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1. Offensive zur Zerschlagung der Hamas

Während Israels Bodentruppen immer tiefer in den Gazastreifen vordrängen und die Zahl der Todesopfer täglich steigt, bleibt die Frage offen, was militärisch erreicht werden kann. Regierungsangehörige wie auch Vertreter_innen der israelischen Armee zielen erklärtermaßen auf eine Zerschlagung der Terrorgruppen, insbesondere der Hamas, im Gazastreifen. Allerdings gibt es auch in Israel immer mehr Stimmen, die sich fragen, ob dieses Ziel allein mit militärischen Mitteln erreichbar ist, und Lösungsansätze einfordern, die nachhaltig sind. Das UN-Menschenrechtsbüro hat bereits den Vorwurf verlauten lassen, Israel begehe schon durch das Einfrieren der Versorgung mit Strom, Treibstoff und Nahrungsmitteln ein Kriegsverbrechen. Israel weist diese Vorwürfe vehement zurück. Trotz der Tatsache, dass Hamas weiterhin mehr als 240 Menschen – darunter über 30 Kinder – in Geiselschaft hält, ermöglicht Israel inzwischen die Einfuhr humanitärer Hilfe in den Gazastreifen über den Grenzübergang nach Ägypten. Im Gespräch ist, dass nach dem Krieg eine Sicherheitszone zwischen Israel und dem Gazastreifen eingerichtet werden soll – gesichert durch israelische und internationale Streitkräfte. Zudem soll die Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde die Kontrolle über den Gazastreifen übernehmen.

Israel's Arrogant Illusion of Toppling Hamas

(...) The Gaza Strip is a state in every respect, even if (...) its independence is limited. (...) Israel is trying to topple the Hamas regime by means of a military operation, which will almost certainly necessitate occupation of part of the Strip. (...) all the attempts in the world in the past two decades to impose regime change from the outside, for example in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya have failed abjectly, and even contributed to civil wars. (...) The regime change will fail in particular in the wake of the internal split in the Gaza Strip, which could escalate into the crumbling of the Gazan entity into a civil war (...). The idea that the Palestinian Authority would be able to take responsibility for Gaza has no ground to stand on, because the PA has been considerably weakened by Israel and in effect functions on the spears of the Israeli army. (...) A possible result of occupying the Gaza Strip could be a considerable worsening of Israel's security, unless the Israeli army serves as a barrier between the Palestinian militias and Israel's civilians, and bleeds for years. (...) Thus, the obvious conclusion is not only to think about "the day after," but also, right now, to draw up far more modest aims for a ground operation, and preferably to avoid such an operation entirely.

Yagil Levy, HAA, 17.10.23

Israelis Need More Than a Vague Demand to 'Destroy Hamas'

(...) Residents of Be'eri and Sderot, of Kfar Azza and Ofakim, need to know that after the victory, the

government will unite them and care for their safety (...) women who are struggling to hold together families, communities and military positions (...) need to know that after the victory, they will not be sent back to the kitchen or enclosed behind screens and veils. LGBTQ soldiers (...) must know that their relationships will be fully recognized by the state, and that after the victory they will be able to marry officially in the state for which they risk their lives. (...) Journalists, influencers, poets and thinkers need to know that both when the cannons roar and when the cannons fall silent, the muses will never be silenced. (...) And if this government does dream of exploiting victory to annex territories, forcefully redraw borderlines, expel populations, ignore rights, censor speech, realize messianic fantasies or turn Israel into a theocratic dictatorship – we need to know it now. Don't tell us that these are divisive issues that should wait until victory is secured; or that there is just no time now to talk about the future. (...) There is consensus in Israel that Hamas must be disarmed, but what about the future of Israel? Netanyahu, Gantz, Eisenkot and other government members: Tell us immediately what the long-term goals of this war are, so we know what we are risking and perhaps sacrificing our lives for.
Yuval Noah Harari, HAA, 18.10.23

