that the cabinet and the Knesset will seize this opportunity to develop a policy that takes Israel's obligations toward asylum seekers seriously and upholds both their rights and the rights of residents of south Tel Aviv, rather than pitting these two disadvantaged populations against each other."

Aeyal Gross, HAA 17.09.13

A worthy, but dangerous decision

"The High Court's decision [...] was received with mixed emotions and responses. [...]

The infiltrators' suffering is harming the already low quality of life of veteran residents of south Tel Aviv. It is unfathomable that the poorest residents of this city are forced out of public areas just because foreigners have now taken over the city square. [...]

What we are talking about is 55,000 African infiltrators who pose an economic, social and demographic burden. [...]

The court's decision could also be interpreted in Africa as a sign of Israeli weakness, prompting more infiltrators to leave their homes and families and try their luck in Israel. The message that came out of the High Court halls this week may be glamorous, but it is also dangerous."

Dan Margalit, IHY 17.09.13

*Über die **Bewegung Im Tirzu**, die linke Aktivisten wegen Verleumdung angeklagt hatte. Das Gericht entschied nun, dass es sich nicht um Verleumdung handele, weil Im Tirzu tatsächlich "**faschistische Züge**" habe:*

Deter the silencers

"In the case of Im Tirzu, the court determined that there is indeed a certain common denominator between the organization's positions and certain principles at the foundation of fascism. [...]

In fact, according to the ruling, the very filing of the suit shows some of the activities and principles of the organization, which under the guise of 'strengthening the values of classic Zionism' conducts campaigns to silence criticism.[...]

It is not enough to reject suits whose purpose is to silence criticism or to rule that it would have been better not to file the suit. To protect freedom of speech, the courts must make it more difficult to file unwarranted libel suits whose purpose is to prevent criticism."

HAA 11.09.13 Editorial

Bad justice, free speech in Israel

"Haaretz editorialized that this decision would 'deter the silencers.' They highlighted that the judge had supported free speech.[...]

But the court's ruling in fact constitutes a grave danger to freedom of speech; the judge didn't throw out the case based solely on free speech grounds [...]. Instead, the judge noted that there were indeed similarities between Im Tirzu and fascist groups.[...] The Left's rejoicing that the 'silencers' are being deterred completely misinterprets the ruling. What the Left has now been handed by the judicial system is simply carte blanche to slander anything on the Right as 'fascist,' because the judicial system has concluded that anything Zionist, i.e. anything that favors the national interest over the universal, is 'fascist.' However the ruling shields the Left from similar accusations, unless it can be proved that a left-wing organization is favoring one group over another."

Seth J. Frantzman, JPO 15.09.13

*Über den ehemaligen Verteidigungsminister **Ehud Barak**, der den ehemaligen Generalstabschef **Gabi Ashkenazi** des Versuchs beschuldigt, die politischen Entscheidungsträger zu untergraben:*

To prevent another 'putsch' attempt

"Is it really forbidden for members of the military, whatever their motives, to follow up information about breaches of the law by public figures, and to spark a chain reaction that leads to the dismissal of such figures from elected office? [...]

In the Harpaz affair – named for the forger of a document purporting to detail Barak's plans for a mud-slinging campaign against Ashkenazi – Barak wants to focus attention on the relations between Ashkenazi and himself instead of on his own actions vis-à-vis the cabinet. If there was a 'putsch' [...] it should be sought in Barak's efforts to expropriate powers that belong to the entire cabinet. [...]

Barak demanded that the regulations involving the supreme command [...] state that the chief of staff must translate into military action the decisions of the defense minister, and not those of the civilian political authority as a whole."

Amir Oren, HAA 25.08.13

HAA = Haaretz; JED = Jedioth Ahronoth; JPO = Jerusalem Post; IHY = Israel HaYom; TOI = Times of Israel; GLO = Globes

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