



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 20

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

29. Oktober – 11. November 2007

#### 1. Annapolis Gipfel

*Mit dem Nahen der von den USA einberufenen Nahost-Konferenz in Annapolis werden die Diskussionen um das Ziel des Gipfels und seine Erfolgsaussichten hitziger. Es scheint sich abzuzeichnen, dass auf dem Gipfel eine gemeinsame Erklärung unterzeichnet werden wird und ein Prozess zur Lösung der Endstatus-Fragen in Gang gesetzt wird. In einer Ansprache am 4. November erklärte Premierminister Ehud Olmert, Ziel müsse sein, eine Lösung des Konflikts vor Ende der Amtszeit des US-Präsidenten George W. Bush anzustreben. Diese Erklärung wurde von vielen Seiten mit großer Skepsis betrachtet, sind doch die Hindernisse auf dem Weg zu zwei Staaten, die friedlich Seite an Seite miteinander leben, sehr zahlreich.*

#### Whose Road Map?

"As did his pronouncements last August in Jericho, where Prime Minister Ehud Olmert indicated a willingness to withdraw from an area equivalent to 100% of the occupied territories, his latest declarations to the Saban Forum [...] sounded promising. [...] He expressed the hope that the two-state solution would be achieved before US President George W. Bush's term ends in January 2009.

[...] In the end, the Palestinians may get 80-90% of the West Bank, but they do not get a viable state. They will have sterile swatches of territory whereas Israel retains control of the borders, movement of people and goods both within the Palestinian state and between it and the countries around, much of the country's arable land, almost all its water, the Palestinians' airspace and even control of their communications. The Palestine state is deprived of a viable economy. Given that 60% of Palestinians

are under the age of 18 and that mini-state must absorb hundreds of thousands of refugees, it's prospects for being a viable, stable and truly independent state are nil given the unspoken parameters outlined in the Bush letter.

[...] The crucial question is: will it be a viable state? If it's true that Olmert intends that Israel permanently retain the settlement blocs, an Israeli "greater" Jerusalem and effective control of the entire country to the Jordan River, then we will merely be substituting a sophisticated form of apartheid for occupation. The devil is in the details." Jeff Halper, JEP, 06.11.2007

#### Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a Flop

"A parallel can be drawn between these days, before the Annapolis summit, and the hours that preceded the decision to embark on the Second Lebanon War. Just like that fateful July 12, 2006, when the government felt it had no choice but to attack Hezbollah, Ehud Olmert is now leading the country to an international meeting in the United States, assuming he has no choice. Just as the abduction of two soldiers drove the prime minister and his colleagues to squeeze the trigger, now the security and political circumstances have set them on a path of no return to Annapolis. The two efforts are very likely to have similar results: bitter disappointment.

[...] To a certain extent, it appears the same syndrome is leading to the Annapolis conference: It is meant to relieve immediate pressures, lacks any chance of achieving long-term results, and is mostly meant to serve the political needs of some of its main participants. There is one difference between the two events: At Annapolis, the limited result is known in advance, so there are apparently no

expectations of disappointment. Herein lies the catch.

The gloomy forecasts by the Defense Minister, Military Intelligence and the Shin Bet on what may follow the Annapolis summit are meant to let them say, "We told you so." They need this alibi to save them from any complaints the day after the summit. The defense establishment has announced that the Palestinians, and the leadership of Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayad, will not budge from the positions set by Yasser Arafat. They, too, are demanding the right of return, an Israeli withdrawal to the final centimeter of territory, and claim all of East Jerusalem, including the Western Wall, as part of their capital. The problem is that even if this assessment is perfectly accurate, it reflects not only the intelligence on the Palestinian position but also the psychological and ideological state of its Israeli authors. It proves that the Israeli leadership, too, has not changed its approach to the Palestinians and its willingness to reach a comprehensive settlement with them. [...] Uzi Benziman, HAA, 11.11.2007

### The Annapolis Trap

"Olmert does not believe he is facing the end of his political career, and he actually intends to use Annapolis in order to stop the decline in his status. To that end, he intends to talk about far-reaching principles, including those that pertain to the "core issues," but he has no intention of committing to anything.

If this is his intention, reality will disappoint him. Experience shows that the Arab side approaches any proposal on Israel's part, whether it is referred to as "principle," "understandings," or "declaration of intent" as an obligation and a starting point. This is how the imprudent pledge made by Rabin regarding the Golan Heights makes it more difficult to engage in talks with the Syrians. Just recently, the Palestinians reminded us that they are still holding a letter from Shimon Peres, the foreign minister in Rabin's government, promising to allow them to maintain PLO institutions in Jerusalem.

