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German Media Reactions to the Lebanon War and the Public Debate: A Critical Assessment

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GERMAN MEDIA REACTIONS TO THE LEBANON WAR AND THE PUBLIC DEBATE

The Lebanon War was a bumpy ride not only for the parties directly involved in the military conflict, but also for the German media, which had a hard time coming to grips with what was actually going on and deciding which side to hold responsible for the destruction. In newspaper commentaries there was, first, a tentative approval of Israel's right to self-defense—even by left-leaning newspapers like the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, which is usually rather critical of Israel. As the war dragged on, this initial understanding of Israel's motives began to change in the print—and especially in the electronic—media that focused much more on Lebanese suffering than on Hezbollah's attacks on Israel. Instead of being seen as a country that had suffered a military attack, Israel was depicted more and more as the real aggressor in the conflict. Accordingly, Germany's public opinion, as in most other European countries, pressured German and European politicians to try and work for an early cease-fire.

Perusing the media reporting in Germany during the Lebanon War, one can find many reasons to be worried. Chief among these is a constant bias against Israel in European media and, in times of crisis, this bias can become an important factor influencing political decisions. Indeed, it is no secret that different attitudes towards Israel and the Middle East conflict are one of the major elements of transatlantic dispute and disagreement. These common and well-known lines of conflict run between the U.S. and Israel, on the one side, and many Europeans, on the other.

Additionally, there is a lack of realistic foreign policy analysis in many parts of German media (and politics as well). The Lebanon War displayed a striking inability of the German public to read the strategic map of a well-known conflict zone and to understand the power play among the different regional actors directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. Although the German government had a much sounder strategic analysis of the conflict than the majority of

public opinion, the lack of a realistic strategic assessment in much of the German public discourse raises serious questions about the ability of Germany to be a mature participant in a meaningful strategic dialogue with its partners. This issue was also visible in other strategic debates in recent months, be it about the proposed missile defense shield in eastern Europe, the relationship towards Russia, or the debate about Afghanistan.

Finally, the Lebanon War highlighted the challenges that a democratic country faces when confronted with a religiously-inspired totalitarian movement that, from the outset, does not see itself bound by international law and is, therefore, using all the advantages of asymmetrical warfare (i.e., fighting without uniforms in order not to be recognizable as combatants, hiding among the civilian population in Lebanon, and targeting civilian instead of military targets inside Israel). Indeed, during the Lebanon War most of the German media became unconsciously complicit with

Hezbollah's agenda and was unaware of and not reporting enough about how Hezbollah used international media coverage—in a very consistent manner—in order to achieve its objectives.

Herfried Münkler, political scientist and expert on asymmetrical warfare from Humboldt University in Berlin, was one of the few voices in Germany during the war who hinted at the fact that, as he put it, the international media was acting like the air force that Hezbollah lacked.[1] That is, the media was instrumental in shielding Hezbollah from facing the gravest consequences of its actions against Israeli territory because it forced Israel to look for an end to the war much earlier than was militarily necessary. In the first phase of the war, the Israeli government refrained from sending in a huge number of ground forces to clear southern Lebanon from enemy fighters, rocket launchers, and Hezbollah bases. The Israeli leadership later realized that error, but political pressure in the international arena had already mounted in a way that it was clear that Israel lacked the time to do what it had refrained from doing in the beginning, namely, using overwhelming force with ground forces to deal Hezbollah a heavy blow. Faced with the dilemma of starting a ground attack that would lead to heavy losses among their soldiers without having the time to finish the job, Israel looked for another option—the international peacekeeping force that was established after the war. That time was running out was mainly due to media reporting and the public opinion pressure it created. In the German press, this can be seen most prominently in the lead editorial that the respected weekly *Die Zeit* ran on the front page two weeks into the war, whose subtitle read, "The war in Lebanon has already lasted too long to still be legitimate."[2] The duration of a war is a strange measure for gauging its legitimacy in international law, given the fact that Israel never stopped Hezbollah rockets from being fired into its territory and, therefore, never succeeded in removing the threat that made it wage a war in the first place.

Thus, the Lebanon War raised serious questions of whether, in today's media environment, a democratic country like Israel can still win a war against a well-trained, well-equipped terrorist organization like Hezbollah. This conflict emphasized that the media's quality of reporting, its ethics, and its awareness of its own role in the conflict play an increasingly important strategic role in emerging international conflicts, including that in which Israel and Hezbollah were engaged, especially when these conflicts are of an asymmetrical David-against-Goliath variety.

Perception of the War: The Outset

On 12 July 2006, Hezbollah launched a surprise attack on an Israeli border patrol, killing eight soldiers and abducting another two. At the time, it was presumed that Hezbollah was imitating the Hamas-led action of 25 June, in which Palestinian militants crossed the border from Gaza into Israeli territory, attacked an army outpost there, and abducted one soldier. Yet it was clear from the outset that the situation was somehow graver than Hezbollah attacks during the previous six years (that is, after Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon) because it was the first time that militants from Gaza and from Lebanon joined in a seemingly concerted effort to put pressure on Israel. In addition to that, Hezbollah started to fire rockets on northern Israel—amounting to four thousand by the end of the war—a military aggression that did not stop until the final ceasefire went into force on 14 August.

Germany's initial response in media commentaries stressed Israel's right to self-defense. Even liberal papers like the Süddeutsche Zeitung stated Israel's right to respond militarily to Hezbollah's action. Nevertheless, in the days immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, astonishment started to grow about the broadness and intensity of Israel's counter attack.

Reading the Strategic Map

Israel had been warning for a long time—publicly and behind closed doors with its western partners—that Hezbollah was amassing thousands of missiles and other equipment in southern Lebanon and that the militant organization increasingly posed a serious threat to Israel's security. That Iran and Syria were Hezbollah's main sponsors was also well known.

However, this was information that, in the first weeks of the conflict, was rather difficult to find in the German media. It took nearly two weeks for the first analysis to turn up in one of the major papers that depicted the conflict as being part of a wider Middle Eastern struggle between the "rejectionist front"[3] and Israel. Also strikingly absent from the German debate was that the whole showdown was probably the first *de facto* war between Israel and Iran, in which Hezbollah acted as an Iranian agent with highly professional Iranian training and rather sophisticated weaponry for a terrorist group. After a C-802 cruise missile hit and almost sank the Israeli battleship Hanit, it should have been clear that Israel was fighting not only a Lebanese guerilla force, but also a far more sophisticated foe. This was hardly taken up in the German media.

