



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 25

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

28. Januar – 10. Februar 2008

#### 1. Barak bleibt in der Koalition

*Nach der Veröffentlichung des endgültigen Winograd-Berichtes am 30.01.08 über Verfehlungen der politischen Führung im Libanonkrieg im Sommer 2006 gab es Spekulationen bezüglich der Reaktion des Verteidigungsministers Ehud Barak. Der Vorsitzende der Arbeitspartei hatte im Mai des vergangenen Jahres angekündigt, aus der Regierungskoalition auszutreten und Neuwahlen zu veranlassen, sollte die Winograd-Kommission ein harsches Urteil über Premierminister Olmert fällen. Obwohl der Bericht sehr kritisch ausfiel, entschied sich Barak jedoch entgegen dieser Ankündigung dafür, in der Koalition zu verbleiben – keine Überraschung angesichts von Umfragewerten, die der Arbeitspartei im Falle von Neuwahlen keine großen Chancen einräumen. Andererseits machte Barak die Kluft zwischen sich und Olmert deutlich, indem er der Parlamentsrede Olmerts, in der dieser zum Winograd-Bericht Stellung nahm, fernblieb und sie dennoch scharf kritisierte.*

#### The man who saved Olmert

"Maybe it would have been cleaner, from a national point of view, for Barak to announce a Labor walkout. [...]"

Olmert and Barak speak the same language [...]. Both have the same interest in blocking Bibi [Netanyahu] and the right as the tone-setters, the ones who are determined to hold back political moves toward peace. [...]"

To push the country into elections now would be suicide, especially when a Labor victory is not in his pocket. The good of the country, getting the army back on its feet and making diplomatic headway are more important than a promise made under different circumstances – all the more so, when there are no fabulous alternatives lining up that would make going to the polls worthwhile."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 05.02.08.

#### A responsible adult

"When making the decision on whether to fulfill his miserable Labor primaries promise to Ophir Pines to quit the government or to act on what he views as his commitment and responsibility to the country, Pines apparently came in second place, what can we do. [...]"

Barak is not ignoring the harsh report, [his] associates said, he believes the report has complex implications and conclusions and he will address them when the time comes – yet he too realizes that what Israel's leadership needs at this time is a responsible adult. [...]"

Some claim that from now on Barak will keep Olmert on a short leash. The possibility that Barak would bring the elections forward would be a constant threat on the prime minister and thus he will become a hostage of his most senior minister. This may be so.

Yet Barak won't have it easy either: As of this morning, he is facing a group of Knesset members from his own party who took upon itself the mission of embittering the life of the Olmert government. This "rebel group" pledges to vote against the coalition on all issues."

Sima Kadmon, JED 04.02.08

#### Either in or out

"Barak's choice does no honor to him and shames the Labor Party. Although the Israeli public is already indifferent to broken promises and empty declarations, when the head of the second largest and second most important party exploits the convenient advantage of remaining in the government, he holds that same government hostage to his career.

There is no chance the government can be decisive and act. Even if the considerations for staying that he presented are reasonable, he cannot continue to sit in the government in the second most important position and further undermine the fragile trust between him and Olmert.

If Barak believes that Olmert is not worthy of continuing to head the government, and is interested in replacing him, he must resign and run at the head of his party in elections. If he has chosen to stay he is signaling that he has confidence in Olmert."

HAA 06.02.08

#### **Power and Politics: The catharsis Israel needs**

"Plainly, Barak hasn't changed. He's still impulsive and full of himself. He is not the antidote to our leadership problem. Bottom line? Olmert must go. Yet Barak is not the guy to replace him. And polls show he would not."

Elliot Jager, JPO 06.02.08

#### **Die Glaubwürdigkeit ist wichtiger als die Stabilität**

„Barak signalisiert auf jede mögliche Art, dass seiner Meinung nach Olmert die Verantwortung übernehmen und zurücktreten muss. Auf jede mögliche Art, außer der direkten und aufrichtigen Art. [...] Es gibt nur eine Möglichkeit für Ehud Barak in der Regierung zu bleiben und trotzdem ein gewisses Maß an Glaubwürdigkeit zu bewahren: Innerhalb weniger Tage mit den Parteiführungen der drei Großparteien eine Übereinkunft bezüglich eines Termins für Neuwahlen zu erreichen.“

