

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:43:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498960

Documents (100)

1. [Hezbollah poised to consolidate hold in Lebanon](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

2. [Change in Iranian leadership won't stop nuclear program, according to IDF assessment. Army also concerned that Hizbullah government would involve Lebanese army in conflict with Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

3. [HEZBOLLAH PLOT FOILED](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

4. [Hezbollah spy thriller grips Arab world](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

5. [Hezbollah chief calls for death penalty for spies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

6. [Hezbollah chief calls on Egypt to stop Gaza wall](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

7. [Hezbollah's stocks on the rise regardless of Lebanon poll result](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

8. [In Lebanon 's wild east, Hezbollah finds itself on left foot](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

9. [Hezbollah attacks Hariri's proposed government](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

10. [Israel says seized weapons would have given Hezbollah a month's firepower, urges focus on Iran](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

11. [Call for unity among Ummah to face challenges](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

12. [Israel says seized weapons would have given Hezbollah a month's firepower, urges focus on Iran](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

13. [On the ground: Public weighs in on Al-Watan's Hezbollah report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

14. [Nasrallah lashes out at Hariri's government proposal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

15. [Beirut's Shiite bastion revives after 2006 war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

16. [*Spying trouble*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

17. [*Peres is twisting the facts by saying Israel has no quarrel with Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

18. [*Qawouk: Elections will defeat 'financial invasion'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

19. [*MULLAHS& MARIJUANA EYEWITNESS THE RULES OF THE GAME MAY HAVE CHANGED FOR LEBANON 'S BEKAA VALLEY DRUG BARONS AS HEZBOLLAH PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS, BUT AS HUGH MACLEOD DISCOVERS, ADDICTION IS A TOUGHER HABIT TO KICK*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

20. [*Wanni patients transferred to Trinco hospital*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

21. [After all, politics was not that 'domestic' in Lebanon](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

22. [Lebanon needs both security and freedom](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

23. [High incidence of cancer patients in Eastern province](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

24. [Israeli killings of civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

25. [Yasoda De Silva and Chanaka Wickramasinghe win diving triples](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

26. [In short](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

27. [PM brands Iran 's intercepted arms-shipment a 'war crime'. 320 tons of weapons on the 'Francop' were intended to kill civilians, says Netanyahu * ' UN should be condemning Teheran, not us,' he fumes * Israel urges world to cease all dealings with Iran 's state shipping firm](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

28. [Baabda stations see flood of citizens eager to shape Lebanon 's future](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

29. [Siniora: Lebanon benefits from Arab reconciliation](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

30. [Vote for bombs or business](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

31. [*While media reports hint agreement is near, obstacles still remain*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

32. [*Hariri striving for 'real partnership' in cabinet*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

33. [*Lebanon Arrests 3 on Charges of Spying for Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

34. [*A new cold war in the Mid-East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

35. [*Is Al Jazeera part of the Muslim Brothers' program?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

36. [*Where are all the usual suspects?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

37. [Fighting fit](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

38. [Sfeir draws fire for wading into electoral waters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

39. [Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights Watch : Action still doesn't justify army response * Group's report due today on alleged killing by IDF of 11 Palestinians holding white flags](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

40. [Obama shouldn't forget the democrats](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

41. [Brother of Hamas spokesman arrested in Arish](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

42. [*Middle East Reality Check*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

43. [*Middle East reality check Globalist*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

44. [*Middle East reality check Globalist*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

45. [*Sinai Bedouins protest hiked security raids*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

46. [*'One people, one city'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

47. [Disproportionate response does no good](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

48. [Israel winning secret war Elite Israeli commandos pounce on a ship they say was bringing Iranian weapons to guerrillas in southern Lebanon . It's the latest victory in an intelligence war with Israel 's enemies](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

49. [Daring rescue of civilians launched](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

50. [Rocket fired from Lebanon prompts Israeli barrage](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

51. [Israel 's rare opportunity](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

52. [International briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

53. [Lebanese officer held amid Israeli spy concerns](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

54. [Foul play in the Gulf](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

55. [Pakistan : Suicide bomber kills two persons, injured 19 in City](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

56. [DCO reviews security arrangements for 2nd death anniversary of Shaheed BB](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

57. [God's foreign policy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

58. [Terror trial accused told women he wanted to kill jews and us troops](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

59. [IN BRIEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

60. [IDF mulling self-defense course for all female recruits](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

61. [It's Short Step From Authoritarian to Totalitarian](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

62. [Lebanon protests condemn clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

63. [*NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rather than focusing on issues of racism and discrimination in the Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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64. [*Jimmy Carter, we can have peace \(without you\) in the Holy Land*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

65. [*Lebanon - Israel border calm after rocket attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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66. [*Lebanon - Israel border calm after rocket attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

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Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

67. [*Eager Lebanese race to polls to cast their ballots*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

68. [World Report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

69. [Bereaved mothers: Bring home Schalit 'at any cost'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

70. [Old fashioned censorship](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

71. [As election nears Lebanon 's banner war rages](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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72. [We cannot ban the freedom to be objectionable](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

73. [*Berri vows reforms, puts abolition of sectarianism on agenda*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

74. [*Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

75. [*'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism Conference in Jerusalem*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

76. [*Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

77. [*Campus Elections in Lebanon Mirror, and May Shape, Society's Volatile Politics*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

78. [News in brief](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

79. [The trouble with censorship: Like eating potato chips, censorship is hard to stop once you get the taste](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

80. [Where is Arab intellectual resistance?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

81. [AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN " Russian -speaking" minister of foreign affairs counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

82. [Obama's link to the Muslim world: Turkey](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

83. [AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN " Russian -speaking" minister of foreign affairs counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

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Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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84. [Muslim said he felt deaths of us soldiers were a 'gift'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

85. [Why silence on Iran when terror reigns?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

86. [Questionable victory; The size of Ahmadinejad's support casts doubt on the Iranian election](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

87. [Iran 's president fires new tirade against Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

88. [*Pro- Israel , pro-Arab and pro-peace Canada's friendship with Israel doesn't mean we can't support a viable state for Palestinians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

89. [*Letters*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

90. [*Assad adviser slams 'crazy' Israeli campaign against Mary Robinson. Bouthaina Shaaban blasts Zionist policies, Arab media's inability to counter propaganda*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

91. [*Israel ends search, says no soldier abducted*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

92. [*Quds rally expresses solidarity with Palestinians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

93. [Israel says no soldier abducted, calls off search](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

94. [Briefly World](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

95. [PM resists as world changes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

96. [Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

97. [What happened in Iran was not an election](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

98. [*In fractured Lebanon , starting reconciliation at a young age An organization helping teachers to promote conflict resolution in classrooms hopes the effort could blossom into a more peaceful national culture.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to
Dec 31, 2009

99. [*Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to
Dec 31, 2009

100. [*Free elect ions in Iran 4 Don't make me laugh LEADER*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 31, 2009 to
Dec 31, 2009

Hezbollah poised to consolidate hold in Lebanon

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 6, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 18

Length: 1119 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis

Body

Backed by Iran, the Shiite Islamists listed as terrorists in the West have the momentum in tomorrow's elections, writes Jason Koutsoukis in Beirut.

LEBANESE voters are widely expected to concentrate power in the hands of the Iranian-backed **Hezbollah** movement in parliamentary elections tomorrow.

Hezbollah appears to have the momentum in the closing stages of a campaign widely seen as a proxy battle between the pro-Western Arab states of the Middle East on one side and Syria and Iran on the other.

An ascendant **Hezbollah**, whose military wing is listed as a terrorist organisation in Australia, will be sure to exacerbate tensions in Israel, where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned repeatedly of the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program.

On Tuesday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad underscored those fears when he threw his support behind **Hezbollah** and said that its victory would "strengthen the resistance and change the situation in the region".

Just how seriously the US is taking the elections was highlighted by the recent visits to Lebanon of two of its most powerful figures - Vice-President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton - to support the pro-Western coalition led by Fouad Siniora and Saad Hariri, the son of former prime minister Rafiq Hariri, who was assassinated by a car bomb in 2005.

Mr Biden's message was unequivocal, stating that Washington would reconsider its continued military assistance to Lebanon based on the election outcome.

There was even a discreet warning to **Hezbollah** in US President Barack Obama's Cairo speech, where he said that "we will welcome all elected, peaceful governments - provided they govern with respect for all their people . . . you must respect the rights of minorities", and added that "the richness of religious diversity must be upheld - whether it is for Maronites in Lebanon or the Copts in Egypt".

But behind the noisy rhetoric of an election campaign, the reality is that sweeping change is virtually guaranteed not to happen.

Hezbollah poised to consolidate hold in Lebanon

"What will happen is the same stalemate as before, just under a different umbrella," says Hilal Khashan, a political science professor at the American University of Beirut. "**Hezbollah** will not seize power, and neither will Iran. They don't want to. This is about very slow and gradual change."

In Lebanon, power is rigidly divided between the country's 14 confessions, of which the big four are Shiite, Sunni, Maronite Catholics and Druze, alongside smaller sects such as the Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Protestants and Alawites. By convention, the president must be a Christian, the prime minister a Sunni, and the speaker of parliament a Shiite.

No party can govern alone, forcing them into ever-shifting alliances and coalitions. Disagreements are often settled in violent street battles or by assassinations.

The present parliament is divided between two coalitions that developed in the wake of Rafiq Hariri's assassination. On one side is the March 14 Alliance, named after the date of the huge demonstration in 2005 that sparked the Cedar Revolution and forced Syria to end its 30-year military presence in Lebanon. It comprises mainly Sunnis led by Saad Hariri, the Maronite Phalange Party led by Amin Gemayel, and the Druze Progressive Socialist Party led by Walid Jumblatt.

The opposition is known as the March 8 bloc, a pro-Syrian coalition dominated by **Hezbollah** and formed to counter the Cedar Revolution, which blamed Syria for Hariri's assassination.

Yet while this formal division exists on the floor of the parliament, the country is run by a national unity government, with **Hezbollah** already holding two seats at the cabinet table and a veto over key decisions.

The key to **Hezbollah** increasing its strength in tomorrow's vote lies in its decision in 2006 to form an alliance with Michel Aoun, a Maronite Christian and former general who could win the lion's share of the Christian vote.

"The question is whether they will have an absolute majority of more than 64 seats," says Omri Nir, one of Israel's leading experts on Lebanese politics.