Rather late in the war, *Die Zeit*, for example, weighed in with some long analysis pieces largely based on quotes from the American think-tank community. The lack of deep-cutting strategic analysis in the German debate itself became very obvious when former foreign minister Joschka Fischer wrote an Op-Ed in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 25 July, in which he depicted Israel's struggle as one of survival against a newly emboldened rejectionist front, which represented an attempt by Iran and its Syrian ally to establish their hegemony in the region.[4] Fischer formulated an analysis that, at the time, was rather common in the American public debate but which struck a refreshing new tone in the German discussion.

A university project about newspaper reporting during the war at the University of Cologne concluded that despite continuing attempts of the German government to portray the multi-layered dimension of the conflict, even quality papers tended to reduce the multifaceted Lebanon War to a "simple dualism of actors".[5] The authors state further, "It has been clearly demonstrated that even quality papers in their reporting did not succeed in implementing the 'encompassing approach' followed by the German government which incorporated many small parties of the conflict. The complexity of the Middle East conflict, which is based on many factors (historical, ethnic, ideological, confessional, etc.) is very difficult to communicate in the media."[6]

One of the many complexities of the war that was lost on German journalists and their readers was the fact that moderate Arab states initially backed Israel's war against Hezbollah. The Saudi government's harsh criticism of Hezbollah in the first phase of the war did not get much attention in Germany, despite this criticism being quite an unprecedented move in Middle Eastern history.

Legacy of the Cold War: Germany's Problem with Deterrence

In the first two weeks of the war, it was interesting to follow the different ways in which the war was discussed in Europe, the U.S., and Israel. Europe centered on the question of righteousness. Europeans acknowledged Israel's right to respond, but expressed early discomfort with that permission and then focused on the problem of "proportionality," which seemed to increasingly de-legitimize Israel's actions. The debate in the U.S. focused more on the regional map, the wider implications of the conflict, and how the new bold posture of Iran was a consequence of a shift in the regional balance caused by the American failure in Iraq.

In Israel, papers were still enthusiastically writing about the international support Israel's actions enjoyed when this support had already started to erode considerably and visibly in Europe. The strategic analysis of the situation focused on the erosion of Israel's deterrence in the six years after its withdrawal from Lebanon, in which the country had usually responded in a very limited way to Hezbollah's recurrent aggressions. Following this, most Israelis believed that the country had to reestablish a strong and reliable deterrence posture. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*' Shmuel Rosner said that this was a "Don't mess with me moment" in Israel's history.[7] A majority clearly felt that Israel had to drive home the message that Hezbollah had crossed a red line.

In the first days of the war, Israel's "will to escalate" the conflict in order to rebuild its deterrence power seemed apparent.[8] Further than that, the need for

deterrence was closely connected to the idea of unilateral withdrawal, like those in Lebanon and Gaza. Absent a territory that can serve as a buffer zone, like the Sinai does towards Egypt, Israel had to rely on an even more heightened deterrence posture.[9] Israel's seemingly "wild" and unpredictable behavior in the Lebanon War, and the perceived disproportionateness of it, was part of that equation. However, the idea that peace and withdrawal on the one hand, and a credible deterrence posture on the other, were necessarily two sides of the same coin was a conclusion that the German public did not want to make.

In order to be restrained, enemies like Hezbollah had to have a margin of uncertainty when trying to calculate Israel's response to their aggression. Of course, the message was not only one towards Hezbollah and its state sponsors, Iran and Syria. Israel was also aiming at the Lebanese government to make it understand that a price must be paid for not reining in Hezbollah and for not fulfilling UN resolutions that called for the establishment of the government's sovereignty over all of Lebanese territory and a dismantling of militias in the country.

Germans do not like the idea of deterrence. Indeed, why should they, given that they feel threatened by almost no one after the end of the Cold War. There is a slight feeling of the threat of terrorism, yet deterrence does not work against people who are ready to sacrifice their own lives. More importantly, the whole idea of deterrence is abstract and smacks of the Cold War and the "mutual destruction" it could have brought to Europe and large parts of the world. Thus, that Israel needed to regain a working deterrence posture was an argument that was largely lost on the German public. Needless to say, hardly anyone connected the dots or wrote about the utter failure of the "withdrawal for calm at the border" paradigm in Gaza and Lebanon. Six years of Hezbollah rockets on northern Israel and a year of Qassam rockets on the Negev town of Sderot had actually disproved the widely held European belief that if Israel only gave up territories and settlements, all would be fine. Yet, this was a conclusion that German public opinion was reluctant to draw. That the attacks on Israel seriously eroded the land-for-peace-concept and that Israel's

future acceptance of a Palestinian state would only be possible with a serious deterrence posture on the Israeli side is also an argument alien to today's European thinking. It is a mindset reluctant to admit that peace in the Middle East needs not only political good-will, but also military prowess on the Israeli side to prevent the militants, who still want to annihilate Israel, from taking a chance at war.

Flaws in Reporting and Lack of Information

The most difficult problem that German media outlets had to overcome during the Lebanon War was a very simple one: how to find someone who could be reporting from Lebanon. None of the quality papers had reporters in Lebanon when the war broke out; everyone was desperately looking for freelancers on the spot who could be recruited for the task. At one point only one person, freelance reporter Markus Bickel, was reporting for a variety of major German news outlets. Thus, at an early point in the war, reporting in quality papers was basically formed by only one man and a lot of freelancers in neighboring Arab countries who did not report from first-hand experience. As a result, newspaper editors had to rely largely on international wire services for reporting. As can be seen from the instances of false or erroneous reporting, the wire services relied largely on local stringers that did not always meet high ethical standards of reporting.

The Sensationalist Urge

It is not a new phenomenon that even high quality news outlets around the world tend to sensationalize news in order to make for more interesting headlines. In the Lebanon War, when Israeli airplanes attacked Hezbollah headquarters in southern Beirut, one could see photos of smoke over Beirut combined with headlines that suggested that Israel attacked all of Beirut or that all of Beirut was burning. Accordingly, when Israeli planes raided a very limited number of targets in the northern part of Lebanon, reporting in papers and on TV created the image that the entire territory of Lebanon was exposed to arbitrary attacks by the Israelis.

