

In Israel This Issue Trumps All

It would be silly to think that the decision to take out a group of Hezbollah fighters led by Jihad Mughniyeh—who, according to media reports, were about to conduct a murderous terrorist attack against Israel in the Golan Heights region—was made based on electoral considerations, as was suggested on Sunday by Maj. Gen. (res.) Yoav Galant, now a Knesset candidate on the Kulanu list.

The incident in Syria did, however, put into sharp focus what the upcoming elections are about and what the main task will be for whoever serves as prime minister in the coming years.

Socioeconomic issues have taken on utmost priority in recent years. Prices are high, housing is expensive and salaries are low—all of these statements are correct. There is no question that the next prime minister will have to seriously tackle these issues.

But we must keep everything in proportion and set the right priorities. Since its establishment, Israel has never been free from security constraints. Just this past summer, terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip fired thousands of rockets and mortar shells at Israel.

And Sunday's incident in Syria was simply the latest reminder of the reality in which we live. If Mughniyeh and his comrades had been able to carry out even part of their plan, we would have found ourselves in a bloody nightmare with an unknown end. We certainly would not have been discussing the price of cottage cheese and housing costs.

It sometimes appears that the obsession with socioeconomic issues ahead of elections is merely an attempt to escape from dealing more disturbing and more existential issues that truly

matter.

The current elections campaign looks to be characterized by the traditional ideological struggle between Right and Left—Likud and Labor—and the public largely appears to already understand this. Israeli citizens will have to decide which party they believe in more, which party leader has the most experience and who is best suited to pick up the red telephone in Jerusalem.

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