Dissensus at Times of Consensus: Arguing Against in Editorials

Galia Yanoshevsky
Bar-Ilan University and Tel-Aviv University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/ossaarchive

Part of the Philosophy Commons

http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/ossaarchive/OSSA7/papersandcommentaries/157
Dissensus at Times of Consensus: Arguing Against in Editorials

GALIA YANOSHEVSKY

French
Bar-Ilan University and Tel-Aviv University
47 Basel St.
Tel-Aviv 62744
Israel
yanoshg@mail.biu.ac.il

ABSTRACT: The role of the media as the "watchdog of democracy" is hindered at times of war when mainstream newspapers support government decisions and military actions. Disagreement is expressed without breaking away from consensus, by using opposing rhetorical moves such as an appeal to both the deliberative and the epideictic modes and to emotion as well as to the reasonableness of the audience. Such moves sustain the alleged "balance of reasons" and thus help to preserve the newspaper's ethos.

KEYWORDS: editorial, doxa, deliberative, epideictic, consensus, dissensus, disagreement, scenography, common sense, reason

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been shown that at times of national crisis, and notably during wartime, mainstream newspapers are likely to support government decisions and military actions. Roeh and Nir (1992) demonstrate how "Intifada coverage suggests that journalism in time of crisis tends to contribute to, and concurrently, articulate the maintenance of a social consensus. That is, it tends to discharge this function more than it tends to abide by the prescribed rules of adversary journalism or even objective or "just-the-facts" journalism." (p. 57).

Recently, Biano and Kohen-Almagor (2007) recall the Israeli press's tendency to "gather around the flag" (metaphorically, to behave in a patriotic way) during war time, a trend that is common in other countries as well (Biano & Kohen-Almagor 2007: 16) The patriotic penchant was expressed by journalist Amiram Nir during the second day of the First Lebanon war, when he wrote an article entitled, "quiet, there's shooting", in support of consensus. The thesis according to which during war journalists must stop debating and engage in support of the government reflected the accepted conception at the time (Biano & Kohen-Almagor 2007: 27).

Biano and Kohen-Almagor report that even Ha'aretz, a quality daily reputed for being "critical and biting" (sic.), reflects this tendency of "gathering around the flag". According to their findings, the paper maintained a mostly neutral or positive description of the regime and the army during all Israeli wars. That is, Ha'aretz retreated from criticism in critical periods of reporting on war, and therefore, they claim, one cannot speak of a critical and biting paper (Biano & Kohen-Almagor 2007: 28).

---

1 Also based on Shohat (1994) and Kellner (2004) on American reporting during the Gulf War.
Both Nir & Roeh (1992) and Hacket & Zhao (1994) see a connection between the newspaper's behavior in reports and op/eds as reflecting a context and a master narrative. "Newspapers are indeed agents of culture, and journalists are the narrators of stories to their audience. The texts they produce must be read in view of their intertextual context. Rather than reporting on the events, the news attests to a consensus, describes deviations from it, and points at the way society perceives itself (Nir & Roeh 1992: 59). Hacket and Zhao (1994) show how US newspaper articles published during the first two weeks of the Gulf War are related to America's master narrative on war (p. 533).

For Hacket and Zhao, dissenting voices such as the peace movement are represented as part of what they dub the "mainstream American journalism's convention of balance and objectivity and the press's need to maintain the image of an open forum of public discussion", a thing which "makes it an imperative to accord some access to different perspectives." (Hacket & Zhao 1994: 525) But in general, they point out to a tuning down or "flattening" of dissenting voices. Although Nir & Roeh (1992) claim that during the Intifada, Ha'aretz editorials did tend to oppose official policies in the territories, they show that overall, Intifada coverage inclined to conformity.

We may then ask how the paper fulfills its duty for independence and criticism despite the tendency to participate in the general consensus. We may inquire how criticism is expressed despite the general call for conformity ("quiet, there's shooting"). In what follows, I show what I call an "ascending conformity" in four editorials of Ha'aretz published during what came to be known as the Second Lebanon War. From an outright negation of the war, reflecting the newspaper's need to conform with its duties as the "watchdog of democracy" to a gradual consent with the military campaign.