This was not the case. Albeit with some fatal errors, terrible flaws, and the use of questionable weapons like cluster bombs, Israel by and large tried to limit civilian casualties in the war. If one compares the civilian deaths of NATO's war in Kosovo—in which over five hundred civilians died from the 10,484 combat sorties—with the roughly 15,000 combat sorties (about 11,000 warplane sorties plus battle helicopter sorties) of the Israeli army in the Lebanon War, which caused about 1,200 civilian dead in Lebanon (which might or might not include some 250—figures given by Hezbollah—to 600—figures estimated by Israel—Hezbollah fighters who did not fight in uniform) one does not get the impression that Israel was deliberately targeting civilians as a policy. The Kosovo War is probably the war in which the least number of civilians died compared to the firing power employed. Given the fact that NATO was fighting against a regular and recognizable army and not against a terrorist organization using guerilla tactics and hiding among the civilian population like Hezbollah, Israel's actions, albeit disputable in some instances, do not fall much off the mark set by NATO's Kosovo campaign. However, the initial threats of Israeli army Chief of Staff Dan Halutz to turn the clock back twenty years in Lebanon[10] set the tone for most of the subsequent reporting, namely, that Israel was overreacting to a rather small aggression and punishing all Lebanese for the deeds of Hezbollah.

There was also little background reporting about how Israel withdrew from Lebanon, under what assumptions and UN commitments this had been accomplished—and how a huge majority of European commentators had wrongly predicted that Hezbollah would lose its *raison d'etre* and convert itself into a normal Lebanese party. Ignorance about the origins of the conflict went so far that some journalists even gave credit to Hezbollah's claims that it still needed to liberate Lebanese territory, the so-called Sheeba farms, from Israeli occupation when the UN had officially stated that this was territory belonging to Syria rather than Lebanon. (In the meantime, the UN has decided to re-examine the matter.)

Given the difficulty of getting a first-hand picture of events in Lebanon that was untainted by political interests, it is understandable that so many news outlets chose a rather general "bird's eye" approach to the Lebanon War, not distinguishing much between the kind of targets Israel chose, the character of attacks, etc. The question remains of why more media outlets did not delve, for example, into the Lebanese "blogosphere" in order to complete the picture. There, one could not only read many comments making it clear that not all Lebanese were driven to back up Hezbollah as a reaction to Israel's attacks (like many commentators and analysts suggested), but could have also found many reports indicating that, outside the areas targeted by Israel, life was going on in a quite orderly manner as, for example, in those Beirut neighborhoods inhabited by Christians or Sunni Muslims in which no Hezbollah stronghold existed. Is this hole in the reporting due to a lack of professionalism? Or is it due to the fact that some of the information available ran counter to the narrative that had established itself in the German media only weeks into the war: that Israel was once again overreacting in a cowboy fashion?

Hezbollah's Media Strategy

It is difficult not to harbor a modicum of admiration for the way Hezbollah controlled the media message coming out of Lebanon. With warnings to journalists not to picture and interview fighters, guided tours through Beirut, and other measures, Hezbollah succeeded in depicting themselves and the Shiite population as victims of Israeli aggression. As Marvin Kalb and Carol Saivetz wrote in "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," "Throughout the conflict, the rarest picture of all was that of a Hezbollah guerrilla. It was as if the war on the Hezbollah side was being fought by ghosts."[11]

Indeed, it was very easy to get pictures of Israeli artillery pounding into Lebanese territory or to see Israeli warplanes taking off and coming in after dropping their deadly loads somewhere in Lebanon. Except for some distorted shards of metal, the remains of Hezbollah's rockets on Israeli fields and buildings, Hezbollah's military actions were a huge mystery. The few pictures on the Internet showing

Hezbollah rocket launchers being prepared for action in a densely populated area (secretly smuggled out of Lebanon and published by Australia's *Herald Sun* on 30 July)[12] were such a rare commodity that Israel-defending bloggers immediately jumped on them. Sure, the Israeli air force had posted videos on its website taken by Israeli warplanes that showed Hezbollah rocket launchers set up in the middle of villages in southern Lebanon—many Israeli soldiers coming back from Lebanon told the same story. However, its value was ignored, as this was information coming from an "interested party" of the conflict. Hezbollah's method of fighting was not much of an issue in German media reporting—neither were the moral and legal intricacies that arose from the fact that Hezbollah was using its own population as a defensive shield, and, if Israel attacked anyhow and civilians died, as a propaganda tool.

This lack of reporting on Hezbollah fighters was also apparent in other European countries. As Annette Levy-Willard, who reported during the war from Israel for the French paper *Liberation*, said to *Haaretz* about her motivation to write a book about the war,[13] "I understood that the French, who had been fascinated by the war in Lebanon, understood nothing about it. On the one hand, they saw the strong Israeli army and on the other, the poor Lebanese victims. But what was in between, what came between the two sides— Hezbollah—they did not see."[14]

It is very strange that civilian casualties played such a big role in the German debate about the Lebanon War, but that Hezbollah's strategy to fight out of populated areas was never a big topic. Most Germans held Israel responsible for all human suffering in Lebanon. To question whether some, if not most, of the casualties were caused by Hezbollah and the way it was using the civilian population would have only complicated the moral picture; most German journalists did not want to raise the question. Herfried Münkler was one of the few voices in the German debate hinting at the media's role as Hezbollah's helpers. In an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) he wrote on 19 August 2006, "The Israeli side was visible for the international public in the form of Cabinet meetings, amassing of troops, attacks of the air force, and, finally, in the transport of wounded away from the battlefield and the burying of the dead. Their enemy, Hezbollah, showed itself only in the TV messages of Sheikh Nasrallah, in protesters confirming the willingness to fight, and over all in the fleeing and the numerous civilian dead. The imaging of the conflict boiled down to the confrontation of martial soldiers and 'innocent civilians.'"[15]

If one remembers the long and arduous discussions in the German media about "embedded journalism" during the Iraq War, it seems strange that Hezbollah's micromanaging of the media message coming out of southern Lebanon and southern Beirut did not get more attention. According to the standards of the Iraq War, many stories coming out of the Shiite areas in Lebanon should have come with a warning attached that Hezbollah had prevented them from filming, photographing, or reporting on many things they had actually seen.[16] A veteran German reporter of the Middle East who had, together with other German reporters, been on a tour of southern Lebanon a year or so before the war recalled that in some villages he had been shown military installations that Hezbollah had placed in schools and other community facilities. This knowledge almost never found its way into the German coverage of the Lebanon War. Very few feature stories in newspapers mentioned that reporters were accompanied by Hezbollah "guides" who supervised interviews with the local population.