There is no doubt that whatever Olmert says in Annapolis, and what he possibly already told Abbas, would make it difficult for Israel in the future when genuine peace talks are launched. This is just a part of the problem, as any concession offered to Abbas may be later cashed in by Hamas." Zalman Shoval, Ynet, 06.11.2007

## 2. Unruhen in Peki'in

*Im Norden Israels kam es am 30. Oktober zu schweren Ausschreitungen zwischen den drusischen Einwohnern des Ortes Peki'in, die in der israelischen Bevölkerung eine Minderheit darstellen, und der israelischen Polizei. Anlass für die Auseinandersetzungen war die Errichtung einer Mobilfunkantenne und vorangegangene Diskussionen über einen möglichen Zusammenhang zwischen der Erhöhung der Anzahl von Krebserkrankungen und der Strahlung der Mobilfunkantenne.*

*Als drusische Einwohner die Antenne unbefugt entfernt hatten, erwirkte der Besitzer Haftbefehl gegen sie. Die israelische Polizei, die in der Folge mit einem Aufgebot von 200 Sicherheitskräften erschien, sah sich mit organisiertem Widerstand der drusischen Einwohner konfrontiert. Im Zuge der gewaltsamen Auseinandersetzung wurde eine israelische Polizistin als Pfand für die Freilassung der drusischen Verhafteten zur Geisel genommen.*

*Während der Ausschreitungen wurden ca. 40 Personen verletzt, davon 13 Zivilisten. Die israelische Polizei ging mit großer Brutalität vor und sah sich dem Vorwurf ausgesetzt, zu einer Eskalation beigetragen zu haben.*

### To much of a reflex response

"The claims against the police for coming to the village with too much aggressive force are countered by opposing claims - that the police had insufficient force and therefore had to defend themselves with live fire. The entry of police to a village whose residents are Druze, Christians and Jews is not supposed to result in masked men taking up positions, in advance, in alleys and on rooftops. This was not a demonstration that was dispersed with live fire as was the case in October 2000, instead of using other, non-lethal means. This was an attempt to arrest suspects. This was a routine police activity that required 200 police officers, because several days earlier, the police had a hard time arresting the suspects when it tried with insufficient numbers. [...] Sensitivity for the feelings of minorities cannot cancel out law-enforcement activities. There are many areas in the country where the police are wary to enter, because it knows that similar violence may occur. Anyone who wishes to live in a country of law and order must back the police, and not remain indifferent to the fact that

Peki'in citizens attacked the police officers who entered the village as if they were the enemy. Similarly, there should be no indifference to the fact that a female police officer who carried out her duty was taken hostage in order to gain the release of the suspects." HAA, 31.10.2007

### **Druze deserve equality**

"I am not convinced that the violent clashes in Peki'in are the result of the placing of the antenna at the chicken coup. The residents' conduct and fury stem from other reasons. For a long time now, various observers have been sounding the alarm over the State's attitude to Druze communities. The establishment views them as a neglected minority that does not need to progress or develop, and closes deals with sheikhs and leaders as if this sect, which numbers more than 100,000 people, is a herd that follows them. The State is unable to digest the fact that young Druze are no longer naïve, and demand the rights they deserve by law - and not as a favor from one government ministry or another. The clashes in Peki'in are the harbinger to what could happen in other Druze communities as a result of neglect and discrimination - whether it is in matters of land and areas of jurisdiction or in matters of local authority budgets and community development. The Druze villages are sitting on a powder keg that may explode in the face of our national leaders, who make do with declarations and don't do a thing to integrate the loyal Druze sect into government institutions. The expropriation of land at Druze communities, for example, for the purpose of developing Jewish communities could lead to a conflagration. And by the way, one of the reasons for the resistance of Arab Israelis to national service is the inequality faced by Druze soldiers and the ongoing discrimination." Majdi Halabi, JED, 01.11.2007

### **Appease the Druze**

"Even stronger than their Israeli identity is their Druze identity. The loyalty to the tribe usually overrides the loyalty to the state. Thus, when Israeli forces clashed with the Druze in the Golan in 1981 over the attempt to force them to accept Israeli identity cards, or when in 1982-'83 the Druze community in Israel felt that their brethren in Lebanon were threatened by Israel's Christian allies there, it did not hesitate to rally behind their brothers - not their state. Think of the protest in Peki'in as the tip of the iceberg, an expression of a much deeper

frustration - that their Israeli identity is not rewarded, that young and educated Druze do not receive equal job opportunities in the civil service (except for the army), that Druze villages suffocate for lack of land, that not enough has been done to develop industrial zones in Druze villages and that far too little has been done to make them feel good - real good - about being Israelis." Gil Sedan, JPO, 04.11.2007