I will analyze in depth the last article of the series. I show that despite conformity with consensus the editorial seems to express certain criticism. This is done, however, I will claim, in order to maintain Ha'aretz's image as the "Journal for people who think". In order to maintain that image, the editorial seems to stage a scenography of argumentation, i.e., the weighing up of options (what I will later refer to as the "balance of reasons"). The paper seems to allow some criticism of the situation underhand. Against praise and support of the campaign, its agents and its positive potential diplomatic results, the journal voices opposition to war by alluding to its price. The more the war progresses, the feebler the opposition to it is. Nevertheless, the faint disagreement enables the paper to maintain its critical ethos.

1. A RHETORIC OF ASCENDING CONFORMITY

1.1. Background

The Second Lebanon War is the name given to the campaign launched in the summer of 2006 by the Israeli government in Lebanon, following the kidnapping by Hezbollah of two soldiers and the killing of four others. It lasted from mid-July until mid-August, a time during which the northern cities of Israel suffered rocket attacks. It came after a few

---

2 Ha'aretz is a high-brow Israeli daily, the third largest paper after two most popular papers: Yed'iot and Ma'ariv. It is considered as economically liberal and slightly leftist. It is widely read by decision makers.

3 "Ha'aretz, the journal for people who think", this has been the paper's slogan for years now, running in its advertisements, as opposed to popular papers.
months of constant rocket attacks in the southern part of Israel, and an abduction of a soldier in Gaza. After the trauma of the first Lebanon war (1982), the government was hesitant to react on a full scale. Public opinion tended in general to be highly supportive of the military campaign in what it viewed as a mandatory war, though it remained critical vis-à-vis what it considered as the government's ineptness to deal with the complex situation.⁴

1.2. Corpus

A corpus of 26 Ha'aretz editorials was examined: from July 13 2006, the first editorial to specifically discuss the potential military campaign in Lebanon, to 11 August 2006, where diplomatic negotiations for a cease-fire were well underway. Four articles were selected, respectively July 13th (included as Appendix A), July 19th, July 23rd, and July 27th (included as Appendix B) that reflect the attitude towards war, from its potential to its realization and consequences.

1.3. Analysis

An analysis of the four texts reveals what I call an "ascending conformity": from opposition to war, to an agreement with the campaign and a call to pursue it until diplomatic negotiations are accomplished.

The title of the July 13 editorial, "No to Lebanon war 2", expresses a clear opposition to the possibility of war. Following the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, "the government approved heavy attacks in Lebanon; Israel is preparing for long distance rocket attacks" (Ha'aretz front page, 07/13/06). The editorial rejects a vast military reaction for fear of an eruption of a regional war, as is stated in the conclusion in paragraph 6 [cf. Appendix A]:

In the situation of war that Israel is now found in, in the territories as well as against Hezbollah, it needs to reinforce its power of deterrence – especially since the abduction attempts may suggest, that this power has indeed been eroded – but [Israel] should not allow an abduction [literally: a terrorist attack of abduction] to drag it towards a regional war.

The argumentative structure is that of a "balance of reasons", i.e., an attempt to "weigh" the different "voices" or justifications for and against the war [cf. paragraphs 1-4]. Considering these options conforms to the editorial function as the "arena of a free exchange of opinions and ideas" (Limor&Mann 1997).⁵ Based on the opposition of

---

⁴ What contributed to the criticism of the government was the fact that neither the prime minister nor the minister of defense were ex-generals, and therefore were supposedly complete laymen in matters pertaining to warfare.

⁵ According to Limor and Mann, Op/eds are one of the most tangible expressions of journalism as the arena of a free exchange of opinions and ideas. The articles play a role in education and socialization as well as in forming public opinion and engaging it for social causes. The article contributes to the crystallization of public norms. Socially speaking, the article is supposed to warn, society, the readers, and decision makers against social dangers. Op/eds expose the reader to a variety of public opinions, but they also contribute to forming or reinforcing opinions and positions on current issues. The article interprets and analyzes what takes place for the benefit of the citizen (Limor & Mann 1997: 371). In each of society's sectors, the articles fulfill two roles. On the one hand, they serve as a feedback on the current opinions and positions held by
response versus restraint, the editorial opts for the second, in a justification based on an appeal to a causal link, i.e. (if Israel reacts to Hezbollah attacks, then this might lead to a regional war) as well as an appeal to experience (the first Lebanon war). The first Lebanon war is referred to as "the 1982 complication", a war that was experienced as traumatic and unnecessary war – an "elective war", by the Israeli public. All in all, the article reflects, on a linguistic as well as on an argumentative level, the paper's negative attitude towards the possibility of a war. It also contains an implied criticism of the government's decisions and conduct in the matter of the abducted soldiers, by appealing to possible world scenarios (if the government would have done so and so in the past, then it might have avoided the current "complication"…) [cf. paragraph 5].