No Debate About Standards of Fairness

In times of heightened conflict in the Middle East, American journalists are monitored very closely by pressure groups from both sides. Though this can be annoying at times and may lead to a self-restraint that will make some of the stories less interesting, it also forms an acute awareness of the standards of fair reporting. In Germany such pressure groups are largely absent. Thus, there is much less discussion in news rooms about fairness and balance in Middle East reporting, giving journalists more leeway to follow their political instincts. Given the fact that most German journalists have a leaning towards leftist parties,[17] this gut feeling usually does not side with

Israel.[18] Even in good faith and with a high awareness of the need for fair reporting, the Lebanon War would have been a difficult balancing act. Most of the action and destruction was in Lebanon; the fact that hundreds of thousands of Israelis were forced to stay in bunkers for weeks did not create nearly as much occasion for news stories. Although most of the stories inevitably had to come from Lebanon, much of the reporting was unbalanced when it came to who was depicted as a victim und who as a perpetrator of the war.

That some important German news outlets did not give much thought to fair reporting seems clear from the results of a study by Media Tenor, a media research institute that reviewed the reporting about the Lebanon War by the two major German television channels ARD and ZDF.[19] The report showed that two of the most important German TV channels disproportionately focused only on Lebanese victims of the war, with ARD criticizing Israel four times more often than Hezbollah in its most important news shows. Hezbollah was nearly absent in news reporting and hardly ever depicted as an acting part—neither was there much reporting about its way of fighting. News pieces would usually start with Israeli military action and keep focused on it for most of the time, while Israeli victims would usually figure only in passing at the end of the stories. Media Tenor also found that the most important news broadcasts in German television usually provided minimal background about the roots of the conflict. They discovered that information about the failure of the UN to secure Israel's border, and the relevant UN resolutions that demanded Lebanon to dismantle the militias, were hardly ever mentioned. The overwhelming force of the pictures of suffering civilians was usually not put into perspective by necessary background information.

ARD and ZDF questioned the validity of Media Tenor's study. Nevertheless, Media Tenor noticed a sharp improvement in the balance of ARD's and ZDF's reporting of the conflict after it had published the report, proving that there was ample space for more balanced reporting without infringing on journalistic standards—a space that ARD and ZDF previ-

ously had not filled and did not think or care about.

The Idea of Israel that Journalists Believe In is the Kind of Israel You Get from the Media

Media Tenor had been following German reporting of the Middle East for quite some time, yet it could not find much in ARD's and ZDF's reporting about Israel in recent years that was not related to warfare and military action. Israel as an "aggressive state prone to overreaction and military solutions to conflicts" is the overwhelming narrative in all of European media; it should not come as a surprise that Israel is frequently rated by Europeans and Germans as among the most dangerous states in the world—often in a group with the United States and Iran. Israel's actions are usually not seen as a response, which might at times also be flawed, to an aggressive environment, but as manifestations of a virulent militarism in Israeli society that triggers a comparable reaction by its foes. Israel is often portrayed by German journalists as a militarized society. This construed "other" makes post-World War II European civilization shine even brighter in comparison.

The Lebanon War seemed to prove again that Israelis have a nervous finger on the trigger. On the other hand, the half defeat/half victory against Hezbollah did not attest to Israeli military prowess. In fact, the debate in Israel was a very interesting one. There was a lot of criticism inside the military and in the media about the fact that many of the dead soldiers came from kibbutzim or from more remote regions of Israel, while the hedonistic Tel Aviv area had a comparatively small share of the war's casualties. Israel itself questioned whether it had not become too much of a hedonistic and postmodern society; that is, too "European" in a sense, in order to be able to effectively wage a war in an environment that was still stuck in the age of "heroism." For many foreign policy analysts in Israel and the U.S., the Lebanon War showed that Israel faced the same dilemma every democratic and open society encounters when going to war against an ideologically and religiously inspired enemy: it can stand casualties much less than its

opponent and is more prone to wage an air campaign rather than a ground operation needed to defeat a guerrilla.

That Israelis are, in fact, more or less like Europeans and had encountered the same problems that post-modern Europe would have encountered if put in the same place was an argument not heard in Germany—because it could have endangered the European view of Israel as a settler's and warrior's society. The prevailing mood after the conflict was one of *Schadenfreude*, a "we told you so" reaction: military answers are not a solution.

A most striking version of "the idea of Israel that journalists believe in is the kind of Israel you get from the media" appeared in *Der Tagesspiegel*. Andrea Nüsse, the paper's Middle East correspondent in Cairo, traveled to Israel after the war to write a feature story about Israeli society. She delivered a report that could have been written twenty years ago, describing a militarized society that had not changed a bit.[20] There was no mention of the moment of self doubt, of the whole post-modernism and post-heroism debate in Israel that questioned whether Israel was still hard enough to survive in a neighborhood mentally stuck in notions of heroic self-sacrifice. Nüsse had ignored the discussion in Israeli media at the time, which could have been accessed on the English websites of *Haaretz* or the *Jerusalem Post*. This is only one example of many that shows how difficult it is for deeply rooted perceptions of Israel to change in the European media.

The Reductionist View of Arab Politics

The "Arab masses" or the "Arab street" are probably the entities most feared by European media. This notion of "the Arab" has a not-so-subtle ring of racism to it, according to which Arabs are easily manipulated and react to political events in a simple behaviorist automatism: When Israel attacks, even if it responds to a military aggression, all Arabs automatically rally behind the extremists who stand up against the Jewish state. It is as though Arabs cannot help but flock to the extremist's flag on such occasions. Accordingly, some argue that Israel should not react

in a military manner in order not to arouse the anger of the Arab street and in order not to raise anti-Israeli feelings among Arabs. Consequently, it's usually the fault of the Israelis if they are not liked in their own neighborhood.

It comes as no surprise that journalists who harbor such notions of the Middle East would largely ignore the fact that there was an unprecedented amount of criticism of Hezbollah in the Arab world at the beginning of the conflict. Government-controlled papers in Egypt and Saudi Arabia condemned the organization for having dragged Lebanon into a war without asking the Lebanese people's consent. There were reports in the Israeli media that the government of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had received reassuring messages from moderate Arab states in support of Israel's campaign against Hezbollah. Later in the war, the dire pictures of Lebanese suffering silenced those voices, but it should have been clear that—at least at the beginning—many moderate Arab states saw their interests lying with Israel, rather than with Hezbollah, in the conflict and hoped that the Israelis would be stopping Iran's ascent in the region by defeating one of its major allies.