"There is a serious possibility that some independent candidates will win enough seats to prevent the March 8 coalition from gaining an absolute majority. Some independent candidates are identified with President Michel Suleiman, a third bloc that may win up to eight seats and that would prevent the absolute victory of any of the sides."

According to Dr Nir, this would be an ideal outcome because it would pave the way for another national unity government.

Adding weight to this view late this week was **Hezbollah**'s own deputy leader, Sheikh Naim Qassem, who pledged that **Hezbollah** would invite its pro-Western opponents to join a unity government if it won.

"**Hezbollah** and its allies will work to form a national unity government," Sheikh Qassem said. "How much we will succeed is up to the other side."

The reasons **Hezbollah** wants such a government are clear, Dr Nir says. "**Hezbollah** have made a strategic decision not to impose themselves, but to persuade, to offer social services. They understand that to achieve their goals, they have to convince, not to force. Second, **Hezbollah** believes that a government of national unity that includes March 14 will provide it with immunity from an Israeli military raid because of its good relations with the US."

But what if **Hezbollah** and March 8 lose ground?

As the events of May 2008 proved, when **Hezbollah** forced March 14 to accept a unity government after a show of force that killed about 100 people, **Hezbollah**'s power is not just about its appeal to voters but also its expertly organised military wing.

Hezbollah poised to consolidate hold in Lebanon

"If March 14 wins, it has no choice but to keep Hezbollah in the coalition," Professor Khashan says.

Perhaps the biggest factor of tomorrow's election is that Hezbollah is even contesting it. In the '70s and '80s, Lebanon's Shiite population was a pilloried and despised minority, and Hezbollah was laughed at as an inept force of amateurs. Its real victory may be that it has shifted Lebanon's face eastward, away from the US and Europe, to Iran.

WHO'S VOTING

- Population About 4 million.
- Voting Compulsory for men aged 21 and over. Authorised for women 21 or over who can prove elementary education.
- Parliament Unicameral, with 128 seats.
- Based on the results of the last census conducted in Lebanon in 1932, seats are allocated to different religious sects according to their size.
- Voting in parliamentary elections takes place once every four years.
- The March 14 coalition includes the Future Movement of Saad Hariri with 36 seats and the Progressive Socialist Party with 16 seats.
- The March 8 opposition includes Hezbollah (14 seats) and Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (14 seats).

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Having their say: Election workers cast their early votes in Beirut under the watchful eyes of security. PICTURES: AP

Load-Date: June 5, 2009

Change in Iranian leadership won't stop nuclear program, according to IDF assessment. Army also concerned that Hizbullah government would involve Lebanese army in conflict with Israel

The Jerusalem Post
May 19, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 446 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

A change in leadership in Teheran would be one of form and not substance, according to the latest IDF assessments, which rule out the possibility that a new president would be open to the possibility of freezing the Islamic republic's nuclear program.

There are four main contenders for the presidency: incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who denies the Holocaust and calls for Israel's destruction; former parliament speaker and reformist Mehdi Karroubil; reformist former prime minister Mir-Hossein Mousavi; and former commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Mohsen Rezaee.

The vote will be held on June 12.

Mousavi, 67, has spoken out against Ahmadinejad's denial of the Holocaust, and is seen by many as the candidate with the best chance of defeating Ahmadinejad.

Rezaee is one of seven Iranians for whom an Argentinean judge issued an international arrest warrant for involvement in the 1994 attack on the AMIA Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people. He has been a fierce critic of Ahmadinejad's policies, saying in a recent press conference that they have led the Islamic Republic to the edge of a "precipice."

Despite the criticism of Ahmadinejad, Israel does not believe that any of the candidates - should they win - would halt Teheran's nuclear program, which according to Military Intelligence is on a fast track toward developing a nuclear weapon within 18 months.

"There is unlikely to be a change in Iran's nuclear policies no matter who wins the elections," a defense official said on Monday. "All of the leading candidates would likely continue with the nuclear program as part of Iran's overall strategy to project regional dominance."

According to the assessments, Israel needs to prepare for the possibility that Iran will not publicly demonstrate its nuclear capability but instead adopt a policy of ambiguity regarding its nuclear capability similar to Israel's. This would be done to avoid tough international sanctions while at the same time establishing a strong deterrent throughout the Middle East and Persian Gulf.

Change in Iranian leadership won't stop nuclear program, according to IDF assessment. Army also concerned that Hizbullah government would involve Lebanese army

Another election that Israel is closely following is Lebanon's parliamentary, elections to be held on June 7 amid predictions that **Hizbullah** will solidify its power base and perhaps establish the next ruling coalition.

If **Hizbullah** wins, Jerusalem believes the Iranian- backed Shi'ite group will install "acceptable faces" in the next cabinet. Israel is concerned that **Hizbullah** will appoint a defense minister affiliated with the group who will call for the participation of the Lebanese army in a future conflict with Israel, in contrast to the Second Lebanon War in 2006, when the Lebanese army stayed out of the war.

Graphic

Photo: SHI'ITE **WOMEN** listen to **Hizbullah** chief Hassan Nasrallah at a graduation ceremony in a Beirut suburb over the weekend. (Credit: Bilal Hussein/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

HEZBOLLAH PLOT FOILED

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

April 13, 2009 Monday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 535 words

Body

CAIRO -- Hezbollah agents operating in Egypt were plotting to attack Israeli tourists at resorts in the Sinai Peninsula, Egyptian and Israeli officials said yesterday.

Egypt announced recently that a cell of 49 men with links to Hezbollah were planning attacks aimed at destabilizing the country. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, rejected the accusations but confirmed over the weekend that it had dispatched a member to Egypt -- a rare acknowledgment that the Lebanese militant group was operating in another Arab country.

Yesterday, Egyptian Cabinet minister Mufed Shehab said authorities seized explosive belts and other bomb-making materials from the agents.

Tamil offensive on hold

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka -- Sri Lanka's president ordered a two-day suspension of offensives against Tamil Tiger rebels to enable nearly 100,000 trapped civilians to leave the war zone, his office said yesterday.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa directed the armed forces to restrict operations during the April 13-14 Sri Lankan New Year to a defensive nature and renewed his call that the rebels renounce violence permanently.

Threat on Sinn Fein

DUBLIN -- Irish Republican Army dissidents threatened yesterday to kill top Sinn Fein politician Martin McGuinness and resume attacks in England as part of their efforts to wreck the IRA cease-fire and Northern Ireland power-sharing.

An Easter statement from the outlawed Real IRA distributed to Irish media branded Mr. McGuinness a traitor because he holds the top Irish Catholic post in Northern Ireland's power-sharing government with British Protestants.

The Real IRA also claimed responsibility yesterday for a long-disputed killing of a Sinn Fein official who was exposed in 2006 as a British spy.

Moldova demonstration

HEZBOLLAH PLOT FOILED

CHISINAU, Moldova -- Moldova's opposition held its first demonstration since post-election rioting left one man dead, denouncing police mistreatment and President Vladimir Voronin's leadership of the eastern European country.

Last week's violence was sparked by the triumph of Mr. Voronin's Communist Party in parliamentary elections on April 5. Authorities arrested hundreds of participants and cracked down on high school and college classrooms. The Constitutional Court ruled yesterday that a recount should be held, as well as a verification of voter lists.

Bomb kills U.S. soldier

BAGHDAD -- A roadside bomb killed an American soldier north of Baghdad yesterday, the U.S. military said -- the sixth U.S. combat death in the last three days.

The bombing reflected still-persistent dangers across Iraq, even as U.S. battle deaths have dropped sharply since 2007 and Christians around the country gathered to celebrate Easter.

At least 4,272 members of the U.S. military have died in the Iraq war since it began in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

Taliban kill female official

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan -- A female provincial official known for fighting for women's rights was gunned down in southern Afghanistan yesterday, officials said.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmedi, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Sitara Achakzai, a dual German-Afghan citizen, was vocal in encouraging women to take jobs and encouraging them to fight for equal rights.

Load-Date: April 13, 2009

Hezbollah spy thriller grips Arab world

Guardian.com

April 29, 2009 Wednesday

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theguardian

Length: 814 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Bugged cars, mini-bars and the 'party of God' ... no wonder the arrest of four alleged moles has the Middle East abuzz

FULL TEXT

It's the first rule of espionage not to get caught - and of counter-intelligence work to ensure enemy operations are monitored and foiled. Occasional exposure can provide fascinating insights into a world that is supposed to remain secret.

So it has been in recent days on the Middle East's hottest frontline, where the Lebanese authorities have been rolling up an Israeli spy network or networks that are said to have penetrated the Shia organisation **Hezbollah**.

Lebanese and Arab media are agog with details of the affair. The most prominent of those arrested is Adib Alam, a retired general with the country's general security department. Alam, his wife and his nephew - a low-ranking serving security official - stand accused of gathering information about Lebanese and Syrian military and civilian targets "with the aim of facilitating Israeli attacks" and guiding Israeli planes to them.

Lebanese security sources have claimed that for 10 years Alam travelled regularly to Europe to meet his Israeli controllers while running a business that brought Asian **women** to Lebanon to work as maids as a front for his espionage activities. In his home investigators apparently found a **mini-bar that doubled as a communications system** for transmitting and receiving information via satellite.

This week the authorities arrested three other people, two Lebanese and one Palestinian, who are alleged to have confessed to crossing the border into Israel and receiving military training there.

Hezbollah, Lebanon's "Party of God," is backed by Iran and Syria and admired for its toughness and discipline even by its critics. Its military wing is clearly alert to the dangers of penetration by hostile intelligence services. But signs are that the "resistance", as **Hezbollah** is universally called in Lebanon, may have learned this the hard way. Earlier this year its security apparatus arrested a businessman named Marwan Faqih, who is **reported to have sold dozens of cars to Hezbollah officials** with GPS tracking and listening devices planted inside them on behalf of Israeli intelligence.

Hezbollah spy thriller grips Arab world

In such a murky area, it is reasonable to assume there may be disinformation in any media coverage, but it does seem likely that this operation allowed the Israelis to locate bunkers, safe houses and weapons caches put in place since the 2006 war.

Hezbollah interrogated Faqih and then - in a sign of its improving relationship with the government in advance of the June parliamentary elections - handed him over to the Lebanese authorities, who charged him with collaborating with the enemy. Before that they did the same with Ali al-Jarrah, another Lebanese who was later charged with spying for Israel for 25 years and faces the death penalty. His brother and several others were also arrested.