But as the attacks in the north progress, the journal seems to gradually renounce dissent and to comply with the idea of "quiet, there's shooting". In the front page, the newspaper starts using the headliner "war in the north". From July 18, the front page manifests a new kicker in red "war in the north". The recognition that the war has erupted leads the paper to "gather around the flag", in what seems to be the manifestation of a crescendo of conformity. The editorial of July 19 carries the title "Who is for the extermination of terror?" voicing thus Ariel Sharon's onetime overtaking of the microphone in his party's assembly (February 1990), in what was to become the cliché of hard line government reaction to a softer, leftist ideology. The editorial's conclusion reflects a careful support of and even identification with the government's move, claiming that "the action taken against Hezbollah can be of great assistance in securing our power of deterrence, on which will be finally based every future arrangement, in the northern border as well as on all of our frontiers". The newspaper's engagement vis-à-vis the need to support government's decision at times of war can be seen via the usage of the 2nd person plural pronoun form "our", but this time and despite its conformity, it shows a certain prudence by restricting its agreement using first a subjugated clause ["on which will be finally based every future arrangement, in the northern border as well as in all of our frontiers"] meaning that the war has an objective: a future arrangement, and secondly, adding a restriction: on the condition that "the war be stopped on time with achievements and not with a number of operational mistakes that may lead to a growth in the number of victims on both sides." Finally, by calling the government to "consider every morning anew what its targets are and if they have been achieved in a way that enables to accept attempts by international elements to create a new security reality, that is reasonable and stable." We can see then that contrary to the first article that rejects war, the second editorial of 19 July carefully supports it, albeit with certain restrictions.

the public or at least by certain factions, about positions and moves of decision makers. On the other hand, their role consists of acting as an instrument for recruiting public support for ideas of moves, or opposing them (p. 372). Finally, the articles published in the press are an essential part of the journal's "identity card". This identity card has two aspects: one being the paper's position on major events of the public agenda, the second being the publishing policy of the paper regarding a host of opinions, even those that do not correspond with the paper's stance. In other words, the articles are an expression of the paper's degree of liberalism and pluralism (p. 373).

6 The Israeli myth includes a talmudic distinction between a mandatory war (milchemet chova), when the enemy attacks, and an elective war (milchemet reshut or breira), when you choose to attack the enemy. In Israeli doxa then, every war is measured against this scale. Whereas the Yom-Kippur (1973) war was viewed as mandatory war, the first Lebanon war was largely seen as an elective, unnecessary war.
July 23rd’s editorial continues this inclination towards aligning with the flag. The article's structure resembles the July 13 article's "balance of reasons", where options are being weighed: on the one hand, the campaign in Lebanon with its heavy price, on the other hand, halting the war without an achievement will cause more casualties on the Israeli side. The article's conclusion, after having considered the options is that Israel should continue the fighting, due to the umbrella of support it now receives from the "International front": "President Bush is leading a firm external front, providing Israel on an international scale, quality time to break down the power of a mutual enemy." The conclusion drawn clearly confirms the full fledged support the paper now accords the government and the army: "The government of Israel and the IDF are worthy of support at home for their efforts to take advantage of the political freedom they were granted, in the following days and maybe weeks."

We now arrive at the editorial that seals our series. The July 27 editorial pursues the line expressed in the July 23 article, entitled "military time, political freedom". Entitled "Only after a clear-cut success", the article implies the question: should war be brought to a halt? While in the July 13 editorial the first Lebanon war is evoked in order to avoid another trauma, here, on the contrary, it is used to encourage the government and the top command to go to war despite its traumatic effect (cf. par 6: "The fear that they may repeat that miserable adventure is freezing their steps to a point where they create themselves a new trauma, that of a rear helplessly being hit by missiles."). According to the editorial, the new trauma will be created here by an absence of fighting.

The editorial then concludes [cf. paragraph 7] that the military campaign must be carried out until an achievement is reached. Both articles (July 23 and 27) express support for the military campaign launched by the government, and both justify it in terms of enabling the diplomatic negotiations that follow. We have thus shifted from opposition to a military campaign at the inception of the war, to a conception of "the fighting must go on".

2. CRITICISM AND THE BALANCE OF REASONS

But even as the paper shifts towards support of the war, the editorial seems to maintain the "balance of reasons". By calling upon common sense and accepted opinions, the editorial appeals to the reason of the audience.