Israel's 'Allied powers' must take control of Gaza

(...) After Israel eliminates Hamas in Gaza, however, who will control the territory? (...) who will ensure that the coastal enclave does not become a base for Palestinian terrorists from which they can commit more atrocities against Israelis? (...) A practical plan for Gaza's future is crucial if Israel and the rest of the free world want to prevent the territory from falling into the hands of terrorists again. It is my opinion that after Israel wipes out Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the territory should be treated as Germany was following the Allies' victory over the Nazis in World War II. After the Nazis were defeated, Germany was occupied by the forces of several Allied powers. Similarly, an international force could be set up to control the Gaza Strip. (...) the international force that controls Gaza after the defeat of Hamas should be made up of personnel from Arab countries (...) Egyptians, Jordanians, Emiratis, Moroccans, and Bahrainis. Even the Saudis could take part, if they agree to normalize relations with Israel. Gazans are a lot less likely to view fellow Arabs as occupiers than troops from Western countries, making it much easier to control the territory. (...) Once an international force is set up to police the Gaza Strip, re-

building can commence. A program similar to the Marshall Plan that helped rebuild Germany and the rest of Europe after WWII would probably be in order. (...) Eventually, the Gazans should be given self-governance, but it must happen gradually, under the close supervision of Israel. (...)
Jason Shvili, IHY, 19.10.23

Can Israel wipe out Hamas in Gaza without losing its humanity?

(...) the civilian deaths that have accompanied the bombings and the fleeing families, who amount to half the population, who have no real place to run to, have caused Israel's supporters to pause and question the toll. (...) Where is the line in an existential war between decimating the enemy and unduly harming innocent people under their control? (...) Within the two million residents of Gaza, it is unjust to label all of them as evil, justifying their persecution. (...) Israeli self-interest should also constrain its actions, as its steps in Gaza can backfire and harm its population. Diseases recognize no borders. Interrupting the water supply to Gaza or the fuel essential for the desalination plant, which forces the population to consume water tainted with sewage or impurities, also leads to the proliferation of diseases. The rodents in the streets of Gaza may migrate to Israel and pose a risk to the border towns that have already endured considerable hardship. And at the same time, Israel has to be concerned by the larger global picture. Eliminating Hamas is paramount for Israeli and Jewish security and should be seen as a significant aspect of the global fight against terrorism. (...) Gazans themselves have something to gain here. (...) The removal of Hamas is the only way Gazans can return to their homes without fear of bombings and internal Hamas repression. It is also the only hope for peace between Gaza and Israel.

Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman, JPO, 20.10.23

What will Israel's victory over Hamas look like?

(...) there is no question that the war will need to end differently, since if it doesn't, what was the point of all of this? Hamas cannot be standing at the end of this conflict (...). While the IDF can (...) kill as many terrorists and their leaders as possible, even if only a few are left, they will simply try to rebuild themselves the day after Israel pulls out. (...) it will be hard to topple a regime or destroy a movement without a long-term takeover of Gaza – something Israel does not want – what the country can do in the aftermath of this fight is institute a complete

change to its national security doctrine. (...) what needs to happen after is for Israel to change the rules of the game. The next time the IDF sees a truck of rockets driving in Gaza City, it will need to attack; the next time Hamas fighters are drilling assaults on Israel, the IDF will need to attack; and the next time it sees people digging a tunnel, it will need to destroy it. (...) assuming, realistically, that terrorist groups will continue to exist and grow, Israel can no longer sit silently. Preemptive action will need to become Israel's new pillar of defense.
Yaakov Katz, JPO, 20.10.23

Eradicating Hamas is the only moral option for Israel

(...) Some say that it is necessary to loosen all reins and act as if "the landlord has gone mad." That is not true. Crushing Gaza does not mean that we are no longer moral. Exercising a heavy hand, not seen until now, is not "madness." (...) We simply are not applying what the world tends to consider as moral. In normal times, we are used to identifying morality with love and mercy and with acts of kindness and giving. (...) But at times such as these, another side of morality is also revealed. A morality that places a responsibility on us to destroy the evil around us and in the world. Because when pure evil is revealed in the world, complexity disappears. There is good and there is bad. There is truth and there is falsehood. There is life and there is death. And at this time, the moral stance is to take a clear side and decide who is on each one. (...)