In the Jarrah case, Lebanese reports have suggested a direct link with the killing of [Imad Mughniyeh](#), the **Hezbollah** military chief (involved in hostage-taking and attacks on US targets in the 1980s) who was assassinated in Damascus in February 2008 in a highly professional car bombing that was widely attributed to Israel's Mossad secret service.

Israel, like many governments, does not comment publicly on its clandestine operations. But unlike most others it does a good deal of nodding and winking designed to signal responsibility without acknowledging it: thus it was with the September 2007 bombing of an alleged nuclear reactor in Syria; the Mughniyeh killing; and most recently, the mysterious drone attack on an arms convoy on its way from Sudan, via Egypt, to supply Hamas fighters in the Gaza Strip.

The pattern is that after an initial "no comment" by the government, a politician makes an "unguarded" remark that corroborates the story. While official silence is maintained, effective confirmation comes later in unattributable or background media briefings - so the message filters through without a formal statement ever being made.

Yossi Melman, an Israeli expert on intelligence, seemed to be struggling to keep the country's military censors at bay when [he commented in Haaretz](#) that not all Israeli spying operations are carried out by the Mossad, a relatively small organisation that focuses activity on high-level targets, especially Iran's nuclear programme. Lebanese agents were likely being recruited and "run" by military intelligence units operating across the border and gathering operationally useful information about **Hezbollah**, he suggested.

It takes two to fight in the shadows of course, and in the last few months the Israeli security authorities have arrested and charged several Iranians, Lebanese and Palestinians - as well as Israelis - with spying for Iran and **Hezbollah** - though none of them appear to have achieved very much. The secret wars go on.

Load-Date: April 29, 2009

[Hezbollah chief calls for death penalty for spies](#)

AlArabiya.net

May 21, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 528 words

Body

Lebanon must hand down the death penalty on Lebanese suspects convicted of spying for Israel, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said on Friday.

"In the name of the families of martyrs, of the wounded and of those who lost their homes ... I demand that the death penalty is handed down to the agents who provided information that lead to all these things," Nasrallah, speaking via video-link, told a south Lebanon rally commemorating the ninth anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.

The Lebanese authorities are holding up to 30 suspects in what security sources say is a widening investigation into espionage for Israel. Three of these suspects, who include women, have been arrested in the past 24 hours. At least 18 suspects have already been charged. Lebanon says at least two spies fled earlier this week to Israel via the border and it demanded that Israel hand them back through U.N. peacekeepers.

Lebanon considers itself at war with Israel, and although its military largely stayed out of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, spying for Israel is considered an act of treason.

Senior Lebanese security officials said the arrests have dealt a severe blow to Israel's spy networks in Lebanon.

They say many of the suspects played key roles in identifying Hezbollah targets that were bombed during a 34-day war between Israel and the Shiite group in 2006. Some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed in Lebanon while 160 Israelis also died.

Others have been charged with monitoring senior Hezbollah officials and at least one is alleged to have played a role in the 2004 assassination of a commander of the group.

Israel has not commented on the arrests.

Illegal methods

Lebanese courts have handed down what was widely seen as light sentences against Lebanese who have worked with the Israeli occupation and its local militias after Israeli forces ended a 22-year occupation of mainly Shiite south Lebanon in May 2000.

Hezbollah chief calls for death penalty for spies

Nasrallah said Hezbollah's security services would step up its cooperation with Lebanese security services to root out the spies. He urged any Lebanese dealing with Israel to surrender to the authorities and seek mercy.

In Israel, meanwhile, the Shin Bet internal intelligence service this week urged people to be careful when using social networking sites such as Facebook, contending Arab groups are using them to recruit and hire spies. In one instance, Israeli intelligence said an Israeli Facebook user was contacted by a man who introduced himself as a Lebanese agent and offered money for information.

Israeli officials said Hezbollah also used the illegal drug trade to lure Israelis into working for them. Over the past decade, two Israeli drug officers and two military trackers were sent to jail for passing information to Lebanese drug dealers.

Prime Minister Fuad Saniora, a major Hezbollah foe in the election, complained to the United Nations about the alleged spying networks, accusing Israel of violating Lebanese sovereignty and a U.N.-brokered truce that ended the 2006 fighting.

Yemen and Iran, plus Egypt -- which has a peace treaty with Israel -- have all charged some of their citizens with spying for Israel in recent years.

Load-Date: May 22, 2009

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Hezbollah chief calls on Egypt to stop Gaza wall

AlArabiya.net

December 26, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 438 words

Body

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Sunday called on Egypt to stop its construction of a steel wall along its border with the Gaza Strip as it could obstruct tunnels which provide a lifeline for the enclave, blockaded by Cairo and Israel.

Nasrallah told a crowd of tens of thousands of Lebanese Shiite Muslim marking the Ashura religious ceremony that Egypt should be condemned if it does not halt the wall building. Last year Nasrallah accused Egypt of complicity with Israel in its siege of the Gaza strip.

"In addition to the siege there has been news about (building) a steel wall..to terminate the thin veins which are giving some life and some hope to Gaza," he said.

"We call on the government in Egypt and the leadership to stop the wall and flooding the tunnels and to end the siege otherwise it should be condemned by all Arabs and the Muslims," he said.

Egyptian officials have said steel tubes were being placed at several points along the 14-km (8-mile)-long border, but they did not specify their purpose.

Palestinians fear a steel barrier, deep underground, would limit or end their lifeline through hundreds of tunnels operating in an attempt to break a three-year-old Israeli-led blockade.

Tunnel-builders said some 3,000 tunnels were operational before Israel launched a three-week offensive in the Gaza Strip a year ago, but only 150 were still functional following the conflict and subsequent Israeli air raids.

"This unjust silence over besieging a whole people should not continue regardless of the excuses," Nasrallah said.

Shortly before Nasrallah's speech tens of thousands of Shiite Muslim Lebanese, chanting "Death to America, death to Israel," marched in **Hezbollah's** Beirut stronghold to commemorate the annual Ashura ritual.

Hezbollah chief calls on Egypt to stop Gaza wall

A sea of men, women and children marched in the streets of Beirut's southern suburbs carrying Hezbollah's yellow and black flags and some carried religious slogans. They beat their chests in a sign of grief over the killing of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Imam Hussein, and chanted "O Hussein" and "We will never be humiliated."

Ashura commemorates Hussein, who was killed along with most of his family by Islamic ruler Yazid, who Shiites remember as an oppressor and murderer. Hussein's death at Kerbala in Iraq in AD 680 is a defining moment in the history of Shiites.

Egypt is trying 26 men suspected of links with Hezbollah and accused of planning attacks inside the country. Hezbollah denies they had plans for attacks inside Egypt and says one of the men is a Hezbollah member and that he and up to 10 others were trying to supply military equipment to Hamas-run Gaza.

Load-Date: December 27, 2009

End of Document

Hezbollah's stocks on the rise regardless of Lebanon poll result

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

June 6, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 14

Length: 979 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis

Body

Once despised, the Shia party has become persuasive in opposition, writes Jason Koutsoukis in Beirut.

VOTERS get the chance to remake Lebanon's political landscape tomorrow in elections that are expected to concentrate power in the hands of the Iranian-backed Shia movement, *Hezbollah*.

Most pundits agree the result is still too close to call but *Hezbollah* appears to have the momentum. The campaign is widely seen as a proxy battle between the pro-Western Arab powers of the Middle East versus the pariah states of Syria and Iran.

An ascendant *Hezbollah*, whose military wing is listed as a terrorist organisation in Australia, will be sure to exacerbate tensions in Israel where the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has warned of the nuclear threat posed by Iran's uranium enrichment program.

The US sent two of its most powerful voices the Vice-President, Joe Biden, and the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, to Lebanon to lend support to the ruling coalition led by Fouad Siniora and Saad Hariri, the son of the former prime minister Rafiq Hariri, who was assassinated in 2005.

But behind the noise of an election campaign that has radiated propaganda, conspiracy theories and specious rhetoric about change, the reality is that a sweeping rearrangement of the status quo is almost sure not to happen.

"What will happen is the same stalemate as before, just under a different umbrella," an American University of Beirut political science professor, Hilal Khashan, said. "*Hezbollah* will not seize power and neither will Iran. They don't want to. This is about very slow and gradual change."

In Lebanon power is rigidly divided among the country's 14 religious groups, of which the big four are Shia, Sunni, Maronite and Druze. Smaller sects include Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Protestants and Alawites.

By law, each sect is allocated a certain number of seats in Parliament, which broadly works out to 64 seats for Christians and 64 seats for Muslims.

By convention, the president of Lebanon must be a Christian, the prime minister a Sunni and the speaker a Shiite.

No party can govern alone, forcing them into ever-shifting alliances where disagreements are often settled in street battles or targeted assassinations.

Hezbollah's stocks on the rise regardless of Lebanon poll result

The Parliament is now divided between two coalitions that developed in the wake of the Hariri assassination.

On one side of the aisle is the ruling alliance known as March 14, named after the date of the Cedar Revolution that forced Syria to withdraw its 30-year occupation of Lebanon in 2005, and which comprises mainly Sunnis led by Saad Hariri, the Christian Phalange Party of Amine Gemayel and the Druze party of Walid Jumblatt.

The opposition is known as March 8, a pro-Syrian coalition dominated by Hezbollah, which formed in response to the Cedar Revolution leaders who blamed Syria for the assassination.

Yet the cabinet itself is a made up of a government of national unity where Hezbollah already has two seats at the table and the right to veto cabinet decisions.

Central to Hezbollah increasing its chances of victory tomorrow is its decision in 2006 to form an alliance with Michel Aoun a former prime minister and acting president of Lebanon who could win the bulk of the Christian vote.

"The question is whether they will have an absolute majority of more than 64 seats," said Dr Omri Nir, one of Israel's leading pundits on Lebanese politics, who lectures at Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University.

"Even if the March 8 coalition win an absolute victory in some polls, the most optimistic for them, they are getting 80 seats which is two-thirds of the Parliament even then, there are good chances of a unity government in Lebanon," he says.

Adding weight to his argument late this week was Hezbollah's deputy leader, Sheik Naim Kassem, who pledged Hezbollah would invite its pro-Western opponents to join a national unity government if it won.

