



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 17

Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

18. September – 2. Oktober 2007

1. Netanjahu zu IDF-Einsatz in Syrien

Netanjahu hat das israelische Schweigen zum Überflug israelischer Kampfjets über syrischem Luftraum gebrochen und brachte damit andere Knesset-Abgeordnete gegen sich auf. In einem Interview mit der Nachrichtensendung „Mabat“ am Mittwochabend sagte er über den Einsatz in Syrien, er sei vom ersten Augenblick an der Sache beteiligt gewesen und habe dieser seine volle Unterstützung gegeben. Er habe dem Premierminister sogar persönlich für den Einsatz gratuliert.

MKs furious at Netanyahu

“Israel’s politicians were shocked and angered Wednesday by Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu’s “slip of the tongue” regarding the reported IDF operation in Syria last week. Netanyahu was the first Israeli official to break the silence and admit that the overflight in Syria took place. ‘Netanyahu’s uncontrollable desire to take credit for accomplishments proves, and not for the first time, that he puts his personal interest ahead of the State’s. Netanyahu pulled a Bibi, he blabbered himself senseless,’ said MK Ophir Pines-Paz (Labor). MK Avshalom Vilan (Meretz-Yahad) also criticized the opposition leader, saying it surprised him that he did not know how to “keep his mouth shut.” Ronny Sofer, JED 20.09.2007

Bibi is looking for love

“Sometimes Netanyahu tends to let out secret information to present himself in a prestigious light. Everyone needs validation from others, some more so and some less, but with Netanyahu this need borders in dependency. Time after time it takes over, drives him crazy and disconnects him from reality. That is what happened to him last Wednesday, when he was dragged into a small

provocation by Haim Yavin (“You didn’t have a good word for Olmert, perhaps because he’s doing well in the opinion polls at your expense.”) Netanyahu confirmed for the first time the report of an Israeli Air Force action in Syria (“Here, too, I was involved from the first moment, and I gave my backing”) Ehud Asheri, HAA 23.09.2007

Olmert’s secret weapon

“The phrase ‘a good political week for Olmert’ became an understatement. Not long ago it was written in these pages, in a similar context, that Bibi is Olmert’s ‘lifesaving drug’. On Wednesday evening Netanyahu proved that his place in Olmert’s health basket – and indirectly also in Barak’s – is ensured. He will always be enlisted to help, when needed and also when not.

At the critical moment, he will always kick over the bucket that is full of himself and go back to zero. This is what happened now.

But the present incident is far worse. Of all people, the security-minded Netanyahu, a person who knows something about state secrets, has pushed himself into a corner with MK Zahava Gal-On of Meretz. He broke the silence that the public admires, came out looking like someone who wants to enjoy a piece of glory, and once again sent out the sort of hysterical vibes of someone looking on despairingly as Olmert and Barak win points, while he, poor thing, remains outside.

Netanyahu read, heard, panicked and ran to the TV studio he knows so well [...]. Poor Bibi.“ Yossi Verter, HAA 21.09.2007

Bibi's morning glory

"His response was honest and accurate: 'I was a partner to this matter from the beginning and I gave it my support.' However the atmosphere produced by the response created the impression Netanyahu wanted to create: That he was partner, and as our wise men say, everyone wants to take credit for a successful mission. According to Netanyahu, this was a successful operation.

Truth is, Netanyahu's sin is not terrible and many politicians may have, perhaps, acted in the same manner. However, his supporters, particularly his aides, should tell him that this is an exact copy of the 'old Bibi', an image he wanted to get rid of so badly – that is, jumpy and taking credit for others' achievements. But this is exactly the old Bibi – and we believed or wanted to believe that he was reborn." Eitan Haber, Yedioth Ahronoth 20.09.07

2. Ahmedinejad in New York

Die Columbia Universität hatte am 21.09.2007 den iranischen Präsidenten Ahmedinejad zu Besuch. Im Namen der Redefreiheit wurde ihm die Möglichkeit gegeben eine offizielle Ansprache zu halten. In den israelischen Zeitungen wurde dieses Ereignis diskutiert und die Beweggründe der Columbia University sowie der Rahmen der Redefreiheit analysiert.