HZO 06.02.08

## **2. Selbstmordanschlag in Dimona**

*Am 4. Februar ereignete sich in der südisraelischen Stadt Dimona das erste Selbstmordattentat in Israel seit über einem Jahr. Dabei wurden eine israelische Frau sowie die beiden Attentäter getötet und viele Menschen verletzt. Zunächst übernahmen verschiedene palästinensische Gruppierungen die Verantwortung für den Anschlag, und es gab Spekulationen darüber, ob die Attentäter nach der Öffnung der Grenze zwischen dem Gazastreifen und Ägypten über die Sinai-Halbinsel nach Israel eingedrungen waren. Schließlich bekannte sich jedoch die radikalislamische Organisation Hamas zu den Attentätern, die aus Hebron im Westjordanland gekommen seien. Auch von den israelischen Sicherheitsbehörden wurde dies angedeutet. In der Öffentlichkeit wurde indes der Ruf nach weiteren Grenzanlagen und Zäunen laut – sowohl an der Grenze zu Ägypten als auch im Westjordanland, wo es noch Lücken in der bestehenden Sperranlage gibt.*

#### **We need a fence**

"Even terror groups were confused yesterday. So many terrorists crossed from Gaza into the Sinai and are all over the place that their masters don't even know who is out there and where. [...] If Hamas' claim that the bombing came out of Hebron is indeed correct, this is yet another proof that we must not rest on our laurels in Judea and Samaria and we must not wait for the Palestinian Authority to handle security problems. Hamas is alive and kicking in the West Bank as well, and the Shin Bet and IDF must cut it down on a daily basis.

Monday's terror attack is also a reminder, to those who forgot already, that the security fence south of Hebron – which was supposed to be completed two years ago – only exists on paper. The road leading from the Mount Hebron area to the southern Negev desert is completely breached. [...]

Our own familiarity with ourselves makes us think that a fence will not be built either here or there. In a day or two, the terror attack in Dimona will be forgotten, and we will continue to hear pompous speeches and firm decisions regarding the need for a fence – until the next attack comes around."

Alex Fishman, Roni Shaked, JED 05.02.08

#### **Common to Dimona and Cairo**

"However, breached border crossings between Egypt and Israel do not in themselves cause terror attacks. After years of imprisonment in a crowded strip of land, without opportunities for earning a living or studying, someone on the Egyptian side - or the Israeli side - should at least have guessed, not to say known, that a thick fence would not contain the frustration and anger that have accumulated. Each time more economic or political pressure has been applied to the Gaza Strip, the pressure on the fence has grown, until it collapsed. [...]

The two countries [...] must decide together on building a fence along their border. [...] Insofar as this is necessary, it would not be superfluous to consider deploying additional Egyptian troops and special equipment along the border, even if to some extent this violates the peace treaty, which severely restricts the number of Egyptian military units in Sinai and their equipment. Times of emergency sometimes demand emergency steps, and the current threat of terror demands more courageous cooperation with Egypt."

HAA 05.02.08

### **Seal the borders**

"Accordingly, the urgent task is both for Israel to complete the missing sections of the West Bank security fence and seal its border with Egypt and, critically too, for Egypt to seal its border with Gaza. We cannot go back to the status quo ante, where weapons and money flowed into and out of Gaza courtesy of Egypt's blind eye. [...]

Further, Israel should actually do what Egypt anyway accuses Israel of doing: press the US to treat Egypt like Syria so long as Cairo acts like Damascus. [...] Just as allowing Hizbullah to build up for six years led to war in the North, what Egypt is failing to do now will lead to war in the South. Rather than wait for this war, and for the Winograd-style committee that will follow it, the time to cut Hamas's weapons lifeline is now."

Uzi Dayan, JPO 05.02.08

### **Terror won't defeat us**

"The evil members of Islamic fundamentalism, you, the men of terror – you should know that you will not defeat us. You will not defeat Dimona, our town, you will not defeat the State of Israel, and you will not defeat our aspiration for peace.

You may think that we are collapsing because our leadership fails to show personal responsibility. But you should know that as citizens, we are responsible for eliminating terrorism in our towns and in our country. Our own responsibility for our future will defeat you any hour, any time, any day. Even if the bloodshed will return, we will overcome you. [...]

Israel is a strong and wealthy country, but we have a weak government; a government that does not put its own citizens at the core of its actions. It disregarded residents of the north during the war. For years now it has been disregarding the residents of Sderot, who have been bearing the brunt of Qassam rockets. It also disregarded residents of the Negev who warned that the region is breached. Those are citizens who were deserted by their government. [...]

Yet Dimona and Sderot cannot be replaced. We can only replace the government. [...]

Everything is possible, but to do that we need a government that does not view its citizens as transparent when it makes decisions. We need a responsible government."