"Hezbollah and its allies will work to form a national unity government," Sheik Kassem said. "How much we will succeed is up to the other side."

The reasons Hezbollah wants a government of national unity, Dr Nir said, were clear.

"Hezbollah has made a strategic decision not to impose themselves, but to persuade, to offer social services. They understand that to achieve their goals, they have to convince, not to force. Second, Hezbollah believes that a government of national unity that includes March 14 will provide it with immunity from an Israeli military raid because of its good relations with the US."

But what if Hezbollah and the March 8 lose ground, and March 14 maintains its absolute majority?

As the events of May 2008 proved, when Hezbollah forced March 14 to accept a government of national unity after a show of force that killed about 100 people, the real source of Hezbollah's power is not its potential appeal to voters but its expertly organised military wing that can be deployed at a moment's notice.

"If March 14 wins, it has no choice but to keep Hezbollah in the coalition," Professor Khasshan says.

Perhaps the biggest outcome from tomorrow's election is the fact that Hezbollah is even contesting it. In the 1970s and 1980s, Lebanon's Shiite population was a pilloried and despised minority, and Hezbollah was laughed at as an inept force of amateurs.

Its real victory tomorrow may be that it has permanently shifted Lebanon's face eastward, away from the United States and Europe, to Iran.

LEBANESE ELECTIONS

Voting is compulsory for males aged 21 and over.

Voting is authorised for women aged 21 or over who

can prove elementary school learning.

Hezbollah's stocks on the rise regardless of Lebanon poll result

Voting on Sunday is for parliamentary elections.

Lebanon's parliament is unicameral, with 128 seats.

The voting system is confessional, based on the 14 different religious groups in Lebanon.

Based on the results of the last census conducted in Lebanon in 1932, parliamentary seats are allocated to different sects according to their

Graphic

MAP: ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, LEBANON

Load-Date: June 5, 2009

End of Document

In Lebanon's wild east, Hezbollah finds itself on left foot

Christian Science Monitor

April 15, 2009, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 1007 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Dar AlWasaa, Lebanon

Body

The death of a noted drug dealer and the revenge killing of four soldiers have plunged the Lebanese Army into a confrontation with the powerful Shiite clans that rule Lebanon's wild northern Bekaa Valley.

Hundreds of Lebanese special forces backed by helicopters deployed this week into the northern Bekaa, raiding homes and encircling villages in a manhunt for a gang suspected of carrying out an attack on Monday against an Army patrol that left four soldiers dead.

But the clash between the Army and clans in the Bekaa, a Hezbollah stronghold, has placed the powerful Shiite organization in an awkward position.

Long loathe to tangle with the clans from which it derives much grass-roots support, the organization had turned a blind eye to their criminality for years. But when a car thief struck one of its own, Hezbollah signalled its consent to the Army to crack down. Now, some angry clan members are vowing to vote against the Hezbollah-led opposition in June 7 parliamentary elections, shaping up to be the closest in decades.

The tough and close-knit Shiite clans have long held sway in the remote arid plain of the northern Bekaa, an area traditionally ignored by successive Lebanese governments. Some of them earn huge profits from drug trafficking, hashish cultivation, car theft, and counterfeiting.

In the impoverished village of Dar Al-Wasaa, tucked into rocky hills on the western flank of the Bekaa Valley, a woman from the Jafaar clan, one of the largest and most powerful tribes in the area, explains why they rely on drugs for income.

"This area is extremely neglected by the government," says the middle-aged woman, who declined to give her full name. "There is no way to earn a living. What are we supposed to do? Eat rocks? There's nothing for us to do but sell drugs."

Why Hezbollah's tolerance snapped

Although Hezbollah disapproves of drugs on moral and religious grounds, it generally ignores the hashish cultivation and heroin refining that takes place in the northern Bekaa.

In Lebanon 's wild east, Hezbollah finds itself on left foot

And it has not been averse to exploiting narcotics as a weapon against Israel. After Israel withdrew from an occupied strip of south Lebanon in May 2000, Hezbollah coopted the existing cross-border drug smuggling networks.

Drug dealers in south Lebanon smuggle hashish and heroin across the border into Israel in exchange for cash for themselves and intelligence information for Hezbollah. The Israeli authorities have busted several drugs-for-intel spy rings in northern Israel in the past few years. One of the largest was run by a lieutenant colonel in the Israeli army who, ironically, lost an eye to a Hezbollah roadside bomb while serving in south Lebanon in the 1990s.

But Hezbollah's tolerance of the criminality in the Bekaa snapped a few months ago when thieves stole a car belonging to Jihad Mughniyah, son of Imad Mughniyah, Hezbollah's top military commander who was assassinated last year in Damascus car bombing.

According to a source familiar with the incident, Mughniyah was hunting with friends near Chaat village in the Bekaa when members of the Zeaiter clan snatched his vehicle, apparently unimpressed that its owner was the son of the legendary Mughniyah.

In response, Hezbollah quietly gave a green light to the Army to mount a crackdown on the gangs of car thieves. But the army's round-up expanded to include drug dealers and hashish farmers, infuriating the clans, some of whom are vowing to vote against Hezbollah in the upcoming election.

<P/>

Army hits the road to Bekaa

On Monday, four soldiers were killed and 11 wounded near the Bekaa town of Rayak in an ambush suspected to have been carried out by members of the Jaafar clan. The attack was revenge for the killing last month of Ali Abbas Jaafar, a drug dealer who had 172 outstanding arrest warrants. Lebanese soldiers shot him in his car on a dirt track outside Dar al-Wasaa.

Speaking Monday after the ambush against the soldiers, Interior Minister Ziad Baroud said that the Army was a "red line" and vowed "to strike with an iron fist" against the perpetrators.

The next day, the highway leading from Beirut to the Bekaa was clogged with tank transporters carrying camouflaged armored personnel carriers and trucks filled with red-bereted soldiers. Troops set up numerous checkpoints on the roads leading to Dar al-Wasaa, while helicopters clattered high above, keeping well out of the range of rocket-propelled grenades carried by the fugitives.

Survivors of Army attack tell their story

The village was eerily quiet in the bright morning sunshine. The men of Dar al-Wasaa had fled ahead of the approaching soldiers, grabbing their weapons and disappearing into the rugged mountains, the traditional refuge for the clans.

The Lebanese army claimed that Ali Abbas Jaafar had failed to stop at a checkpoint, forcing the soldiers to open fire at his vehicle. Ali Abbas and another member of the Jaafar family were killed.

But those in the vehicle who survived offer a different version, insisting that the troops ambushed Ali Abbas and opened fire without warning.

"We didn't see the soldiers or their vehicles. All we saw were bullets coming from the trees, hitting the car and us," says Salwa Jaafar, who had hitched a ride in Ali Abbas' car along with her four children. She was wounded in the arm and in one lung. Her teenage son, Ahmad, was hit in the back.

Salwa claimed that the soldiers beat them despite their wounds and it took the intervention of armed members of the Jaafar clan before they were allowed to go to hospital for treatment.

In Lebanon 's wild east, Hezbollah finds itself on left foot

The incident has inflamed the Jaafars, arousing fierce instincts of revenge and tribal solidarity.

"Yes, the Jaafars do kill, but only those that kill us," says a close **female** relative of Salwa, her voice rising with anger. "The soldiers who were killed deserve to be killed. I support the boys that did this. Understand this: If they kill one of us, we kill one of them. If I know where the men are who killed the soldiers I would go and kiss their feet for what they have done."

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Load-Date: April 15, 2009

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Hezbollah attacks Hariri's proposed government

AlArabiya.net

September 7, 2009 Monday

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Length: 688 words

Body

Lebanese prime minister-designate Saad al-Hariri handed the president his proposed line-up for a national unity government on Monday, in a move swiftly rejected by opposition groups including the powerful Shiite **Hezbollah**.

Hariri, the son of assassinated billionaire ex-premier Rafiq Hariri and head of the Western-backed parliamentary majority, was named prime minister on June 27 after winning a general election earlier that month. Tough negotiations led to a deal on the number of ministers each political camp would have in the 30-seat cabinet, with 15 going to Hariri's ruling alliance, 10 to the opposition and the president appointing five.

He presented President Michel Suleiman with a draft 30-seat cabinet that was rejected by the opposition as a unilateral step because the draft had not been agreed with them.

"I do not believe this way of doing things will lift Lebanon from the crisis over the formation of the new government," **Hezbollah** leader Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised speech late on Monday. "It will make the problem more complicated."

"I do not think that the method employed today takes Lebanon out of the government formation crisis. On the contrary, it further complicates the problem," he added.

Nasrallah, whose group was allocated two seats in Hariri's proposed cabinet, described Hariri's move as inappropriate and said no concessions were made in talks aimed at agreeing on the new unity government.

President Michel Suleiman, who took office last year as a consensus candidate, is not expected to approve any cabinet proposal that does not have unanimous support among factions whose rivalries spilled into armed conflict last year.

President Suleiman, who is allowed to name five ministers, giving him a decisive say over cabinet decisions, has said he wants the government in place before he travels to the U.N. General Assembly later this month.

The rival factions have agreed on the broad division of seats in the new cabinet. But Hariri, son of assassinated former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, has struggled to reach agreement with opposition politicians on the details.

At the heart of the dispute are the demands of Christian leader Michel Aoun, an ally of **Hezbollah**. Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement holds more seats in parliament than any other Christian party.

Hariri resists Aoun demands

Hezbollah attacks Hariri's proposed government

Hariri has resisted Aoun's demand for Gebran Bassil, his son-in-law, to keep his post as telecoms minister. Aoun also wants to name the new interior minister.

Hariri's proposed line-up keeps Ziad Baroud in his current post as interior minister and hands the telecoms ministry to Ghazi Aridi, an associate of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, political sources said.

Hariri is keen to gain the telecoms portfolio for his coalition and oversee a long-stalled plan to privatize the telecoms sector. The sale of two state-owned mobile firms is expected to garner as much as \$7 billion.

Aoun said Hariri's move showed he did not want to form a government. "On the contrary, he wants to play with the cabinet formation according to his mood," Aoun told Sawt al-Mada radio station, according to a report published on his Tayyar website.

Fouad Siniora, the outgoing prime minister and a member of Hariri's Future Movement, will lead a caretaker cabinet until Suleiman issues a decree appointing the new government.