Despite a clear expression of support for the continuation of the war, it seems like the 27 July editorial allows for criticism. On the explicit level, the article "divides and rules": though not expressing doubt with regard to the "justification of the war and its justness", it is skeptical with regard to the management of the campaign (par. 1); it supports the military moves and the combatants (cf. par. 6), but decries the political level and the top command's conduct (cf. par. 6). This criticism vis-à-vis the government is supported by the usage of an emotional vocabulary: a "difficult battle" (par. 1), and the death of 50 soldiers and civilians is a "difficult fact" (ibid.).

The difficulty of the war, yet its necessity is also reflected by the "balance of numbers": 50 soldiers and civilians is a high price to pay, but on the other hand, "the UN forces to the Middle East has not fulfilled its duty to restore security and order across the

---

7 Cf. Amossy's (2002) analysis of "doxic elements" and the role they play in determining the universal audience.
border, ever since its foundation 28 years ago" (par. 2). Contrary to Roeh and Feldman's (1984) claim, numbers here do not contribute to an emotional effect (what Roeh and Feldman dub the melodrama of news), but rather to a reasoning: the elevated number of deaths is weighed against the wasted time and losses during the presence of the UN forces. It can be deduced that only a continuation of the war may change the situation. The editorial supports the US Government's Secretary of State call for a stable cease-fire, which the paper interprets as (cf. par 2. "i.e.") "a cease fire after the weakening of Hezbollah." And again, the "weakening of Hezbollah" is expressed in numbers: "A tough impact" on Hezbollah means "bringing down to nearly zero of the rocket [katiushas] firing on Israel" (par. 4).

Criticism of the top command and the government is also expressed on the stylistic level. The article uses a military jargon (pars. 3-5), going as far as criticizing tactical level decisions. Paragraph 5 discusses the concentration of fighting with respect to missile launchers: "Concentrating efforts on the front line only, the center of which is Bint Jbeil will not bring the desired result. If the launchers of missiles that hit Haifa are located north of this point, in the Tzor region, then taking over Bint Jbeil will not help in destructing them". This reflects the paper's deep understanding of military manoeuvres, as opposed to the government and the top command which seem to be "frozen in a giant ice cube" (par. 6). The government's lack of understanding is emphasized in comparison with the paper's manifested expertise.

As we have seen so far, the editorial's critical mode is reflected by the deliberative mode, i.e., by the weighing up of options: the price of continuing the war as opposed to its immediate halt. This criticism may seem inconsistent with the prevailing doxa of gathering around the flag. It is however "balanced" by an appeal to the epideictic mode: the praise of the combatants whose conduct during the current war is the very expression of doxa. A good example of this is provided by the front page headline of the same day. It quotes a platoon commander's saying "whoever cannot protect his freedom – is unworthy of it". The commander is quoted in the article as saying "we will not lose this war. We did not start it, but it is our duty as an army to protect the Jewish people and to care for the citizens that are here in Metula and Haifa to live peacefully." (Ha'aretz 27 July 2006). Combatants are praised in the editorial precisely because no one doubts their sincerity, they are the only real common ground in this war, and the paper relies on them in order to express its conformity, despite its criticism vis-à-vis the government.

Finally, the call for the continuation of war is supported in the conclusion of the article by an appeal to (international) authority, recognized by the Israeli public (par. 7: "The Israeli public perfectly comprehends what Rice understands; an abrupt ending to the military action, with no achievement, will result in the renewal of fire within a few weeks."). The Israeli public's common sense is thus set as a common ground, a starting point from which the editorial argues, expressing both support and criticism.

---

8 "If we don't do it, nobody else will. For two thousand years we waited for this state and we will not retreat because a bunch of terrorists think that they can scare us."/ "I've told you this [before] and I really believe it", continues captain Uri Lavie, "whoever cannot protect his liberty – is unworthy of it. If we as an army, as a country will not now how to fight with our teeth, to the last drop of blood, so that this people can be free in its country, it will not be."/ "There's time for talking and time for action, and when missiles and katiushas fall on all cities in the north and even reach Haifa, and when we have two kidnapped soldiers and already 10 casualties and dozens of injuries – it is no time for talking, it is time for fighting. [...]" (Ha'aretz front page, 27 July 2006).
3. DISCUSSION – (DIS)AGREEMENT AND THE SCENOGRAPHY OF ARGUMENTATION

In what follows I discuss the previous analysis in light of Dominique Maingueneau's (1998) genre theory. This, I presume, will shed light on how and why disagreement is expressed at times of consensus in an editorial.