Ido Pachter, JPO, 21.10.23

Don't Let Calls for Revenge Against Hamas Silence Our Conscience

Our reading of the situation since October 7 (...) is being shaped by our nation's collective trauma: pogroms, indiscriminate slaughter, parents hiding with their children in their closets without food and water, a holocaust. It's understandable, but history, with its ghosts, has another lesson to teach us, and it's the one that should guide our decisions. (...) Our fundamentalist right wing is rubbing its hands with satisfaction. Look, we've been given an opportunity to uproot any chance of a diplomatic agreement from the foundations. Starving the population of Gaza and keeping them without access to water and medicine could lead to outbursts in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and trust the settlers to do everything possible to ignite the fire inside Israel as well. That's what they live for. (...) Revenge is silencing every other voice, even the voice of our

conscience. But if the rage blinds us, we'll enter a prolonged cycle of violence. (...) the goals of the war must be logical: a heavy blow, but not the insanity of flattening and occupying Gaza that has seized everyone. We have to rehabilitate, not spill more blood. We must concentrate our efforts on a major hostage deal and make time for the process of recovery and the defascization of Israeli society. It will begin with bringing down the government and its leader and establishing a commission of inquiry for the events of Black Saturday (...) and the rot of the years of Netanyahu's rule that led to them.

Iril Leal, HAA, 24.10.23

2. Streit um Entführte im Gazastreifen

Familienangehörige und Freund_innen der von der Terrororganisation Hamas im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Kinder, Frauen und Männer drängen auf Verhandlungen mit den Geiselnern. Mehr als 240 Menschen befinden sich seit dem 7. Oktober in der Gewalt der Islamisten. Die israelische Armee geht davon aus, dass die meisten Geiseln noch am Leben sind. Bisher konnte auf militärischem Weg nur eine Soldatin befreit werden. Das Risiko ist groß, dass im Verlauf der Kämpfe auch Entführte durch den Beschuss von Seiten der israelischen Streitkräfte verletzt oder getötet werden. Nach palästinensischen Informationen befinden sich unter den bei dem Luftangriff auf Flüchtlingsunterkünfte in Jabalia Getöteten bereits mehrere Entführte. Auch in Europa und in den USA baten Angehörige von Geiseln um internationale Rückendeckung und sprachen sich dafür aus, alle Maßnahmen auf die baldige Befreiung der im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Menschen zu konzentrieren. Gegenstimmen erinnern an den Geiselaustausch im Oktober 2011, als Israel mehr als 1000 palästinensische Häftlinge im Gegenzug für den entführten Soldaten Gilad Shalit entließ, darunter zentrale Drahtzieher des Massakers von Anfang Oktober.

Don't repeat the mistakes of past deals

It rends one's soul to think about those who have been abducted and taken to Gaza. The heart goes out to their families. (...) No effort should be spared to release those held forcibly by Hamas, but without repeating the fatal errors of the past. For decades we have been turning those who had been taken captive and gone missing into instruments that allow us to be extorted. By surrendering to the enemy, we have caused many more among us to be murdered

and abducted. (...) we must not allow the enemy to use the abductees to weaken our morale, our resilience, our cohesion, and our judgment. (...) The conclusions should be drawn right now, even though the blood boils and the heart quakes for those in the clutches of the murderous sect that controls Gaza. Every effort should be made to extricate the abductees without repeating the mistake. Pursue military operations without limit but do not let the enemy twist our arms. (...) the time has come to understand where we went wrong and to do the opposite.
Nadav Haetzni, IHY, 17.10.23