Other ministerial positions

Hariri proposed Raya Hassan for finance minister, responsible for managing Lebanon's massive public debt burden, and Nada Mfarrij for the post of energy minister, the political sources said. They are two of four women in the proposed line-up. Both are close to Hariri. A political source had earlier named Mfarrij as the proposed economy minister.

Hassan has an MBA from The George Washington University in the United States. She is currently manager of a United Nations Development Program project aimed at supporting decision-making at the office of the prime minister.

The sources said that Elias al-Murr would keep his job as defense minister while the foreign ministry would go to Yassin Jaber, who is close to parliament speaker and leading opposition figure Nabih Berri.

Load-Date: September 8, 2009

End of Document

**Israel says seized weapons would have given Hezbollah a month's
firepower, urges focus on Iran**

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

November 5, 2009 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 01

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Dateline: ARTICLE

Body

JERUSALEM - Israel said Thursday that **Hezbollah** could have bombarded the Jewish state for a month with the weapons confiscated in the country's largest-ever arms seizure, and called on the world to focus on the Lebanese militants' chief backer, Iran, rather than assailing Israel.

Palestinian leaders expressed concern that Israel would use the seizure of a ship laden with what officials described as hundreds of tons of weapons from Iran to divert attention from its settlement expansion and accusations of Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

Hezbollah denied any connection to the weapons.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, commenting on United Nations deliberations Thursday over Israel's conduct during last winter's Gaza war, said Iranian efforts to kill civilians by smuggling massive amounts of weapons to **Hezbollah** are the real war crime.

"It is a war crime that the U.N. Security Council should have a special meeting over," he told reporters in Tel Aviv. "A major component of this shipment were rockets whose only goal was to hit civilians and kill as many civilians as possible - **women**, children, old people," Netanyahu said.

Israel displayed on Wednesday the contents of the ship it seized off Cyprus - crates filled with rockets, missiles, mortars, anti-tank weapons and munitions - the largest such haul in the country's history. Israel's claim that the weapons came from Iran were bolstered by Iranian markings on the sides of the containers and what it said was a document proving the ship had set off from an Iranian port.

Israel has not publicly shown the document, however, nor offered evidence to back its assertion that the weapons were headed for Lebanon's **Hezbollah** fighters.

"**Hezbollah** categorically denies it has any connection with the weapons which the Zionist enemy claims it seized," the group said in a statement faxed to The Associated Press in Beirut on Thursday.

Lebanese officials did not comment.

Israel says seized weapons would have given Hezbollah a month's firepower, urges focus on Iran

Israeli defence officials said the arms cache would have given Hezbollah, which fought a monthlong war against the Jewish state in 2006, enough firepower to sustain a full month of fighting on the scale of that war.

However, the officials also said the weapons would not have significantly enhanced Hezbollah rockets' ability to reach deeper into Israel, as the haul consisted of weapons already in Hezbollah's possession.

The defence officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the military has yet to formally comment on how the arms could benefit militants.

Iran has never acknowledged giving weapons to Hezbollah. Proof of large-scale Iranian weapons shipments to its proxy forces on Israel's borders could reinforce Israeli demands for tough action - possibly even a pre-emptive strike - against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Israel sees Iran as its biggest threat because of what it believes to be Tehran's ambitions to acquire atomic weapons. Iran says its nuclear program seeks only to generate energy.

The weapons seizure appeared likely to boost Netanyahu's top policy priority: neutralizing Iran's bomb-making ability.

Palestinians worried that Netanyahu, a political hawk, would use the seizure to avoid peacemaking - and divert attention from his refusal to heed a U.S. and Palestinian demand to halt Jewish settlement building on lands the Palestinians claim for a future state.

"Since the Israeli leadership and society are not ready for peace, they are using any pretext to shun peace obligations, and one is the issue of the Iranian shipment," said Ghassan Khatib, a spokesman for the West Bank-based Palestinian government.

In the Muslim world, officials echoed the concern that Israel would use the seizure as a diversion.

State-run Iran TV said in a commentary that the "Israeli propaganda" was aimed at diverting attention from Gaza war crimes allegations. A Syrian Foreign Ministry official expressed the same view after Israel said the arms were destined for a Syrian port before being handed over to Hezbollah.

Iran's English-language Press TV said Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki dismissed the allegations on the cargo's destination and route.

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Associated Press Writers Aron Heller and Michael Barajas in Jerusalem, Hussein Dakroub in Beirut and Albert Aji in Damascus contributed to this report.

Load-Date: November 24, 2009

Call for unity among Ummah to face challenges

The Nation (AsiaNet)

September 18, 2009 Friday

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Length: 691 words

Byline: NISAR MEHDI

Body

Al-Quds Day was observed with full fervour and enthusiasm on Friday in

order to express solidarity with the oppressed of the Palestine who are striving for their liberation from cruel clutches of Israel, the Zionist state. One the eve, a big rally was held here in the metropolis in which a number of people belong to all walks of life participated.

The call for observing Jummatul Wida (last Friday of fasting month of Ramadan) as Al-Quds Day was by the late Imam Khomeini in 1979 to condemn and foil the conspiracies hatched by the US imperialism and Israel against the Muslim Ummah particularly the innocent people of Palestine.

The procession was taken out from Numaish Chowrangi and culminated at Regal Chowk and addressed by President of the Imamia Students Organization Syed Hassan Zaidi, Allama Aftab Haider Jafari, Allama Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui, Maulana Baqar Zaidi, and Maulana Mirza Yusuf Hussain.

Thousands of the Participants including men, women, and children raised slogans against the United States and Israel for their unscrupulous tactic against poor people of Palestine.

US and Israeli flags as well as effigies of US President Barrak Obama and Israeli Prime Minister BinYamin Netanyahu were also set on fire.

Demonstrators were carrying the flags of Pakistan, Hizbullah, Hamas, Jihad-e-Islami and ISO and also holding the portraits of Hizbullah leader Syed Hassan Nasrullah, Imam Khomeini and Ayatullah Khamenei. Speaking at the rally, ISO Central President Hassan Zaidi hailed the resistance put up by Hezbollah, Hamas, Jihad-e-Islami and Palestinian forces against the Zionist state and said the Israel was bound to face defeat at the hands of brave and courageous liberation forces.

"The recent evacuation of Israeli forces from Gaza is the victory of Palestinian Muslims," he said, adding that the Jihad against the very existence of Israel would not let the dream of the Zionist state come true. He announced that they were ready to sacrifice their life for the supremacy of Islam and freedom of the land of messengers.

Allama Aftab Haider Jafari said that the so-called rulers of certain Islamic states were finding a settlement of the Palestine issue through various means but the only way to resolve it was the one declared by Imam Khomeini who called for Jihad. Waging Jihad against Zionist occupation forces is obligatory on Ummah in defence of Muslim countries, he added.

Call for unity among Ummah to face challenges

He declared Israel as the biggest terrorists of the world and stressed the need to launch a war against the coloniser state. "If we really want to end terrorism, the elimination of Israel is essential," he said. He said that it was shameful that the second Qibla of Muslims, the Bait-ul-Muqdas, was under the occupation of Jews saying that Zionists were hatching the conspiracy to destroy the Al-Quds and had planned to make the Hekal-e-Suleman at the same place.

Maulana Baqar Hussain Zaidi said that Ummah would continue to observe Jummatul Wida as Al-Quds Day until the liberation of the Al-Quds saying that Al-Quds Day is the day of Islam and Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

"Muslim rulers are busy serving the Americans and our disunity is benefiting the enemies of Islam," he said. He condemned Israel who had forcibly uprooted Palestinians from their lands and are living a life of refugees in different parts of the world, adding that US invasions of the third world countries has resulted in the killing thousands of innocent people.

Noted scholar Allama Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui has said that the issue of Al-Quds could only be resolved through war. He paid rich tribute to the noted Islamic leader Imam Khomeini, who issued the decree against the Zionist regime and asked the Muslims of the world to raise their voice for the Palestinian people.

The rally also adopted a resolution in favour of the Hizbullah and Hamas. The resolution condemned the American and NATO interference in Pakistan. They also condemned the presence of Black water terrorist organisation in the country and development of the largest US embassy in Pakistan and termed that this was considered as the attack on the national sovereignty.

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**Israel says seized weapons would have given Hezbollah a month's
firepower, urges focus on Iran**

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

November 5, 2009 Thursday

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Dateline: ARTICLE

Body

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Israel's U.N. Ambassador Gabriela Shalev on Thursday urged the U.N. Security Council to conduct a further investigation and "take the appropriate action." She accused Iran of continuing to defy Security Council sanctions, which threatens professional shipping crews who are "unknowingly and unwillingly exploited by Iran's repeated transgressions."

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Associated Press Writers Aron Heller and Michael Barajas in Jerusalem, Hussein Dakroub in Beirut, Albert Aji in Damascus and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations headquarters contributed to this report.