Ahmadinejad's overlooked message

"During his visit to New York this week, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attacked every basic assumption upon which Western civilization is predicated.[...] Ahmadinejad is not interested in convincing the US government or even the majority of Americans to convert to Islam. He is interested in convincing adherents of totalitarian Islam and potential converts to the cause that they are on the winning side. He is interested in demoralizing foes of totalitarian Islam within the Islamic world and so causing them to give up any thoughts of struggle.[...] Perhaps the central reason that Ahmadinejad's message, and the hundreds of thousands of voices echoing his call throughout the world, are so dangerous is because the Free World is making precious little effort to assert its own message.[...] In spite of what the West would like to believe, Ahmadinejad and his allies from Ramallah to Waziristan, from Gaza to Kandahar to Baghdad,

are not negotiating. They are fighting. Rather than ignore them or seek to find nonexistent common ground, we must defeat them - first and foremost on the battleground of ideas." Caroline Glick, JPO 28.09.2007

Ahmedinejad and the city

"What has become clear beyond doubt this week, if there had been any doubt, is that Ahmadinejad, petty or not, cruel or not, is above all a world-class celebrity of the sort that a New York backdrop only flatters.[...] Nonsensical chatter about academic freedom alongside the tabloid Simpson story. Like the publisher that wanted to publish Simpson's book, If I Did It, Columbia University simply could not resist the temptation.[...] Did they expect that Ahmadinejad would suddenly decide to tell them the truth, of all things? Did they believe themselves when they said that they would ask him "probing questions?" Did they think that he would in fact answer them? Did they know that he would lie, but not care, as long as he came?[...] On one hand, it is possible to hope that no great damage was caused. He came, he spoke, he left. We can only guess what impression was made in New York by this momentary visitor who, like Madonna in Tel Aviv, appeared for a moment and immediately disappeared, leaving behind a mysterious smile and heaps of words open to interpretation." Shmuel Rosner, HAA 26.09.2007

Columbia was right

"What chutzpah, what hypocrisy!" said everyone: Politicians in Jerusalem and Washington, American-Jewish leaders, students at Columbia University – how dare a distinguished university invite Iranian President Ahmadinejad to deliver a lecture? He must be silenced![...] Notably, freedom of speech is not meant to protect common and agreed-upon views. The objective of the freedom of speech is mostly to allow the voicing of different and annoying opinions.[...] When is it proper to limit the freedom of speech? When there is substantive danger that the words will encourage listeners to engage in violent or racist acts. Does anyone believe that Ahmadinejad's American audience was convinced that their country is the "kingdom of evil" and that Israel should be wiped off the face of the earth?[...] Therefore, Columbia University was right to invite the Iranian president to appear at its campus, just like all the official bodies in the United States and other countries are right to refrain from inviting

him.[...] It was important that many people went out to protest against Ahmadinejad in New York, and it was important to see people not letting him evade all the tough questions at Columbia University. Yet it was no less important to let him speak." Avi Weinberg, JED 30.09.2007

Columbia's `realpolitik`

"In addition to anger, it is hard not to react with sadness to one of America's great universities succumbing to the utter distortion of the hallowed value of free speech.[...] We do not know if Columbia would have in fact invited Hitler to speak, had its officials known that he was presiding over mass murder, not to mention being at war with the US, at the time. We would like to think that such an august institution of higher learning would not. [...] In Cuba, HIV-positive citizens have been quarantined as a health measure. In China, part of the government's one-child policy is support for forced abortions. Would Columbia be interested in hearing a defense of these policies from these governments? To take some perhaps less extreme cases, would a tobacco executive, a fur coat manufacturer or a scientist who rejects the contention that global warming is man-made be given as respectful a hearing as the president of Iran will be? [...] Columbia is not standing up for free speech, but for realpolitik in its crassest form: might makes right. Or in this case, terror makes right. It is a shame that the governor and police department of New York see no choice but to grant police protection for this visit, and that the US State Department would not restrict the Iranian leader's presence to the UN building itself." JPO, 23.09.2007

3. Vorbereitungen für Nahost-Gipfel

Am 19. September kam US-Außenministerin Condoleezza Rice nach Israel und in die PA, um den in zwei Monaten stattfindenden Friedensgipfel in Washington vorzubereiten. Von ihrer Amtskollegin Livni wurde sie mit dem Hinweis empfangen, dass Israel nur an einem Gipfel der Erklärungen und nicht an Grundsatzabkommen interessiert ist. Der Besuch von Rice war Anlass für die Medien, den grundsätzlichen Sinn des Friedensgipfels zu diskutieren.