A call: Help release the Israeli captives

(...) The lives of the victims slaughtered in this sadistic murder attack can no longer be saved. However, the kidnapped, at least some of them, are still alive. I am specifically addressing the readers who do not like Israel (...), who may have some influence on the kidnappers. Exercise it to save lives. (...) It is enough for you to raise a cry, and express your opinion that such behavior is intolerable under any circumstances. Talk to your governments. Maybe that can save somebody's life. (...) The thought of her and the other hostages breaks my heart. Raise your voices. Use your influence. Help rescue innocent human lives.
Yishai Sarid, YED, 19.10.23

Three-year-old Abigail is held in Gaza. What is Netanyahu doing for her?

Abigail Idan, just three years old, has been held captive by Hamas in Gaza for over two weeks. (...) During these two weeks (...) nothing has been done to rescue Abigail. She remains captive there, alongside Hamas militants, far from her home, without her parents (...), and her siblings. She's alone without any familiar faces, without her beloved doll, without her cherished toys. There is no country in the world that would tolerate such brutal acts. (...) The airstrikes by the Air Force may be suitable for a conventional round of conflict with Gaza, but not for the current situation. (...) while Abigail, along with more than 200 other Israelis, remains captive under Hamas, Israel's response appears to be ordinary, routine, and proportionate. (...) Why hasn't Israel undertaken an operation to rescue Abigail in these two weeks? (...) This is an impassioned plea to Netanyahu: bring Abigail home and eradicate both Hamas and Hezbollah. If this task proves too daunting, give up your position immediately.
Eran Tiefenbrunn, JPO, 23.10.23

Israel's Top Priority Must Be to Free the Hostages

(...) It took Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nine days from the start of the war before he met with the families of the hostages and missing persons. (...) In his meeting with the families, he defined the return of the hostages as one of the goals of the war, but he did not give it priority over other goals. (...) States do not have a mandate to abandon the lives of their citizens, and the highest moral injunction cannot become a political issue, which is determined by affiliation with one political camp or the other. The call to release the hostages first does not imply any opposition to exacting a price for the terrible massacre committed by Hamas.

Israel's president, government, prime minister and military cannot look the families of the hostages, and all Israeli citizens, in the eye and tell them that there is a more urgent mission than bringing the hostages back home. If the hostages are abandoned, there will be no forgiveness.
Editorial, HAA, 24.10.23

Hamas terrorists must not be released. My son's murder shows why

(...) Hamas murdered my son. I have known for twenty years that Hamas has no right to exist. It's a murderous organization driven by Nazi/ISIS ideology. (...) Hamas ultimately released the kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for Israel releasing 1,027 terrorists (...). These were murderers, responsible for killing hundreds of innocent Israelis. Three of the released terrorists were directly responsible for the murder of my own son. All three had been tried in court and handed 17 life sentences. And yet they served a mere eight and half years in prison. Six months for each Israeli they murdered. (...) Today the head of Hamas is Yahya Sinwar, who became a master terrorist in an Israeli prison. While in prison he was found to be suffering from a serious brain tumor. Israeli doctors operated on him and saved his life. It didn't help Israel one iota. He remained a savage barbarian and serial murderer. (...) Releasing terrorists is dangerous, unjust, immoral, and a threat to the rule of law. Surrendering to Hamas and releasing terrorists will bring more kidnappings. (...) We need to make a U-turn, even today, and go back to the Entebbe paradigm: You kidnap an Israeli, you die. Period.
Yossi Zur, TOI, 26.10.23