The Asymmetry of Self Criticism

To be sure, it is not always easy to find the little cracks that occur in the Arab narrative and, compared to European standards, there is really very little dissident opinion that questions the common Pan-Arabic or Pan-Muslim narrative depicting Israel as the principal foe in the region. One of the many asymmetries of the conflicts between Israel and its neighbors is the fact that one can always find a dissident Israeli who criticizes his or her own government and society, whereas it is rather difficult to find Arab intellectuals who are ready to do the same thing for their government or society in western media and be seen as talking negatively about their communities to the outside world. The *Tagesspiegel*, for example, asked Moshe Zimmermann, a representative of the far left in Israel, to engage in a dialogue with the Lebanese intellectual Abbas Beydoun in its cultural section during the war. Abbas Beydoun refused to address Zimmermann directly in his columns for fear of Lebanese laws that

forbid contact with Israelis. After an initial column in which he criticized Hezbollah, he took the less dangerous approach and almost exclusively criticized Israel.[21] In an attempt at even-handedness, the *Tagesspiegel* was left with two columnists in its cultural section doing the same thing: taking turns at bashing Israel for its actions.

This is a common, but not much discussed, asymmetry in Middle Eastern conflicts that stems from the fact that no country in the region has as open a society as Israel. In Israel it is as common as in any western country that someone will criticize the prevailing narrative. Arab intellectuals critical of the government line or of militant groups might well end up in jail or be killed by extremists. This creates an abundant supply for the European media of Jews or Israelis critical of Israel. At the same time, there is an extreme shortage of Arab dissidents, which creates a picture that is rather unfriendly to Israel. Furthermore, it encourages a reductionist view of Arab politics because it creates the image of a uniform "Arab mass" where everyone is of basically the same opinion, when in reality the shortage of dissidents who are ready to speak out simply attests to the fact that many Arab societies are "fear societies," to quote Nathan Sharansky.[22]

Why Pervasive Political Correctness Plays into the Hand of Hezbollah: The Debate About Disproportionateness and "jus in bellum"

In no other country in Europe do questions of law and legality play such a large role as in Germany. That is the case for internal politics, for which Germany's Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) has, over the years, become the final arbiter in many important political decisions. It is also true in the field of foreign policy, as many Germans believe that international law—and not power politics—should be the final arbiter of international relations. The outbreak of the Lebanon War caused some consternation in public opinion about which side to take. Many papers initially agreed that Israel had the right to respond militarily to Hezbollah's action; when the first civilian

deaths started to be counted in Lebanon, this support quickly vanished. On the other hand, it was very difficult to switch alliances and side with Hezbollah, which seemed to go too far. One example of this disorientation was an essay by the Austrian intellectual Robert Misik in *Die Taz* (a leftist, usually rather anti-Israel newspaper) on 26 July 2006 in which the author talked very openly about his difficulties in taking sides: "I am not as convinced as the friends of peace that the war that Israel wages is a mistaken and a 'disproportionate' war. I am also not as sure as the stick-wavers, that this is a right war for a 'just' cause and will solve the problems that caused it. But I know two things. First: I do not want to be for the war together with the anti-Muslim ideologues, and I do not want to be against the war together with the hemming and hawing anti-Israelites and anti-Semites."[23]

In my opinion, Misik wrote this piece to tone down anti-Israeli sentiment on the left; in a way, it was part of a leftist discourse about the war and meant for "internal consumption." In actuality, he gave voice to a difficulty many Germans had at the time (if they were at all interested in what was going on in the "crazy Middle East"): they did not want to condone a war in which many people died. On the other hand, they did not want to be seen as taking the side of a terrorist organization like Hezbollah. The way out of the perceived moral deadlock was a legal trick: if most media outlets had embraced Israel's right to go to war, they would criticize the way in which the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) fought it. This criticism took many forms; some displayed a striking ignorance of the difference between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bellum*, that is, the internationally accepted reasons for resorting to war and the rules that should be applied to warfare itself—two very distinct categories of international law. The most often voiced idea of proportionality followed a tit-for-tat logic: a country cannot respond to the abduction of two soldiers by laying destruction to a whole other country. The deeper this idea took hold, the more simplistic it became. With this argument, the eight dead soldiers soon vanished (like the history of Hezbollah's aggressions since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon), as did Hezbollah's rocket campaign. Rather than seeing Hezbollah's rocket attacks as a continuation of its

initial aggression against Israeli territory, it was seen as a natural reaction to Israel's counter attacks. That Israel, once attacked, had every right under *jus ad bellum* to remove the threat to its own territory—which it did not succeed in doing throughout the whole campaign, a fact to which the almost four thousand Hezbollah rockets fired on Israeli territory until the last hour of the war gave ample proof—did not count in this kind of an argument.

Another argument, legally much better informed, about proportionality was made in the correct framework of *jus in bellum*. The argument's proponents did not think that Israel only had a right to respond in kind to Hezbollah's initial attack, but they believed that the weapons Israel used and the way it waged the campaign did not fulfill the Geneva Convention's restrictions to minimize civilian victims in warfare. This was a view voiced also by some jurists in the academic sphere interviewed on TV or in papers, as well.

The Ivory Tower and the Public Debate

The legal debate played a most important role in the German discussion of the war. Post 9/11 debates in the U.S. about international humanitarian law (especially with regard to the Bush administration's concept of "enemy combatant" and its positions on what constitutes torture and what not) reached Europe only on rare occasions. Given the fact that Germany was not forced to face these kinds of issues in a practical sense, there was almost no public debate about the hard questions and difficult moral arguments they entailed. European academia is still largely in a post-modernism mode in dealing with these types of questions. It tends to interpret the Geneva Convention in a very restricted manner. Worldwide campaigns of human rights groups against a whole range of military weapons in the last decades had the effect that many experts now deem illegal weapons—that some, decades ago, would have been thought perfectly legal—under *jus in bellum*. The same applies to the question of legitimate targets in a war. Thus, there are many trends in European society and academia that converged in the Lebanon War and that formed public opinion:

1. A pacifist trend in European, and especially German, society that has steadily grown after World War II;

2. A legalist, multilateral approach to international relations that has grown very strong after the end of the confrontation with the Soviet Bloc, which has led to a romanticized and idealistic view of international politics. This is connected to a growing unwillingness after the end of the Cold War to think about international politics as "power politics" and to seriously consider strategic and security issues; and

3. A tendency in academia to be aloof of pragmatic politics and to interpret the laws of war and conflict in a very restricted way.