Maingueneau reminds us that a text is not an ensemble of inert signs, but the trace of a discourse where speech is performed (mise en scène). As such, it is subject to several "scripts". The global scene relates to the type of discourse: the political discourse involves deliberation while the epideictic concerns praise. The journalistic discourse requires both objective coverage as well as a critical outlook on government and society. The generic scene relates to the conventions of the genre within which a discourse is pronounced. Thus, the editorial is supposed, as we have mentioned earlier, to represent a pluralism of voices and to support or criticize government actions. But how government and society's actions are criticized or supported, how opinions are expressed or justified, is a matter of what Maingueneau dubs "scenography" (p. 71-73). Scenography is the "outfit" chosen for the utterance. For example, an advertisement for Coca-Cola presents attractive people; an advertisement for cigarettes portrays some pastoral scenery with a house and chimney. The scenography selected is supposedly the best rhetorical means to express an idea.

Regarding our subject matter, the question of scenography seems to highlight a certain ambiguity. Can we be sure that the consensual tone expressed in the articles is sincere, or is it just a setting, a scenography, the best way to communicate a dissenting opinion by appealing to common ground, in order to enable the editorial to fulfill its critical duty without provoking resentment? In other words, does the editorial opt for what best appeals to the common sense and the reason of the Israeli audience, to what Velasco (2005: 57) calls the "doxic experience"?9

Or maybe the criticism expressed in the text – on both the explicit and implicit levels - against the government, but not against the actual justification of the war nor against its performers (the combatants) - maybe this criticism by dissociation is the lip service paid to the paper's need to maintain an appearance of critical thinking even when consensus is called for, as part of carrying out its generic duty?

Either way, the journal's reputation of "the paper for people who think" is preserved: expressing opposition to war in the first editorial (13 July 2006) is supported by a scenography of the balance of reasons or an appeal to the deliberative mode, while relying on Israeli common experience of the first Lebanon war. This scenography is

---

9 The universal audience thus becomes part of what le Velasco dubs the "doxic experience" (ibid., 57): "[...]Perelman argues that tacit agreements on presumptions about what counts as "normal" can sometimes acquire "the same order of validity for the universal audience as agreement upon established facts and truths" (The New Rhetoric 73). With remarks such this, Perelman seems to suggest a way in which the universal audience might work as what he calls a "reference group" (The New Rhetoric 72) to valorize and legitimate particular norms and classifications in society as if they reflected objective facts, as well as how "when inserted into a system of beliefs for which universal validity is claimed, values may be treated as facts or truths" (The New Rhetoric 76). It is from this perspective, which sees the universal audience as a kind of storehouse for presumptions about reality that have acquired their own facticity in the social world as part of a "system of beliefs for which universal validity is claimed," that we can relate the concept to the notion of doxa." (le Velasco, 2005: 57-58).
maintained throughout the third article (23 July 2006) where the price of war is considered against the price of retreat. Finally, in the last article (27 July 2006), expressing support for the war becomes the common ground upon which criticism is enabled. The journal thus "eats the cake and leaves it whole": it criticizes yet remains on the safe side of siding with public opinion.

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to show how disagreement is expressed at times of general consensus in a genre – the editorial – that requires the expression of criticism. I have demonstrated how the editorial performs its duty without breaking away from public opinion, by actually appealing to it as the very common ground required for argumentation to even take place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Roselyne Koren for her insightful remarks and suggestions.

REFERENCES

The firing attack and abduction initiated by Hezbollah in the North presents a dilemma for the Government and the I.D.F.[Israeli Defense Forces] On the one hand, it is impossible to accept the rude offense on Israeli sovereignty. The Israeli army has withdrawn from Lebanon to the international border, an official approval has been received from the UN, and at the time the government has declared to its people and to the outside world, that Israel will be able to protect its citizens and its land from within its territory. The reliability of the deterrence has received a blow yesterday. The obvious connection to the abduction in the South adds to the gravity of the event in the North [The kidnapping of Gilad Shalit – G.Y.] . The natural inclination is to respond with force, and by doing so to reinforce the deterrence that was hindered.

On the other hand, Israel has chosen more that once in the past a controlled and reasonable policy, even at times of anger and frustration, as it declared that it will indeed react – but at a place and a time of its choice, and not necessarily on the verge of the moment and with great military force, that destructs on its way hostile forces as well as peaceful citizens. Such an outburst of Israel's enormous power can easily come out of hand, and it is likely that the torn and wild Lebanese arena will encourage a dangerous escalation such as the one that developed following I.D.F.'s invasion in 1982.