Rice as a supporting actor

"Rice's immediate schedule is filled to bursting with meetings on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. It's as if all the other problems of the world have been

resolved. [...] Maybe all this is a sign that Rice is serious in her intention to enlist the world in supporting the "bilateral": possibly a sign that the talk about the "bilateral" is no more than camouflage for an attempt at a more blatant intervention, an unnecessary push that she will give Abbas, and mostly Olmert, during their meeting. [...] We can praise Rice for being willing to take such a risk. Even more, it is possible to question the wisdom in giving so much weight to a plan in which the external actors are beyond her control. [...] Besides Olmert and Abbas - a rather fragile support structure - Rice is basing her future success on another flimsy stalk: Saudi Arabia.[...] These are the first signs of what will happen in the coming weeks. A lively Middle Eastern bazaar, at the end of which, we hope, will emerge some form of document and some kind of meeting." Mazal Mualem, HAA 19.09.2007

A ritual move in a virtual process

"The present diplomatic frenzy that is supposed to lead within two months to a "meeting" (a term that embodies modest expectations) or an ambitious "summit," does not reflect gradual but genuine progress, but rather a virtual process.[...]

The main promoter of the November meeting is U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The Bush administration has transferred the focus of American policy from Europe to the Middle East, and it is preoccupied with four interrelated issues: Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. Bush and Rice have tough demands. They call Olmert, and he reports. The same is true of Abbas, of course. With his honesty and in his willingness to try to find a realistic solution, Abbas is ostensibly a refreshing change when compared with Yasser Arafat.[...] Therefore they are talking once again about "a vision" and "a horizon" and "core issues." And the innocent term "path," which is liable to recall the outmoded road map, has been replaced by "route," meaning the successful route to establishing a Palestinian state. It would be encouraging, were it not for the dangerous gap between the great expectations and the helplessness of Abbas and of his prime minister, Salam Fayad, a good guy and a talented economist, a combination of Stanley Fischer and Avishai Braverman; in other words, not a national leader for a crucial period." Amir Oren, HAA 25.09.2007

Don't be petty or stingy

"While recognizing that this is indeed the case, and assuming that Israel has a clear interest in the peace conference taking place and succeeding, it is important that the government make every attempt to bolster this diplomatic effort and avoid actions that may undermine it.

First, Israel must show openness and flexibility in the negotiations on the formulation of the declaration of principles that will be presented at the conference.[...] Second, questions of prestige and political infighting must not be allowed to foil the diplomatic effort. There is no real dispute among Kadima ministers, or between Kadima and Labor, on the desired formula for a settlement.[...] Third, it is important that the efforts to bolster Abbas and the moderates in the West Bank are also felt on the ground, not only heard in speeches and statements.[...] There are still two months before the conference in Washington, and it is important that this time is used to further the process in which the conference is central, and to prepare for the next stages in the negotiations for the solution of the conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian state." HAA 25.09.2007

Eine Gelegenheit

„Am Vorabend der Einberufung der internationalen Konferenz in Washington werden die israelisch-palästinensischen Verhandlungen angekurbelt. Die Zweifel, die Zögerungen und die Unschlüssigkeit sind klar und verständlich, aber es sieht so aus, als müsse Israel trotz der Enttäuschungen und gescheiterten Versuche der Vergangenheit diese Gelegenheit nutzen. Allem Anschein nach findet in der PA eine Veränderung statt. [...] Der Terror aus Judäa und Samaria hat zwar vor allem Dank des Einsatzes der israelischen Sicherheitskräfte abgenommen, aber auch eine palästinensische Bemühung ist sichtbar. [...] Der jetzige US-Präsident ist ein wahrer Freund, der sich der Gefahren und der Möglichkeiten, diese zu bannen, sehr wohl bewusst ist. Israel darf seine restliche Amtszeit nicht ungenutzt verstreichen lassen.“ Dov Weißglas, JED 23.09.2007

HAA = Haaretz

HZO = Ha Tzofe

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JED engl. = www.ynetnews.com

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

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