Leadership forced to decide, hostages or offensive

(...) Israel is obliged, sooner or later, to carry out an extensive ground offensive into the Gaza Strip to end the rule of Hamas and destroy its military capabilities, in order to eliminate the looming threat on civilians and restore normal life in Israel. (...) As for Hamas (...) the terror group is demanding three things in exchange for the release of some of the captives, likely including foreign citizens, children, women, and elderly Israelis: fuel (...), a ceasefire, and the release of prisoners held in Israel. (...) the pressing question now is whether to continue delaying the ground incursion to negotiate further or to enter Gaza with full force, achieve objectives, and manage the negotiation process while exerting pressure on Yahya Sinwar, Marwan Issa, and Mohammed Deif. Those advocating for "negotiating the kidnapped return first" argue that there is no reason for Israel to rush. With each passing day, Hamas faces struggles militarily and is in survival mode and the bombings from the air create better conditions for a rapid and relatively short ground campaign. An additional advantage is that, as long as the operation is underway, the leaders of the terror organizations have no incentive to harm the captives. Proponents of the "ground operation first" argue that the IDF can achieve objectives that would force Hamas to negotiate on a prisoner swap from a position of weakness. However, doing so increases the perceived risk to the captives. (...) there is nearly a consensus among the security establishment, commanders, and soldiers that they can swiftly enter the northern part of the strip and achieve objectives without paying too high a price. Given this feeling and the high motivation, and after some hesitance due to concerns for the captives' fate, the option of a ground offensive first seems preferable at the moment.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 27.10.23

3. Netanyahu im Zentrum der Kritik

Angesichts der katastrophalen Fehleinschätzung von Israels Sicherheitsapparat und der politischen Führung wird die Kritik an Armee, Geheimdiensten und vor allem Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu immer lauter. Während von führenden Vertretern des Militärs, der Geheimdienste und von Verteidigungsminister Yoav Gallant eine Mitverantwortung für das israelische Versagen am 7. Oktober übernommen wurde, verweigert Netanyahu die Anerkennung jeglicher Schuld. Einen Eintrag auf dem Twitter-Nachfolger X, demzufolge der Premierminister „unter keinen Umständen und zu

keinem Zeitpunkt“ von den Sicherheitsdiensten gewarnt worden sei, löschte Netanyahu kurze Zeit darauf und entschuldigte sich sogar dafür. In der Bevölkerung macht er sich damit nicht glaubwürdiger. Mehr als zwei Drittel der Israelis erklärten zuletzt, sie hätten bestenfalls geringes Vertrauen in Netanyahus Fähigkeit, das Land durch diesen Krieg zu führen.

Netanyahu Won't Be Able to Escape Blame

(...) The situation requires us to be asking difficult questions about Netanyahu's competence right now – and not after the war is over. It is clear to many that he can no longer lead Israel, certainly not into a war containing so many unknowns. (...) It is a serious dilemma. We have family members and friends in the army. We are all worried and want the Hamas threat removed forever. We all appreciate how difficult this will be and the high price it will exact. The presence of serious, thoughtful and experienced people in the war cabinet is a necessary but insufficient condition for achieving our aims. Netanyahu (...) himself should take action: by removing all meetings with political advisers and associates from his schedule and putting a halt to all the PR political antics in order to focus on the war effort. No post-war investigative commission will clear him of responsibility. He has been prime minister since 2009, with just one short break for the "change" government. He has ministerial responsibility for the faulty preconceptions that collapsed with the Hamas assault. He stands at the head of the most extremist and messianic government ever in Israel's history, a disaster that occurred on his watch. He will not be able to escape blame. Netanyahu has only one obligation right now – to ignore petty politics and devote all his energy to the security crisis. If he is incapable of doing so, he should resign.

Sami Peretz, HAA, 18.10.23

Eyes Wide Shut: Israeli Intelligence Was Blind to Hamas' Military Build-up

(...) No one in Israel foresaw anything like Hamas' military plan. Mohammed Deif and Yahya Sinwar planned a brigade-size assault on all army posts and Israeli communities near the Gaza border (...). This was the mission planned by the Hamas commanders, the mission for which they trained, armed and equipped their people (...). Israel failed to grasp that the confrontation with the IDF would only be a secondary mission, while the main effort would be a mass slaughter of civilians in their homes and at a large outdoor event, all through the area, and all at