Load-Date: November 24, 2009

On the ground: Public weighs in on Al Watan's Hezbollah report

Right Vision News

September 12, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 816 words

Dateline: KUWAIT

Body

KUWAIT, Oct. 12 -- Some are panicked, while others are a bit more cautious after the Arabic Al Watan newspaper published a report that Kuwait might be at a security risk as some questionable individuals are believed to be living in Kuwait, and have close ties with Lebanon's Hezbollah. It is believed that members of the Hezbollah group are attempting to build themselves a niche in Kuwait in order to strengthen their organization. Furthermore, it has been reported that a Kuwaiti?

based Hezbollah group already exists in Kuwait to promote their political agenda. Al Watan Daily spoke to citizens and expats to hear their reaction surrounding this breaking news. Ahlam, a Lebanese female who runs her own business in Kuwait, read the news Friday morning and noted that the security of Kuwait takes first priority. Noting that without political stability and law and order mayhem might surface in the streets of Kuwait. "I am not sure about the depth of the situation and how wide?spread the situation is, nevertheless, Kuwait needs to act, vigorously and swiftly in order to eliminate any kind of danger that poses a potential threat on Kuwait," she stated. Ali, a Lebanese male working in Kuwait, offered a more cautious view, "If this is remotely true, the only thing I can think of is that it may reflect poorly on other Lebanese. I'm only worried that if Hezbollah does something negative in the in the eyes of Kuwaitis, all Lebanese will be held accountable. Hezbollah, from my understanding is a resistance force in Lebanon, and Lebanon alone." Fahad, a Kuwaiti citizen, seemed to be radically concerned of the news that emerged in the newspaper Friday morning. He lamented that this is not the first negative encounter that Kuwait has faced in this context. "It was not too long ago when the Shiite dilemma occurred in Kuwait which caused problems, a recent example is a member of parliament held a funeral session when the senior member of the Hezbollah organization Imad Mughniyah was assassinated that caused some controversy." Therefore, something needs to be done immediately in order to eradicate any harm that might be cast on Kuwait in the future. The country cannot afford to become vulnerable to culprits who have a political agenda and want to destroy the unity of Kuwait," he frankly stated. He further said that sectarianism is slowly finding its way in Kuwait. "Albeit, it is not tangible nor does it have a strong presence, Kuwait needs to understand every innuendo about it so it can fully control the sectarianism issue ? after all sectarianism is what causes people to go astray and admire someone such as Hassan Nasrallah," he ended. A further voice belonging to Abu Jarah noted that the news that he read in the newspaper very much disturbed him and that while no real tragedy has actually emerged it still implies that something is wrong. "The national security needs to step up and apply some kind of strategy that will prevent the conspiracy taking place or any kind of conspiracy that might take place on the future of Kuwait," he explained. He added that Kuwait has always been an exceptional country because Kuwaitis tend to care about each other, and that they share similar views and values, which has kept the unity alive. "Moreover, Kuwait generally is a peaceful country that has never tolerated terrorism in all of its forms and I am confident that Kuwait will respond to the looming threat swiftly and aggressively," he noted. "Syria, Iran and Lebanon for example are victims to terrorism. The terrorist organizations want to spread their influence to other countries to achieve greater power," he added. He further

On the ground: Public weighs in on Al-Watan's Hezbollah report

explained that, according to him, "terrorists have attempted to influence people in many different ways in the past but have failed. What is happening today is an example of how they want to spread mayhem in the streets of Kuwait, or any country that they are able to reach and sway the opinions of individuals." "I hope Kuwait acts quickly before it is too late ? there is no room to ponder, no time to plan, one needs to act quickly before chaos ensues. Kuwait needs to axe the source out completely, tackling the situation from its roots," he ended. Mohammed, another Kuwaiti, took a contrasting stance to the other two voices above: "There is nothing really wrong with it. We have had such groups (Political and Islamic groups) in Kuwait, and they ruined a lot. However, if we allowed such groups to have existed in the country, we should allow others as well. We have no political parties in Kuwait, but we will and this is just part of that process. This just sounds like fear mongering and sensationalism against **Hezbollah**; we had our issues with them but that is in the pa Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: October 22, 2009

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Nasrallah lashes out at Hariri's government proposal

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

September 9, 2009 Wednesday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 600 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Hizbullah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah slammed Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri for proposing a Cabinet line-up that he says will only complicate the situation in Lebanon. Hariri submitted a 30-seat coalition cabinet to President Michel Sleiman Monday, more than three months after his alliance won a general election, but the Shiite **Hizbullah**-led opposition rejected the move.

BEIRUT: **Hizbullah** leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah slammed Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri for proposing a Cabinet line-up that he says will only complicate the situation in Lebanon. Hariri submitted a 30-seat coalition cabinet to President Michel Sleiman Monday, more than three months after his alliance won a general election, but the Shiite **Hizbullah**-led opposition rejected the move.

"I do not believe this way of doing things will lift Lebanon from the crisis over the formation of the new government," Nasrallah said in a closed televised speech to **women** organisations the same day. The speech was emailed to the media just before midnight on Monday. "It will make the problem more complicated," he said.

The head of March 8 faction **Hizbullah** said the minority opposition would "stand up to this inadequate measure, and in complete solidarity."

Nasrallah said each parliamentary bloc has the right to name its ministers and the cabinet portfolios it wants.

He reiterated that there was no law that prevents giving Cabinet seats to candidates who had lost the polls, in reference to the majority's rejection to reappoint Telecommunications Minister Jebran Bassil for a second term.

"Doesn't such a rejection obstruct the process of the formation of a Lebanese government?" Nasrallah asked.

Also on Monday, Nasrallah denied any involvement of his party in the dealings of a bankrupt Lebanese businessman who is suspected of depriving investors of hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Lebanese financier, Salah Ezzedine, is suspected of creating a Ponzi scheme that promised investors up to 40 percent returns a year - a case that has drawn comparisons in Lebanon with that of Bernard Madoff. He turned himself in to Lebanese authorities in August after declaring himself bankrupt and is now in custody and being investigated.

Nasrallah lashes out at Hariri's government proposal

"Neither Hizbullah, nor its leadership, nor its members have any link to this matter," Nasrallah said.

"Leaders [of Hizbullah] do not have any of the alleged funds." Ezzedine, a wealthy businessman from a town near the southern city of Tyre, is a prominent financier particularly among Shiite circles in Lebanon. He is the owner of Dar Al-Hadi Publishing House - one of Lebanon's most prominent publishing houses of religious Shiite books which also prints books written by Hizbullah officials - and Al-Hadi TV for children.

Recent media reports in Lebanon have alleged that Hizbullah has had business dealings with Ezzedine, somewhat shaking Hizbullah's image as an austere resistance movement and provoking rare criticism by journalists known to be close to the group.

One of them, Ibrahim al-Amin, wrote in Al-Akhbar daily on Saturday that most of the people who deposited money with Ezzedine were members of Hizbullah's families or supporters. He added that the case is an "alarm bell" because Hizbullah's supporters and members are known to have long lived a simple and religious life but were starting to want more money than they earn.

Sateh Nouredine, managing editor of the Lebanese As-Safir daily, which is close to Hizbullah, wrote Monday that "Hizbullah is not the first and will not be the last revolutionary movement that gets corrupted with money." - The Daily Star, with AP and AFP

Load-Date: September 10, 2009

Beirut's Shiite bastion revives after 2006 war

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 24, 2009 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1129 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

BEIRUT: The sprawling Shiite suburb of south Beirut has made a comeback after the destruction wreaked by Israel during 2006 fighting, a symbol of the community's resilience at a time when its political patron, *Hizbullah*, is seeking a greater voice in Lebanon's government. The district, called simply Dahiyeh - meaning "the suburb" in Arabic - is the stronghold of *Hizbullah*.

Hamza Hendawi

Associated Press

BEIRUT: The sprawling Shiite suburb of south Beirut has made a comeback after the destruction wreaked by Israel during 2006 fighting, a symbol of the community's resilience at a time when its political patron, *Hizbullah*, is seeking a greater voice in Lebanon's government.

The district, called simply Dahiyeh - meaning "the suburb" in Arabic - is the stronghold of *Hizbullah*, and was heavily targeted by Israel during its war with the militant Shiite group three years ago. The bombardment leveled *Hizbullah*'s headquarters as well as entire blocks across the neighborhood.

Now dozens of newly built or repaired apartment blocks stand in place of those destroyed, the result of a reconstruction program led by *Hizbullah*, which receives millions of dollars a year in aid from its ally Iran.

Property prices are soaring. The district's main streets are congested bumper-to-bumper with cars, while uniformed *Hizbullah* members direct traffic. Commerce is thriving, restaurants are packed.

"Dahiyeh will be more beautiful than it was before," read billboards at the construction sites that remain.

Beyond the district's ties to *Hizbullah*, Dahiyeh is a source of pride for Lebanon's Shiites. For them, it exemplifies how the community has shaken off years of discrimination at the hands of the country's traditional powerbrokers - Christians and Sunni Muslims - and has established itself as a powerful political force.

Beirut's Shiite bastion revives after 2006 war

Literally, Dahiyeh brought Shiites closer to the center of power: It grew from nearly nothing over 30 years to become a densely packed region of apartment towers and homes for 700,000 Shiites on the southern doorstep of Beirut, historically a mainly Christian and Sunni city with only a tiny Shiite presence.

"In Beirut, people are arrogant and think the world of themselves," said Nagat Gradah, a bookstore employee in the district who, like many of its residents, migrated from Lebanon's mainly Shiite south. "But Dahiyeh? It's very special."

Dahiyeh's revival comes as the March 8 group is seeking to bolster its credentials as a mainstream political power.

For months, it has been in negotiations with Sunni-led Western-backed parties over the creation of a new government, in which Hizbullah and its allies would have a sizable role. The negotiations have been deadlocked, however, in a dispute over who will get which positions, fueled by suspicions in the pro-Western bloc that Hizbullah and its allies will seek to impose Syria's and Iran's agenda in the deeply divided nation.

Hizbullah is strongly backed by Syria and Iran, and it touts a powerful armed guerrilla force. But the movement also runs an extensive social welfare network and is the main political representative for Lebanon's Shiites, who make up about a third of the country's population of 4 million.

Dahiyeh itself may be a sign that Shiite power is not necessarily an omen of Lebanon's "Iranization" as Hizbullah's opponents fear.

Despite its undisputed lock over Dahiyeh, Hizbullah has not tried to enforce its strict interpretation of Islamic teachings in the district, a show of pragmatism perhaps aimed at casting doubt on the extremist tag critics slap on the group and increasing its appeal to secular Shiites and other sectarian groups.

Billboards advertising women's couture compete for space with billboards of bearded clerics and images of the young Hizbullah guerrillas who died fighting Israel over the years.

Women in tight pants and low-cut tops shop at boutiques with names like "Pascale" and "La Verna" where bikinis, miniskirts and hot shorts are on display in windows - much like in the more liberal districts of Beirut.

"Here in Dahiyeh, we have managed to have resistance, freedom and fashion all at the same place," said Hussein al-Zein, a 40-year-old resident who runs a women's casual wear store.

"People think Lebanon is either about fighting Israel or whoring with nothing in between. In Dahiyeh, we have freedom, but it has boundaries," he said at his store.

That said, the majority of women in Dahiyeh dress conservatively in Islamic headscarves in public. There are no bars or liquor stores and certainly no nightclubs.

European non-alcoholic beer ads in the streets don't mention the word "beer," using instead the term "barley drink."

Hanein Estiatieh, a graphic design student, says she has no worries about going out in jeans and a tight top in Dahiyeh, her birthplace.

"I will cover up only when I marry," declares the 18-year-old.

"I don't mind her not covering up," said Aliyah Sohoura, daughter of the owner of the women's clothes store where Estiatieh works. "But I pray for her to see the light of faith," added Sohoura, who wore a headscarf and a bulky coat.