### **Playing with fire**

"Last week's violent clashes between the police and the Druze inhabitants of Peki'in should be a wake-up call for Israel that we are facing a problem which is too hot to be handled by local police officers. [...]The Druze community, as well as the Circassians in Israel, for the past 50 years have been the living proof that you don't have to be Jewish to be a loyal citizen of Israel or to share with Israel's Jewish citizens the burden of defending the country against its enemies. The Druze, whose language and culture are Arab, have demonstrated that in itself that is no obstacle to being an integral part of Israeli society. They might be the tipping point of Israel's minority population, whose example would be followed in time by the other segments of Israel's Arab minorities. But for this to happen, the Israeli government must have a policy toward Israel's minorities. A policy, whose aim is the establishment of equality of rights and obligations among all segments of the population. A fundamental part of such a policy must obviously be affirmative action toward the Druze community, demonstrating the advantages that are attained by those who serve in the IDF.

It may come as a surprise to many Israelis that this has not been the policy of Israeli governments. For many years, it was quite the contrary." Moshe Arens, HAA, 05.11.2007

### **3. Olmert an Krebs erkrankt**

*Premierminister Ehud Olmert teilte am 31. Oktober in einer Rede an die Nation mit, dass er an Prostatakrebs erkrankt sei. Daraufhin wurde in den israelischen Zeitungen diese Bekanntgabe vor allem aus der Perspektive des Rechts der Öffentlichkeit auf das Wissen um den Gesundheitszustand der politischen Führung diskutiert.*

## Public's right to know

"First of all, Olmert deserves praise. The prime minister was right when he said that the law in Israel does not obligate him to provide the public with any information regarding his medical condition, and the press conference he held was entirely his own initiative. [...]"

Things will no longer be as they used to be. On October 29, 2007 a new standard was set regarding the public's right to know the prime minister's medical condition, and there is no turning back from this standard. Yet it is not enough. The manner of presenting ongoing information regarding the prime minister's health condition to the general public should be set through legislation – in the hopes we would not require any special updates." Roy Peled, JED, 31.10.2007

## Half a cure

"Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made an important contribution to the health of Israeli politics yesterday when he faced the nation and announced his illness. Of all the tidings a leader can bring to his citizens, exposing an illness may be the hardest. The public can handle difficult decisions; it can protest for or against war, for or against peace. But what can it do about a leader's illness? How does it deal with that? In a brave revelation unprecedented in these parts, Olmert opted to preempt the rumor mill in a country where rumors are quick to take on lives of their own. Had he chosen to keep his illness a secret, some anonymous source would have leaked it. The prime minister would have been damaged by the media reports, and the public would have lost even more of its confidence in both the current political leadership and politicians in general." Daniel Ben Simon, HAA, 31.10.2007

## Comment on the situation

"This week Ehud Olmert couldn't claim to be unpopular. The dramatic disclosure that he had prostate cancer plucked at the heartstrings of even the toughest media figures and political rivals. The courage, composure and optimism he displayed as he informed the public of his upcoming surgery turned his greatest critics into lapdogs. The newspapers and the electronic media were full of moving, sentimental descriptions of his heroic deportment, along with various diagnoses of his illness, including graphic diagrams of all the private bits that might be affected and where they are

located. One journalist wrote that he looked pale. Another said his complexion was yellowish, "something between egg yoke and egg white." Anyone who read Ben Caspit's opus in Maariv would swear the man had personally sat in on all the talks between Olmert and his doctors. In the Knesset, a long line of MKs waited to shake his hand and pat him on the shoulder. But despite all their displays of sympathy, when the politicians return to their offices they engage in cold, cynical calculations about their moves if the worst happens. Prof. Motti Ravid says that the statements about Olmert being fully functional, apart from a "couple of hours" after the surgery, are too optimistic. I can't help wondering what effect these remarks are having on the opponents and rivals of Tzipi Livni, who will be replacing the prime minister during his expected incapacitation of "only four hours." Maybe our leaders of old were right when they hid their illnesses from the public. There might be a club hidden behind all the friendly pats on the shoulder." Yoel Marcus, HAA, 02.11.2007

HAA = Haaretz

HZO = Ha Tzofe

JED = Jedioth Ahronoth

JED engl. = www.ynetnews.com

JPO = Jerusalem Post

MAA = Maariv

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