the same time. (...) The scenarios for which the IDF prepared resembled occurrences from the last Gaza war in 2014: an incursion by a small force via a tunnel, a breach in the fence, or boats from the sea against an IDF outpost, or perhaps against a village or two, in order to kill and kidnap a small number of soldiers and civilians. It was in accordance with this scenario that the thin Gaza Division force was deployed. This was the scenario that its commanders and soldiers trained for. (...) The science philosopher Karl Popper taught us that the story precedes the facts, and that all new knowledge begins with a hypothesis that gives meaning to the details. When the story is misunderstood, the facts are misinterpreted. (...) Had the people responsible in Israel given a moment's thought to the possibility that Hamas was preparing for a huge massacre and mass kidnapping, and not just another border incident, the Egyptian warning that "something big is about to happen in Gaza" and the disturbing reports that were flowing into the Shin Bet security service and Military Intelligence on the eve of the invasion would have taken on a wholly different meaning. But having missed the story, they set aside all the warnings, and with eyes wide shut, led us into this calamity.

Aluf Benn, HAA, 20.10.23

The Secret to Netanyahu's Gaza Failure: Do Nothing

(...) The man is done. He is unfit. He cannot lead us a single day further. (...) Bibi is now in the fight of his life. Some demand that he accept responsibility for the historic failure two weeks ago, which he refuses to do. It's good that he refuses. (...) the moment he said anything including the word responsibility, the pressure on him to resign would drop, and that's the worst thing that could happen. (...) we citizens will make sure he goes home as soon as possible. After all, he's not only the main culprit of the horrible failure, he's an existential threat to Israel. (...) Bibi (...) the king of cowards (...), believes that by doing nothing you also risk nothing, so you keep your throne stable. This allows him to accrue more money, power, renovations to his villa, luxury flights, luxury hotels, gifts like cigars and jewelry, and unimaginable quantities of pistachio ice cream. That night, due to the terrorist incursion, Bibi failed to pursue the do-nothing policy. (...) And he kept on doing nothing, even when the warning lights near Gaza flashed a lurid red, when Hamas trained for a rampage. He even ignored Egypt's warnings about an impending attack. (...)

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA, 21.10.23

Hamas attack proved two working assumptions wrong

Israel will never be the same country it was (...). When the war is over, we will ask the difficult question of how Hamas infiltrated Israel. But right now, the most important thing is to define how to defeat the enemy and clarify the goals of this war. Because senior officials are calling to wipe out Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in its entirety, while the War Cabinet seems to be content with merely destroying its military capabilities that would deter it for years from threatening Israel and harming its citizens. (...) In the past, many said Israel should not return to the Gaza Strip, a move that would carry heavy consequences for our security, soldiers, and expenses. However, after the massacre perpetrated by Hamas, it is clear to everyone that this is a preferred alternative, one that will cost less in human lives and money. The conclusion is real: Israel must start thinking outside the box. It must not come up with maneuvers – political and military – to leave Hamas with hope of recovery. Hamas' rule must be overthrown, which will be achieved by removing Hamas from power in Gaza completely. Otherwise, the next round of fighting, as murderous as the current one, is just a matter of time.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 22.10.23

Just as Begin resigned, so should Netanyahu. But he won't

We are at a perilous historical moment. The fighting in Gaza could at any moment devolve into an all-out war on Israel's northern border and in the West Bank. Iran is threatening to join in, while huge demonstrations in Jordan raise concerns about its stability. And because this is such a dangerous moment, I won't mince words: The man currently leading Israel and running the war is unfit. His interests are not the interests of the State of Israel. For too long, Israeli history has been shackled to Benjamin Netanyahu's urges, desires, and lies. We don't have that luxury anymore. The Commission of Inquiry set up after the Lebanon War in 1982 criticized Prime Minister Menachem Begin's performance but reached no personal conclusions about him. Nevertheless, Begin thought this criticism necessitated his resignation. (...) Netanyahu is not Begin. He will not resign. (...) That Netanyahu "will make decisions based on personal interests pertaining to his political survival rather than to the national interest" is (...) a fact. The man (...) is ready to buy his rule with

blood. And what is most horrifying is that Netanyahu is only the tip of the narcissistic iceberg known as Israel's 37th government: 64 people, and not a single Menachem Begin among them. Not one who is putting the good of the country ahead of his pointless political career. (...) Lives are at stake and Netanyahu is unfit to run this country. (...)