Some may believe that one should take advantage of the opportunity in order to "purify" [sic.] all of Southern Lebanon from Hezbollah posts in order to restore Israel's deterrence power. Syria, too, may seem in this context a just target, especially since Israel considers, and justly so, its influence on the Palestinian organizations and on Hezbollah. But there is doubt whether an exaggerated action will bring to the release of the hostages; it may bring, God forbid, a modern version of the 1982 complication.

The need for restraint is especially salient because in the attack two soldiers were kidnapped, who are still alive, so one hopes, in the hands of Hezbollah. The government and the army are declaring their obligation to do everything in their power to return the soldiers from captivity. In the past, Israeli governments have negotiated with Hezbollah, under similar circumstances. Such a negotiation is not meant to change Israel's general attitude towards the organization, so long as it is still involved in terror.

The hard blow that Israel stood yesterday, the circumstances of which will probably require explanations, is highly serious especially because it did not come as a surprise. Hassan Nasserallah has warned as early as April, that he intends to return, even with the use of force, Samir Kuntar, the Haran's family 1979 assassin, that Israel refused to return until some information is received on Ron Arad. It might be, that Kuntar's return with the rest of the Lebanese prisoners and hostages would have prevented the abduction. It is also possible, that had Israel agreed to the principle of negotiation with Hamas government, there would have been a deal to return Shalit [soldier kidnapped in Gaza – G.Y.] and a cease fire in the South.

In the situation of war that Israel is now found in, in the territories as well as against Hezbollah, it needs to reinforce its power of deterrence – especially since the abduction attempts may suggest, that this power has indeed been eroded – but [Israel] should not allow one abduction to drag it towards a regional war.
The number of IDF fallen soldiers and Israeli citizens killed so far in the battlefield in Lebanon and in the rear has increased yesterday, and it has by now – after the difficult battle in Bint Jbeil – surpassed 50. This difficult fact renders more acute the wondering upon the wisdom of managing the battlefield – an issue different from its purpose and justification. To this was added another accidental killing incident, of four UN observers in Southern Lebanon, by IDF artillery. This tangible danger for foreign citizens in UN uniforms may obstruct the willingness of countries to contribute units to the force the USA wants to establish in Lebanon.

Over the 28 years since the establishment of UN power Unifil, this force has not fulfilled its mission to carry out the Security Council's decision 425 and to assist in restoring security and order on the border. Instead of acting as a buffer between the PLO, and later on Hezbollah, and Israel, it has become a loose filter, making immune planners of attack. Therefore, the American effort to establish a new multinational force instead of the weak Unifil, and Foreign affairs minister Condoleezza Rice's approach – seeking for a stable cease fire, i.e. a cease fire following the weakening of Hezbollah – is justified.

A premature cease fire means stopping the fire, in between salvos, rather than its conclusion. The Hezbollah leaders may then claim that immediately following the abduction they called for a cease fire in order to proceed to the negotiation stage on their demands, and if after more than two weeks of mutual blows their demand has been accepted – then it means that they have won. They will recover the damages with the courtesy of their treasurers in Tehran, and on a convenient moment will restore the fire.

The damage inflicted upon Hezbollah, for the sake of strengthening the political system in Lebanon, who is unwilling to become a hostage of Iranian and Syrian delegates, is essential to stabilizing the security arrangement that will rely upon a multinational force. To achieve such impact, IDF must act quicker and stronger in order to bring to an almost complete halt, the launching of rockets on Israel.

Concentrating efforts on the front line only, the center of which is Bint Jbeil will not bring the desired result. If the launchers of missiles that hit Haifa are located northern to this point, in the Tzor region, then the taking over of Bint Jbeil will not help in destructing them.

The combatants are determined and even enthusiastic, but the top commanders and the political leaders look as though they were congealed in a giant ice cube – the Lebanon war trauma. The fear that they may repeat that miserable adventure is freezing their steps to a point where they create themselves a new trauma, that of a rear helplessly being hit by missiles.

Israel cannot allow itself a wearing out of the battlefield, more and more victims on the front and the rear, and a low key tie; that is, a victory for Hezbollah. The Israeli public recognizes well what Rice understands; an abrupt ending to the military action, with no achievement, will result in the renewal of fire within a few weeks.