Lack of Imagination: Why Europe Will Not Put Itself in Israel's Shoes and "jus ad Israel"

Respectable political commentary has to answer two important questions: what are the realistic options a decision-maker has in a given situation and how would you decide if you were in his position. To put themselves in Israel's shoes is something that Europeans have not done for a long time. One reason is a lack of imagination. It is obviously difficult for Europeans to imagine a hostile environment like the Middle East, given their own post-war history of reconciliation.

It is just as unimaginable for Europeans to accept that there are things in life and politics that are not negotiable. Indeed, one will very seldom hear about Hamas' or Hezbollah's wildly anti-Semitic ideology. For most Europeans, this is only Arab rhetoric that will cease when the Middle East conflict is resolved. This view of the Middle East does not bother with the many hints that maybe the conflict is not only about territory or misunderstandings, but about real and exclusive ideology. In this light, critics of Israel ought to also consider a few key questions, including: Is it acceptable for a democratic state to be under constant threat of attack, although it had completely withdrawn from Lebanese territory? Why did Hezbollah amass

so many weapons at the Israeli border if its *raison d'etre*, according to many Europeans, was only to liberate Lebanese soil, at which it had already succeeded in 2000? Is it really logical to presume that those weapons were supplied by Syria and Iran to Hezbollah in order to serve purely defensive reasons in the eventuality of an Israeli attack on Lebanon? What, then, is the real aim of Hezbollah's recurrent attacks on Israel in the last six years? In other words, was not this a war that would have come about anyway?

In Middle Eastern issues Europe usually prefers to revel in the luxury of inconsequentiality instead of asking itself some unpleasant questions. That is to say, when it comes to the Middle East, it is always safe to be a politically correct pacifist, because no one in Europe will have to bear the consequences, if Europe's "good advice" to Israel fails the reality test. The evident question is how a democratic state willing to abide by the international rules of warfare can fight a well-equipped terrorist militia that hides among the civilian population and does not feel restrained by international law. This question has not been asked in seriousness. Instead, the restrictive interpretation of international law put forward actually had elements not of a *jus in bellum*, but a *jus ad Israel* to it. The standards applied to Israel by the German media were not applied to German action, for example, in the Kosovo War, in which hundreds of civilians died although the allied forces only had to cope with a regular army and not with a difficult-to-detect and difficult-to-tackle foe like Hezbollah.

The Rhetoric of Irresponsibility and the Politics of Emotion

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, German Minister for Development and Cooperation with the Third World, was early on in the war one of the most vividly heard voices in the public sphere calling for an end to the war. Only one week after it started, she was already calling for an "immediate ceasefire."[24] George Orwell wrote once that the quickest way of ending a war is to lose it. In terms of Realpolitik, that was what Wieczorek-Zeul actually suggested to Israel's government. Given Israel's difficulties in locating Hezbollah

fighters and the lack of success of Israel's campaign, an early ceasefire would have only emboldened Hezbollah, would have eroded—even more seriously than it actually did in the end—Israel's deterrence posture, and would have left the unacceptable status quo at the Israeli-Lebanese border untouched. Although Wieczorek-Zeul represents the leftist, rather anti-Israeli current in the Social Democratic Party, she gave expression to a much wider felt gut feeling in Germany and her early motion was also co-sponsored by her conservative (although politically insignificant) predecessor, Carl-Dieter Spranger.

Wieczorek-Zeul's position, which in a way later culminated in *Die Zeit*'s terribly naïve subtitle "The war in Lebanon has already lasted too long to still be legitimate" only a week later, was a victory of emotion over reason. It was a position informed by the admittedly terrible images of human suffering in Lebanon. It was also a position that completely ignored the regional implications, was totally lacking in strategic thinking, and did not care a bit about the consequences of the action recommended. That is, it was another of the many examples of *Gesinnungsethik* (ethic of conviction) prevailing against *Verantwortungsethik* (ethic of responsibility), a very common feature of the foreign policy debate in Germany, in which considerations about not letting its own hand be morally dirtied win the argument against a Realpolitik approach that weighs the consequences—also the moral ones—of action or inaction.

The Wieczorek-Zeul camp was hardly ever confronted by journalists with hard questions about the practicability of what they advocated. And the longer the war dragged on, the more her position became the mainstream of media commentaries in Germany. The bottom line of this kind of argument was: this is the wrong war, it should never have been started and that's why it has to stop. Even if you think this was the wrong war started at the wrong moment, a responsible approach would be to say, now that it did start, even if you do not like it, how do we make that story end without the terrorists, Iran, and Syria rejoicing and getting even stronger?

The what-to-do aspect was the soft side of this kind

of a moral-posturing-position. Indeed, it was unrealistic that the Israeli military thought they could finish off Hezbollah entirely, and it is surprising to me that Israeli politicians, according to the Winograd report, did not really think much about viable exit options and realistic targets to be achieved before they started the campaign. But this does not mean that singing old European slogans like "if they only talked they'd get along" or "if only the Palestinians had their state, everything would be fine" were anything more realistic than that—quite the contrary.

Responsible Versus Irresponsible Actor

The media impact of human rights groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch is steadily growing. In times of crisis, when people are looking for moral guidance, this becomes very decisive in forming public opinion. However, visiting the Human Rights Watch website during the war one could see that no attempt was made at even-handedness. Among a list of ten to fifteen reports that accused the parties of not fulfilling their obligations under international humanitarian law only one, the last, addressed Hezbollah—all others were directed at Israel. This is in part due to the usual anti-Israeli bias of the political camp, usually the left in Europe, that is active in human rights circles and accustomed to criticizing Israel—with good reason, at times—for its human rights record in dealing with the Palestinians. Singling out Israel in this way is unfair.

There are many reasons for the Israel obsession, not only of the left but of large parts of the European public. Nevertheless, there is also a rational core to the one-sidedness. It stems from the notion that Israel, although perceived by many as an overreacting cowboy, is still seen as a responsible state actor with a clear-cut chain of command and a political leadership that is susceptible to the pressure created by international public opinion.