Zehava Galon, TOI, 23.10.23

Netanyahu will eventually have to draft a resignation letter

(...) all the key figures have taken upon themselves the responsibility for the failure – the head of the Shin Bet, the head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, the chief of staff, and even the minister of defense in one way or another. They are aware that, following the conclusion of the hostilities, they will need to draft the letter of resignation and hand over the keys. Therefore, and since this is their situation, they are all deeply committed to the ongoing investigation and their way out is subject to less pressure. Instead of understanding this and working with them, Netanyahu acts towards them in a humiliating manner. (...) Netanyahu will have to draw conclusions, draft a resignation letter, and as a last act, if he has a drop of leadership left in him, he will need to present a government decision to establish a state commission of inquiry. He needs to go because the buck stops with him. And if we go back and quote what Menachem Begin said to Golda Meir after the Yom Kippur War: if you knew, and did nothing, it's bad. If you didn't know, it's even worse."

Nechama Duek, IHY, 26.10.23

4. Weitere Themen

Gefahr an der Grenze zum Libanon

Hezbollah readies its fighters for war

Hezbollah is preparing its forces and operational systems for a full-blown conflict with Israel that would include massive rocket fire on the Israeli home front (...). If Iran puts pressure on Nasrallah to join the war, he will do so just as he did when he sent troops to fight alongside Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria (...) the decision to open a second front would likely be made in Tehran and Beirut (...). Biden's snap visit aims, first of all, to ensure Israel succeeds in ending Hamas's rule over Gaza and its military capabilities without destabilizing the entire Middle East, which means without Iran's Lebanese proxies entering the war. Israeli and U.S. officials

say this is a shared interest and not a directive from Washington. The president's trip to the region is part of the American show of force, meant to send a clear message to Iran and Hezbollah that if they fire rockets at Israel's home front – the U.S. will participate in their interception. (...) Biden (...) knows the war Israel is fighting has popular support among Americans who saw the atrocities committed against Israeli civilians, women and children in the Hamas attack, which to them is reminiscent of al-Qaida's attack on 9/11 and of the cruelty of ISIS when it captured entire swaths of the Middle East in a strategy of instilling fear and by its acts of terror. He hopes to harness public support to help him win the 2024 presidential race. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 17.10.23

Amid Israel's war with Hamas, the North may be the most important front

(...) Should a second front be opened up in Lebanon, (...) the implications would go far beyond Israel, Gaza, or indeed the Levant area. (...) Iran today is in de facto power (in Iraq and Lebanon) or has freedom of operation (in Syria) across the entirety of territory between the Iraq-Iran border and the Mediterranean Sea, and between that border and Israel. (...) in order to prevent such an eventuality that the United States has brought two aircraft carrier groups, with their massive array of firepower, into the Mediterranean. (...) for now, the prospect of American Tomahawk missiles on Beirut creates a new equation with which Iran and its Lebanese Hezbollah franchise must contend, in weighing their decision regarding a possible direct, large-scale intervention into the current hostilities. (...) Hezbollah is walking an extremely fine line. The type of actions that it has been undertaking in recent days (...) would, under the "rules of engagement" usually applied to the Lebanese border, have already precipitated a major Israeli response, and probably a general conflict between Israel and the IRGC franchise in Lebanon. (...) Israel has continued to respond proportionately, rather than attempting a major response to Hezbollah's aggression. This may well be because of the current focus on the South, and Hezbollah and Iran may assume that this prioritizing enables them to raise the pressure on Israel a few notches more without incurring anything other than a proportionate and predictable response – that is, without triggering a second front in the current war. (...) The main focus on Gaza is understandable. But the northern front may yet prove to be the most consequential.