Dahiyeh was not always a Shiite stronghold. It was once an area of small villages south of Beirut that were home to Christians and some middle-class Shiites.

During Lebanon's Civil War, tens of thousands of Shiites poured into the area from the impoverished, more rural south and east to flee fighting. The Christians largely moved out, though pockets remain.

Beirut's Shiite bastion revives after 2006 war

Beirut itself is sharply divided between Sunni and Christian districts, with very few mixed areas. In the 2006 war, Israel almost exclusively targeted Dahiyeh and Shiite areas in the south and east, while largely steering clear of Sunni and Christian regions - which in turn fed distrust between the sects.

In May last year, sectarian tensions turned violent when **Hizbullah** fighters clashed with Sunni rivals, briefly seizing Sunni districts at the height of a political dispute with the US-backed government.

Fistfights and stone-throwing have since broken out occasionally between youths from Dahiyeh and adjacent Sunni districts. Shiites' sense of solidarity in Dahiyeh is reinforced by what residents see as neglect from the central government.

The district gets only 12 hours of city electricity a day, compared to 19 in Beirut. Authorities blame large-scale power theft in Dahiyeh, while residents call it discrimination.

Shiite group **Hizbullah** handles security in the district, managing traffic and even handling crime cases like drug offenses.

However, the group says it has no choice, saying central authorities ignore the area.

"We don't try to be a substitute for the state but we just try and come up with solutions," said **Hizbullah** official Ghassan Darwish. "We cannot replace the government, even if we tried."

Load-Date: October 29, 2009

Spying trouble

The Jerusalem Post

May 22, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 15

Length: 1431 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: If emerging reports are accurate, the apprehension of cells working out of Lebanon on behalf of Israel marks one of the greatest intelligence blunders in the country's recent history. SECURITY AND DEFENSE

Body

The equipment shown to reporters by a masked Lebanese security officer was not all that fancy - hardly the stuff of James Bond movies: an Internet router, several laptops, a few cameras and a red Igloo water cooler (with an advanced electronic mapping system hidden inside), encryption devices, a can of motor oil hiding mini tapes, forged identification papers, a car battery charger used to store and transmit data, and USB flash drives containing detailed maps of Lebanon. Some of these, according to police, showed bridges and military outposts that were hit by the IAF during the 2006 war with Hizbullah.

The equipment, according to Arab media reports that have surfaced in recent weeks, belongs to a group of several dozen Lebanese citizens who were arrested for spying on Hizbullah for Israel. Since the arrests began late last year, the Lebanese Internal Security Force (ISF) claims to have dismantled at least 10 spy rings, and arrested close to 40 people.

As it has always done in response to media reports of its espionage activities, Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement. And though reports on Israeli spies surface every so often - with Iran claiming regularly to have uncovered a Mossad cell - the reports now emerging from Lebanon are of such magnitude that, if accurate, they constitute one of the greatest intelligence blunders in the country's recent history.

The value of intelligence vis-à-vis Hizbullah cannot be underestimated, particularly due to the Iranian-backed Shi'ite group's extensive use of civilian infrastructure to hide its military operations. On the first night of the Second Lebanon War, for example, IAF jets bombed more than 90 targets - many of them homes - containing the long-range, Iranian-made Zelzal and Fajr missiles. The operation, considered one of the few successes of the war, was made possible by intelligence collected over a number of years.

THE ARRESTS in question began in November, when the Lebanese media announced the ISF had arrested Ali Jarrah from the town of Maraj in the Bekaa Valley. Sophisticated photographic equipment and GPS devices allegedly had been discovered in his car, and he was accused of playing a role in the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh, Hizbullah's notorious military commander, in February 2008.

According to Lebanese security sources, Jarrah admitted in his interrogation to being a veteran Mossad spy, who had been recruited in 1983.

Spying trouble

According to a New York Times report earlier this year, Jarrah confessed to having traveled frequently to Syria and southern Lebanon, where he photographed roads and convoys that were believed to be used to transport weapons. Also according to the report, he told interrogators that he spoke with his Israeli handlers via satellite phone, and on a rare occasion - under the pretext of a business trip - flew to Europe, where he received an Israeli passport, then continued on to Israel to be debriefed at length.

In January, the ISF claimed to have cracked another cell, this one led by Marwan Fakih, the owner of a car dealership and garage in Nabatiyeh. According to Lebanese security, Fakih installed tracking devices and eavesdropping equipment in cars he serviced that belonged to **Hizbullah** operatives. If the allegations are true, and he was indeed working for Israel, it is possible that the devices he installed allowed Israeli intelligence to locate and identify secret **Hizbullah** installations.

In April, the ISF announced that it had captured a retired Lebanese general, Adib Alam, who allegedly headed a 12-man Israeli spy network. It said Alam, along with his wife, received thousands of dollars for information on Syrian and Lebanese military and civilian sites, some of which were bombed during the Second Lebanon War.

Lebanese security sources said that Alam had undergone training in Israel to learn how to operate the spy equipment and communications devices that were seized during a raid on his home. Lebanese detectives reportedly decoded four messages, one in which Alam expressed fears that he would be exposed.

Hizbullah deputy secretary-general Naim Qassem called Alam's arrest a major achievement for security forces. "Preliminary information indicates he had been working as a spy for Israel for more than 25 years, and retired from his position in national security eight years ago," Qassem was quoted as saying.

It is since Alam's arrest, say Lebanese security officials, that they and **Hizbullah** have succeeded in all the additional arrests. One of these was Ziad Homsy, deputy mayor of Saadnayel in the Bekaa Valley, who was allegedly ordered by his handlers to get close to **Hizbullah** leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah. According to news reports, Homsy renewed communication with old contacts from the Lebanese opposition movements, and asked one of them to pass on a message to Nasrallah that "he was absolutely committed to the resistance option," and was ready to become a martyr for the cause.

Homsy told his interrogators he was asked by Israeli intelligence officials to request an appointment with Nasrallah, and then to report back to them once a time and a place for the meeting was set. This led to media speculation that Israel had been planning to assassinate Nasrallah.

In an interview with Agence France Presse this week, ISF chief Gen. Ashraf Rifi said that a "technological secret" assisted Lebanese security forces in uncovering the different cells. Israel, he said, would seduce the spies with beautiful **women** and trips abroad.

"They would pay them handsomely, say \$5,000 to \$7,000, for their first mission. After that, Israel would drop the price significantly, as it had these people hooked, and would threaten to expose them unless they cooperated," he was quoted as saying.

INTELLIGENCE IS obtained in three ways: from human agents (HUMINT); from electronic eavesdropping and signals (SIGINT); and from surveillance equipment, such as satellites (VISINT). All are important, and each has advantages and disadvantages. Human agents can go places that listening devices and satellites cannot. In addition, electronic signals can always be intercepted, decoded and traced back to their source.

If the reports are true, then, the discovery of 10 spy rings in Lebanon is of great significance, especially if the discovery of one led to the exposure of another.

When a spy is recruited, he usually has contact with no one other than his recruiter, and will never learn the identities of other spies. This way, if captured, he cannot reveal information on others.

Spying trouble

"When dealing with spy rings, one of the most important elements is compartmentalization," explained a former intelligence officer, stressing that he was not familiar with the current events in Lebanon. "If the downfall of one cell led to the downfall of another, the compartmentalization was not kept here."

DESPITE THIS supposed setback, according to foreign reports, Israel has had some significant intelligence achievements since the 2006 war. The first was the September 2007 bombing of a nuclear reactor in northeastern Syria. Then came the assassination of Mughniyeh in a meticulously-planned car bombing in the heart of Damascus; the assassination of Syrian Gen. Muhammad Suleiman, who was involved in the nuclear project by a sniper; and the successful bombing of a Hamas weapons convoy deep in the Sudanese desert, during Operation Cast Lead in January.

Hizbullah, some reports have claimed, decided to increase its counterintelligence efforts following the Second Lebanon War, particularly after the assassination of Mughniyeh, one of the most wanted terrorists in the world.

There is also the possibility that **Hizbullah** is purposely making these arrests just weeks before the Lebanese parliamentary elections. Some analysts believe it is doing this to increase public support by creating a major security crisis in Lebanon, and showing that only it is capable of confronting that crisis.

Predictions here are that **Hizbullah** will solidify its power base following the June 7 elections, and establish the next ruling coalition. If **Hizbullah** wins, Israel believes it will install "acceptable faces" in the cabinet when forming the government. But at the same time, it is concerned that **Hizbullah** will install a defense minister affiliated with the group who will support the participation of the Lebanese Armed Forces in a future conflict, in contrast to the Second Lebanon War, when the LAF stayed out.

Whether or not this is the case, the discovery of a spy ring is part of the ongoing espionage game that is far from over for either Israel or **Hizbullah**.

Graphic

Photo: CAUGHT RED-HANDED? A masked police officer in Beirut shows a device used to decipher coded messages, seized from suspected Israeli agents spying on Lebanon and **Hizbullah**. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Peres is twisting the facts by saying Israel has no quarrel with Lebanon

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

August 15, 2009 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 501 words

Byline: The Daily Star

Body

Israeli President Shimon Peres on Friday engaged in a malicious distortion of historical facts when he declared that his country has no quarrel with Lebanon and that there is no reason for the two states to be enemies. In Peres' version of reality, tensions between the two neighbors are the sole fault of Hizbullah, which he accused of "destroying Lebanon" with its "thirst for blood in a land of peace."

Editorial

Israeli President Shimon Peres on Friday engaged in a malicious distortion of historical facts when he declared that his country has no quarrel with Lebanon and that there is no reason for the two states to be enemies. In Peres' version of reality, tensions between the two neighbors are the sole fault of Hizbullah, which he accused of "destroying Lebanon" with its "thirst for blood in a land of peace."

The problem with this reasoning is that Israel was attacking Lebanon decades before Hizbullah ever came into existence. Hizbullah was not created until 1982, when the resistance group emerged as a direct response to Israel's invasion of Lebanon that year. But the group did not yet exist during the nearly three-and-a-half decades of Israeli incursions and invasions that preceded the 1982 assault.

The first of these that was recorded was the massacre in Houla, a village in southern Lebanon that was captured by the Israelis in 1948 without any resistance. According to the testimony of the Israeli officer who commanded the raid, 50 Lebanese men from the village were rounded up and shot dead in a house that the Israelis blew up on top of them to become their grave.