It was already clear in the second Intifada in the occupied territories that, when confronted with two sides—one a responsible state actor, the other a hazy conglomerate of militias—the media would distribute criticism not to which side deserved it the most, but to the side that seemed more prone to make a difference as a political actor and more likely to change its behavior due to media pressure. That might be a rather subconscious and morally unfair approach, but one that has certain logic to it. Confronted with a choice in the Lebanon War about which party to influence in order to end the war, the overall reaction of European media early into the war was to level heavy criticism against Israel rather than against Hezbollah, whose anti-western mindset and strange ideological convictions did not seem to be much affected by what international media commentators wrote. This was a misunderstanding of Hezbollah's strategy, which, as Münkler wrote, relied on western media to substitute for the air protection it did not have.[25] In Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's videotaped TV appearances during the war it became clear that the organization felt the need to justify its actions, at least in the Arab public sphere. From its efforts to control media reporting from Lebanon it became obvious that Hezbollah actually cared about what kind of images were transported from Lebanon into western living rooms. Indeed, more reporting about Hezbollah's cynical use of civilians as shields and—if killed by the Israelis—as propaganda tools in Arab and western media would have probably influenced Hezbollah's decision-making process. No movement that relies on the David-against-Goliath image can stand to be depicted for long as cynically exploiting those that are even weaker then they cast themselves to be.

The Problem of the Realists

As the University of Cologne's study cited above indicated, the German government, as represented by Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD), drew a much more complex picture of the war than German media. For most of the duration of the war, Merkel and Steinmeier tried to fend off calls for an early ceasefire. Steinmeier succeeded in doing so even against considerable pressure from the leftist current in his own party, including Ms. Wieczorek-Zeul. Merkel's and Steinmeier's position was determined by two main features: a sound strategic analysis about the causes of the conflict and its place in the shift of power towards Iran and Syria as a result of the war in

Iraq. They were also preoccupied by the postwar scenario and frightened by the prospect of an emboldened Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria in the region. Theirs was a position that three weeks into the war was very difficult to communicate to a public enraged by civilian suffering. The government tried to keep a low profile in the matter, exaggerated its own part in finding a solution to the conflict, and kept mostly silent about its efforts in the European arena to gain more time for Israel to weaken Hezbollah in order to set a favorable stage for the post-war settlement. Given the fact that Steinmeier and Merkel must have realized early on that their position was increasingly contrary to the majority of public opinion, it is rather astonishing that they stayed the course, albeit with many concessions in rhetoric. This was a pragmatic tactic that gave the government some leeway to follow their politics without arousing too much media pressure that would have made their position increasingly unfeasible.

The downside of this kind of a low profile approach can be seen in many foreign policy debates in Germany: the absence of politicians who forcefully make the point of realism and pragmatism in foreign policy discussions causes this position to get caught in a "spiral of silence," a term coined in the 1970s by the famous German pollster Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. As a result, there is a small "elite" of foreign policy experts (who in their own small world are more often than not convinced transatlanticists) that argue pragmatic foreign policy positions and know that the world—and especially the Middle East—is mainly organized by power politics, while the public discourse at times seems fairly detached from realistic foreign policy options.

This "parallel discourse" in the media did not succeed in seriously limiting Germany's foreign policy options in the case of the Lebanon War. However, the dualism that was visible in the Lebanon debate of "elite foreign policy thinking" behind closed doors and among a small group of decision-makers and "mainstream foreign policy thinking" in the media is a serious burden for Realpolitik approaches in German foreign policy. It is what makes pragmatic approaches, e.g., to Germany's mission in Afghanistan, so difficult.

Furthermore, it has the potential to seriously damage German national interest, as we have seen, for example, in the discussion about the U.S. missile defense shield in Europe, during which it was very difficult to engage in a serious debate about threat scenarios in the public sphere.

Assembling the New Unifil Mission: The Call-Me-Out Syndrome and German Exceptionalism

Given the deficiencies of the debate about the Lebanon War, it is surprising that the German government succeeded in gathering support from both the media and the Bundestag for German participation in the UN mission. Opinion polls suggested at the time that a majority of Germans would have liked to see others take care of resolving an international crisis. It would have been quite possible for the German government to follow the isolationists' call-me-out syndrome that had manifested itself several times in the recent past. This had happened earlier in the aftermath of the Iraq crisis when German diplomats (as temporary members of the UN Security Council) battled, especially with the United States, to assure a bigger UN role in Iraqi affairs—and after they had largely won in this issue, did not think that it was rather strange that a country that had more than any other called for a strong UN role in post-war Iraq all the same called itself out when then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan explicitly asked for troops to protect the UN mission in Iraq—troops that were not part of the countries that had waged the war.

The same picture holds true with Afghanistan, where politicians and media commentators always criticize the U.S. for alienating the local population with their allegedly militaristic approach in the south and regularly give good advice about how this should really be done—and when NATO comes by and asks for more German involvement in the south, this is turned down. It would not have come as a surprise if Germany would have stuck with the good old European habit in the Middle East of giving inconsequential good advice from the sidelines without getting really involved themselves.

To be sure, it was not the Germans or the French who saved the mission in Lebanon from dying at the start, but rather the unlikely Italians who generously offered ground troops while the French were still hesitant. It also helped that the German government picked a rather unspectacular and seemingly much less dangerous part of the mission in patrolling the sea instead of going into Lebanon itself. Despite the fact that Germany's engagement in the Lebanese crisis shows a growing amount of maturity in foreign affairs, some problematic aspects of the public debate remain.

Germans still do not see their country as one that is called upon to intervene in the case of international crisis. When they do, they do not portray themselves as doing so out of a sound understanding of national interest. This has been true in other missions, as well: they are in Afghanistan because their partners asked; they went into the Congo to please the French and embolden European foreign policy; they intervened together with NATO partners in Kosovo because then-Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer called for preventing a second Auschwitz from happening on European soil. Consequently, the strongest reason for going into Lebanon was Germans' historical guilt towards the Jews and the subsequent commitment to the existence of the Jewish state. Even those opposing the Lebanon mission were arguing with history. Indeed, the Free Democratic Party that for decades had filled the post of German foreign minister and at the time seemed to be increasingly populist in foreign policy matters, rejected the mission on the grounds that it did not want a situation to arise in which a German soldier might be forced to take aim at an Israeli soldier. The idea that it was unacceptable for Israelis to have German soldiers next to their border was going on even days after Israel had explicitly asked Germany to take part in the mission.

History and a commitment to the existence of Israel are important factors in German foreign policy. However, the history argument, much like the "our partners want us to take part" argument in Afghanistan and the Congo, is a way of once again evading a Realpolitik approach to foreign policy.