Jitzhak Jacky Edry, JED 06.02.08

### **3. Umgang mit Gaza**

*Zum zweiten Mal innerhalb eines Monats intensivierten sich die gewalttätigen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen israelischen Streitkräften und militanten Gruppen im Gazastreifen. Nach dem Selbstmordanschlag am 04.02., für den die Hamas sich verantwortlich bekannte, nahm die israelische Armee begrenzte Bodenoffensiven vor, bei denen sowohl palästinensische Militante als auch Zivilisten getötet wurden. Gleichzeitig verstärkte sich der Beschuss durch Kassamraketen auf die Grenzgebiete des Gazastreifens, durch den israelische Zivilisten verletzt wurden. Am 08.02. kündigte Verteidigungsminister Ehud Barak daraufhin an, die militärischen Maßnahmen auszuweiten, sollte der Raketenbeschuss kein Ende nehmen.*

*Angesichts der Spekulationen über eine baldige ausgeweitete Bodenoffensive wurde in den Medien diskutiert, mit welchen Strategien im Gazastreifen vorzugehen sei.*

### **Siege doesn't work**

"The growing siege imposed by Israel on Gaza must be weighed in line with its ability to bring more security to Gaza-region residents. Yet so far, our experience has shown that this type of cruel collective punishment doesn't bring results. When we are threatened and our security is undermined, do we become more appeasing towards the other side? Does a woman who lost the child she was bearing because the Israeli blockade prevented her from reaching hospital will immediately conclude that she must resist the forces fighting against Israel? [...]

We must face the truth: The cruel move led by the defense minister in Gaza is first and foremost a response to our desire for revenge and the feeling we must "hit them hard," but it is not a response to the danger threatening Israeli lives. [...]

I do not believe in diplomatic negotiations with Hamas. [...] On the other hand, when we are talking about lifting the Qassam horror threatening the children of the western Negev and securing the release of Gilad Shalit, there is no other way aside from a short-term target-specific dialogue with Hamas. Talks on a ceasefire do not guarantee a long-term solution. Such truce would not bring quiet for many years in and of itself, yet it is the most effective, most logical way to bring quiet now and save our citizens in Sderot and area communities."

Chaim Oron, JED 28.01.08

### **Hit 'em where it hurts**

"The IDF has already targeted bases belonging to Hamas' operational force here and there in the past, but not to such extent and with such lethal results as we saw Tuesday. The objective was to show Hamas that Israel has the ability to escalate the fighting should Hamas continue with its suicide bombings, whether from the West Bank or via the Sinai. The same is true should heavy rocket fire continue to target the Negev. [...]

It doesn't matter how much effort the Egyptians invest in blocking the Philadelphi Route. Experience shows that if the IDF fails to block the route, rocket fire, terror attacks from the Strip, and Hamas' strengthening process will reach such scope that it would force Israel to embark on a comprehensive operation whether it likes to or not.

Sooner or later, Israel will be forced to seal off the Philadelphi Route on its own and regain its operational freedom and intelligence superiority in every point in the Gaza Strip."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 06.02.08

### **How to turn Gaza over to Egypt**

"Given that Gazans have shown themselves incapable of responsible self-rule and Cairo has tacitly allowed the smuggling of arms since 2000, Mubarak needs to be made responsible for the Gaza Strip. [...]

How to achieve Gaza's transfer?

Robert Satloff of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy suggests to me that Jerusalem announce three steps: 'a date certain for the severing of Israel's provision of water, electricity and trade access, free entry for replacement services through Egypt, and an invitation for international support to link Gaza to Egyptian grids.' [...]

These Israeli initiatives would force the Egyptian hand. Sure, the Egyptians, with help from Fatah and even Hamas, will try to resurrect the border and put the onus back on Israel. But in the end, Arab solidarity demands that Egyptian "brothers" fill in for the Israeli enemy. Once Jerusalem cuts supplies, Cairo has no choice but to furnish them. [...]

In brief, Gaza can be dumped on Egypt with confidence that the Egyptians must accept it and must impede Gazans from attacking Israel. Starting this "peace process," though, will require uncharacteristic imagination and energy from Israel and the Western states."

Daniel Pipes, JPO 06.02.08

### **Open the Rafah crossing**

"This cycle of bloodshed has already proved pointless. The Palestinians gain nothing by firing Qassam rockets, but Israel is not helping itself with its extensive operations in the Strip. [...]

Israel, just like Egypt, is of course unable to agree to a breached border that is open to all. On the other hand, the fact the Qassam attacks slowed to a near standstill during the days the crossing was open suggests that Israel should be interested in the orderly opening of a crossing to Egypt and in lifting the total blockade on the Strip - a siege that has so far not furthered any of Israel's goals. [...] Therefore, Israel must lift its objections to the opening of the Rafah crossing, and work with Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and the European Union toward its supervised opening. Some IDF officials have already spoken in favor of opening the crossing. [...] The Qassam attacks will end only when the Palestinians have something to lose. This has so far not come about through Israeli retaliatory actions; it may occur if the blockade is lifted in the Gaza Strip, at least in the southern border."

HAA 08.02.08

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JED = Jedioth Ahronoth  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
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