Antisemitismus und die Rede von Guterres

Jewish homes getting tagged in Europe, the rest is yet to come

(...) During protests supporting Hamas since the onset of the war, participants also chanted familiar Nazi slogans, like "Death to Jews." The Nazis have not vanished. But Islamo-Nazis are marching in the streets of Berlin and almost every major city across Europe. The problem isn't just with the Jews. Europe has a problem. Israel is battling the axis of evil, Sunni and Shiite Jihad, in a tough and brutal war. But these are primarily external enemies. Hezbollah from the north, Hamas from the south, and occasionally, Jihadist terrorists operating in the Palestinian territories. European countries face a wholly different situation. The Islamo-Nazi enemy is within. (...) Tens of thousands of Muslims took to the streets since October 7 to identify with Hamas, an integral part of the global Jihad. They showed support even when they were aware of the mass murders, even when they knew about the slaughtering of infants and mothers. (...) These are demonstrations advocating for the elimination of the Jewish state. (...) Not every protest participant or Hamas supporter, even among those who take to the streets, will arm themselves to carry out a terrorist act. But it's already happening. So far, there have been "only" three victims in two terrorist acts. A teacher was murdered in France, and two Swedish soccer fans were killed in Brussels. (...) It's alarming. The security at every Jewish institution in most European countries has been heightened. No Muslim institution has needed such an increase. (...) Europe hasn't truly awakened. It's in a slumber. (...) Germany knows that cries for the death of Jews and homes marked with the Star of David in the first act will end with these same homes getting pogromed in the third one. Another Kristallnacht? When you see the hatred emanating from those identifying with Hamas – anything is possible. (...) Many thousands more were killed in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries. Has anyone seen or heard of a protest for them? By Muslims? By human rights advocates? It didn't happen. Because it's not about sensitivity to human life. It's about hatred of Jews. We hope that riots will not occur. But there is a very serious fear that they indeed will.

Guterres is now part of the problem

Secretary General Antonio Guterres has dragged the UN down to a new low with his disgraceful justification of the Hamas slaughter, rape and torture of innocent Israelis. Before all of the bodies have even been identified, so vicious was the violence against them, and while 220 distressed and abused hostages remain imprisoned in the Gaza Strip, Guterres was blaming Israel in front of the UN Security Council. Not only is this deeply unworthy of a body that is dedicated to peace and truth, it also follows Hamas's own agenda.

(...) Israel unilaterally left the Gaza Strip in 2005, effectively ceding it to complete Palestinian control. Immediately Hamas took over they used the territory as a base for attack on Israel, compelling the IDF, and Egypt, to impose a partial blockade to try to prevent weapons entering Gaza as well as attacks being launched from there. That is the reality of Guterres's supposed "occupation."

We know from Hamas's founding charter and from its actions that its idea of Israel's "stifling occupation" is not just of Judea and Samaria and Gaza but the entirety of Israel "from the river to the sea". Hamas does not accept a Jewish state in any boundaries. It is dedicated unequivocally to the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews everywhere. The UN Secretary General (...) presides over a systematically anti-Israel organization that believes Israel is not a legitimate state. (...) Guterres is now part of the problem. He has become an active propagandist for Hamas. His words and his actions will help give heart to Hamas and its supporters, encouraging it to fight on knowing its message of anti-Israel hate is promoted from the very top of the world's pre-eminent international body. (...) Guterres has rendered himself unfit to lead the UN, and should resign immediately or be dismissed.

Richard Kemp, YED, 26.10.23

HAA = Haaretz
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews
JPO = Jerusalem Post
IHY = Israel HaYom
TOI = Times of Israel
GLO = Globes

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