There was a good, pragmatic, and even self-interested case to be made for taking part in the Lebanon mission, which then should have been duly weighed against the risk of such an undertaking. The argument could have gone as follows: this is a crisis just on our doorstep that inevitably will have repercussions for Europe as a whole, either in fomenting more terrorism that will spill over to Europe or in causing huge numbers of refugees to knock on our door. If the Middle East conflict is really the mother of all conflicts, as many Europeans believe, then Europe cannot go on talking the talk without walking the walk. Germany is the most important economy in the EU and one of the most important countries in the world, so it bears a responsibility to stabilize a situation that might have repercussions also for itself and for its region. It is not acceptable anymore that Europeans and Germans always give good advice from the sidelines and refrain from really getting involved. This is a pattern of European Middle East politics that is increasingly hurting our credibility in the region.

To be fair, parts of this pragmatic line were put forward in the debate by politicians and commentators alike. Still, the overriding argument was one of history, which fosters the idea that German intervention is still the exception and not the new state of affairs. Some said it after the Congo mission, others after the Lebanon crisis: it is high time that Germany gets its act together and defines its national interests and the guidelines upon which to decide whether a mission makes sense. It should not become a rule to argue with exceptional circumstances when Germany engages in an international mission.

Conclusion

The Lebanon War broke out more than a year ago. The German navy is patrolling the Lebanese coast and, at least in German politics, there is little discussion anymore about the sense of the mission. With the end of heated debates about the Lebanon War, the media focus also went away. Today a majority of Germans are probably just as uninformed about what is actually going on in Lebanon as they were when the war began. Thus, it is very likely that if a new war between Hezbollah and Israel broke out, it would be

the Lebanon War 2.0 (or 3.0, depending on how one counts) all over again.

As highlighted in this essay, the media perception and the general debate about the war had many deficiencies. There was a lack of reporting about the history of the conflict, a heavy reliance on the emotional power of pictures of the victims of the war on the Lebanese side, and a striking unbalance in the reporting, especially in the electronic media, that worked to Israel's disadvantage. German media failed to convey the complexity of the regional factors involved and did not really want to discuss the hard choices Israeli leaders were confronted with. It did not report enough about Hezbollah's fighting tactics and subsequently was not reflecting enough about Hezbollah's use of the media and the media's role in the conflict.

So did the media actually act as Hezbollah's helpers? If so, this was unintentional. Nevertheless, war reporting, analysis, and commentary alike did not really grasp the nature of this asymmetrical conflict and how media imaging played a much greater role than in previous conflicts. There can be little doubt that the extensive media coverage, its focus, and its deficiencies overwhelmingly worked to Hezbollah's advantage.

In addition, the debate about the Lebanon War offered some insights about the general state of the foreign policy debate in the country. There is an important pacifist trend in Germany, a general dislike with everything having to do with warfare. As a result, the rules of going to war and the rules of warfare itself are usually interpreted very restrictively. In the discussion about the Lebanon War, Israel was measured to a higher standard than, for example, what was applied to NATO's Kosovo campaign. But still the debate raises the fundamental question of whether, in today's media environment, a democratic country can successfully wage a military campaign against a well equipped guerilla force that hides among the local population and uses media reporting to its own advantage.

The German debate focused much on the legality of Israel's action, much less than on the clear cut illegally of Hezbollah's tactics. But the media largely ignored an important new phenomenon of asymmetrical conflicts: while international law is intended to protect countries against military aggression, the high moral standard western societies hold themselves to, and the willingness to abide by international law become a serious burden when attacked by a foe that does not see itself restricted in any way by the international rules of warfare and successfully plays on the theme of David and Goliath. There is no easy answer to the moral dilemma that a regular state actor who is the victim of an aggression by an illegal guerilla force is suffering from a net disadvantage caused by international law, especially when this law is applied very restrictively. The German media did not so much as raise the question of whether international law had developed from a force protecting regular state actors to protecting unlawful actors—and consequently also did not ask about its own place in that picture.

Another feature peculiar to the German debate is a moral aloofness that does not care much about the consequences of its demands. Early calls for an immediate ceasefire displayed a striking lack of Realpolitik considerations and usually evaded the question of what to do once the ceasefire was in place. Finally, the debate about Germany's part in the UN mission gave another example of German exceptionalism when it comes to intervention in foreign countries. Both sides, the ones arguing for and those against German involvement were mainly referring to Germany's Nazi past and the obligations towards Israel that arose from it. The predominance of these type of arguments once again overshadowed a Realpolitik approach to a military mission abroad.

A lack of realism is perhaps the recurrent theme when one looks at the public debate in Germany about the Lebanon War. Realism in thinking about war and what it means and the inevitable victims it costs. Realism of how to manage a regional crisis without the "bad guys" being emboldened. A realistic view of the cynicism with which Hezbollah used the Lebanese population as a shield and propaganda tools—and a more sober assessment of the media's role in Hezbollah's game. And finally a more realistic view of why a

country like Germany cannot refuse to call itself to action in a mission in Europe's backyard that is vital to stability in the region.

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23 Originally in German: Ich bin mir nicht so sicher wie die Friedensfreunde, dass der Krieg, den Israel führt, ein falscher, „unverhältnismäßiger" Krieg ist. Ich bin mir aber auch nicht so sicher wie die Haudraufs, dass das ein richtiger Krieg um die „gerechte Sache" ist, noch dazu einer, der die Probleme lösen kann, deren Folge er ist. Aber zwei Dinge weiß ich. Erstens: Ich will nicht mit antimuslimischen Ideologen gemeinsam für diesen Krieg, und ich will nicht mit antiisraelischen und antisemitischen Herumdrucksern gemeinsam gegen diesen Krieg sein. Robert Misik, "Und, wo stehen Sie?" *Die Taz on the Web*, 26 July 2006, <http://www.taz.de/digitaz/.archiv/suche?dos=1&mode=erw&demo=1&tx=&ti=&au=Robert+Misik&sdd=01&smm=07&syy=2006&edd=28&emm=07&ey y=2006&art=&len=&se=&rev=1&ListLen=10&qu=&re=> (23 August 2007).

24 "Es gibt keine militärische Lösung," Der Tagesspiegel on the Web, 20 July 2006, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/International-Nahost;art123,1865728> (23 August 2007).

25 Originally in German: Zur Asymmetrie gehört, daß diese nach Partisanenart operierenden Bodenkämpfer sich gegen Attacken aus der Luft nicht durch moderne Luftabwehrsysteme schützen, sondern daß diese Funktion die Bilder von den "unschuldigen Zivilisten" übernehmen. Sie sind ein elementares Moment der asymmetrischen Entschleunigung durch gesteigerte Opferbereitschaft. Herfried Münkler, "Wer ist David?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on the Web*, 19 August 2006, <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,,19955774-5007220,00.html> (23 August 2007).