Israel's aggression didn't stop there. In the period between 1948 and 1982, dozens of Lebanese villages were either occupied or raided, thousands of civilians were killed and scores of massacres and other acts of war were recorded by historians. Before Hizbullah was ever formed, the United Nations Security Council had already issued nine resolutions condemning Israel's acts of aggression against Lebanon.

Peres claimed in his speech on Thursday that "we never were and never will be enemies of Lebanon." But if committing acts of war against our people and continuing to illegally occupy our land does not constitute good reason for enmity, then what does?

Peres is twisting the facts by saying Israel has no quarrel with Lebanon

The Israelis have a habit of sustaining their dysfunctional pattern of acting badly by blaming somebody else for their bad behavior. In the 1970s and 80s, they claimed that the killing of Lebanese women and children was "necessary" to defeat the Palestinian militants who had been forced out of their homeland and into neighboring Arab states. In 2006, they alleged that the wanton destruction of Lebanon's civilian infrastructure and the slaughter of over 1,200 civilians was "required" to eliminate Hizbullah "terrorists" and retrieve a captured soldier who was seized in a bid to force the return of Lebanese from Israeli jails.

But the Israelis pursued these goals in Lebanon with such vile methods that they achieved nothing but this country's enmity.

Load-Date: August 15, 2009

End of Document

Qawouk: Elections will defeat 'financial invasion'

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
February 24, 2009 Tuesday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 244 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Hizbullah official in South Lebanon Sheikh Nabil Qawouk said during a meeting with **women** campaigners that the resistance would win June's legislative elections. "The same way the resistance defeated the military invasion in July 2006 and the political invasion in 2008, the resistance will defeat the financial invasion in the elections of 2009," said Qawouk.

BEIRUT: **Hizbullah** official in South Lebanon Sheikh Nabil Qawouk said during a meeting with **women** campaigners that the resistance would win June's legislative elections. "The same way the resistance defeated the military invasion in July 2006 and the political invasion in 2008, the resistance will defeat the financial invasion in the elections of 2009," said Qawouk, referring to alleged vote-buying by the March 14 coalition. He accused March 14 of "creating crises" beginning with the delay in compensating victims of the 2006 war and culminating with "attempts to cancel the Council of the South and postpone and decrease its budget." He was critical of Arab and international financial aid given to the coalition, which he said aimed at weakening the **Hizbullah**-led March 8 forces, particularly "since the opposition deprived the United States and its regional followers of achieving their objective or political gain." The appointment of hawkish Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli premier should push Lebanon "to strengthen its national consensus and the national unity cabinet," he added. - The Daily Star

Load-Date: February 23, 2009

**MULLAHS& MARIJUANA; EYEWITNESS THE RULES OF THE GAME MAY
HAVE CHANGED FOR LEBANON'S BEKAA VALLEY DRUG BARONS AS
HEZBOLLAH PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS, BUT AS HUGH MACLEOD
DISCOVERS, ADDICTION IS A TOUGHER HABIT TO KICK**

Sunday Herald
June 7, 2009 Sunday
Final Edition

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sundayherald

Section: NEWS; Pg. 24

Length: 1651 words

Byline: HUGH MACLEOD

Body

WE were to meet in the southern suburbs of Beirut, where faces of dead fighters on posters line the streets, and above bombed-out bridges and the diggers clearing the rubble flies the yellow flag, a fist clutching a Kalashnikov rising from Arabic script that spells out who's in charge: Hezbollah.

As the stronghold of the only Arab army to have inflicted defeat on Israel - drawing on a potent mix of religious ideology and hundreds of millions of dollars of Iranian money and weapons to drive Jewish soldiers from south Lebanon in 2000 and then fight them to a stand-still in 2006 - much of the area has been reduced to rubble by Israeli bombs.

But we were heading there not to meet one of Hezbollah's sharp and serious-minded officials, but to see a very different kind of person seeking refuge inside the Islamists' security zone: a top Lebanese drug baron.

The man, a member of the powerful Shia Muslim Jaafar clan from Lebanon's eastern Bekaa valley, another Hezbollah stronghold, had fled his home that morning after the army raided it.

A rare crackdown had begun against the drug and crime gangs of the Bekaa, and Jaafar needed a place to stay. But something changed and at the last minute we were told to keep driving, south past the suburbs, along the coast to a shabby old caf among banana plantations on scrubland by the sea.

It was dark, but we could hear his heavily armed guards rustling in the trees.

"If they come for me, my men will start shooting, just be prepared for that," said the burly figure, offering up cans of strong German lager." They tried to arrest me today. Someone was on my trail but as long as I have money from cannabis I can bribe the biggest players. Money rules this country." A few days before, members of the Jaafar clan

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had ambushed an army jeep in the Bekaa, spraying it with machinegun fire and grenades, killing four soldiers and wounding 11. The attack was revenge for the death of Ali Abbas Jaafar, a senior member of the clan with 172 outstanding arrest warrants, who was killed by soldiers after his vehicle refused to stop at a checkpoint.

In response the army launched a large-scale operation in the Bekaa, sending in special forces and armoured vehicles, setting up extra checkpoints, arresting around 100 suspects and confiscating close to 1500 kilos of drugs, large quantities of weapons, military equipment and counterfeit money.

At his seaside hideaway, Jaafar blamed the army for ambushing his cousin and dismissed the crackdown. "Nothing's changed. The judges will release those captured because they too like to take our drugs and money. We pay people in intelligence for information about where we can travel. There are people in the army protecting me now." But something big had changed and perhaps Jaafar knew it: he was travelling out of Lebanon the next day. Long opposed to the state's armed forces tackling criminality in its own backyard, Hezbollah had lifted its cover that kept the drug gangs of the Bekaa protected.

Some reports said the Islamists' patience had snapped when members of the Bekaa's Zeaiter clan allegedly stole a car belonging to Jihad Mughniyeh, son of Imad Mughniyeh, Hezbollah's top military commander who was assassinated last year in Damascus.

With their controlling seat in cabinet, Hezbollah ministers and their allies gave the green light to send the army in to Bekaa against the gangs for the first time in years.

" There were people who broke the law and felt they could seek the protection provided by influential political forces in their region," Information Minister Tarek Mitri told the Sunday Herald..

" But Hezbollah and others said they would do everything to ensure the law is enforced and that no-one is under any protection." In the last three years, the unresolved issue of Hezbollah's arms being beyond state control has drawn Lebanon into a war with Israel and to the brink of civil war last year, when a Hezbollah-led take-over of parts of Beirut spread into the mountains around the capital and descended into sectarian bloodletting.

But as the country goes to crucial parliamentary elections today, in which Hezbollah and its Syrian-backed allies are expected to take a slim majority of seats over the pro-West ruling coalition, the once-radical militia born out of the chaos of civil war appears now to be throwing its weight behind the institutions of a state in which it may soon have a much greater say.

" There is nothing called Hezbollah and the state. The state is all," said Nawaf Mousawi, a senior Hezbollah official running as the party's MP in the port city of Tyre." Sovereignty is ultimately for the Lebanese security forces.

The army is now good for its citizens." Just a few months ago, the cannabis and poppy farmers of the Bekaa could have had little idea how changing dynamics in Beirut might soon upset the established order in their fertile valley, where disputes are settled through tribal law, and honour and revenge are guiding principals.

Neglected by successive Lebanese governments, the rich soils of the Bekaa were once a breadbasket of the Roman Empire. Today, the south of the valley is dotted with vineyards, producing wine beloved of European connoisseurs.

To the east, tracks lead into the mountains beyond which lie the vast arid plains of Syria, an un-demarcated border across which Land Rovers ferry drugs, weapons and fighters.

Further north, the soil turns to rock, but on the remote north-west edge of the valley, the summer sun ripens cannabis plants that grow nearly as tall as their farmers.

For Nouh Zeaiter, known to villagers of Kneisse as a Robin Hood figure for supplying them with free diesel to run generators - electricity lines being nonexistent - it's the smell of riches.

MULLAHS& MARIJUANA EYEWITNESS THE RULES OF THE GAME MAY HAVE CHANGED FOR LEBANON 'S BEKAA VALLEY DRUG BARONS AS HEZBOLLAH PREPARES FOR ELECTIONS, BUT AS HUGH MA....

The 38-year-old Shia farmer has all the trappings of an international drug baron: a huge villa, the latest Hummer SUV, guards armed with M18 assault rifles and surveillance cameras everywhere.

With 540 charges against him, Zeaiter is right to be cautious.

With a bumper harvest earlier this year from his 500 hectares of cannabis, some poppies to be refined into heroin and a couple of fields of wheat, Zeaiter said he stands to make over\$ 1 million..

" At the end of each harvest trucks come and take all the cannabis harvest of the Bekaa. We don't ask where it goes.

We're farmers, not dealers," he said.

" Look at this village, there's no electricity or water network, so everyone here grows. Our only choice is cannabis farming." IN the chaos of civil war in the 1980s, Lebanon emerged as the Middle East's main source of narcotics, but by 2005 the police appeared to be getting a grip on the industry. According to figures from the Internal Security Forces(ISF) tasked with policing the drug trade, in 2005 some 6419 hectares of cannabis were ploughed or burned - nearly the entire Bekaa harvest.

That effort came to an end with the political upheaval triggered by the 2005 assassination of five-time prime minister Rafik Hariri, which left an anti-Syrian government, accusing Damascus of Hariri's killing, paralysed by a Hezbollah-led opposition. By 2007, not a single hectare of Bekaa drug crops had been touched. Nor were any destroyed last year. Poppies, too, lay undisturbed.

" In 2006 we were supposed to launch a campaign against cannabis but the July War stopped it," said Colonel Adel Mashmouchi, head of the ISF drugs department." In 2007 the army was busy fighting in Nahr al-Bared[a Palestinian refugee camp] while in 2008 the political split made it very sensitive for the army to go to opposition areas." With bumper harvests have come increasing numbers of drug addicts. In 2003, there were 1130 officially registered drug addicts, nearly half cannabis users and almost all men, according to the ISF. By 2008, the number had grown to 1684, including many more women, with the number of heroin addicts tripling and the number taking ecstasy doubling.

Mona Yazigi, director of the Mother of Light drug rehabilitation centre, said her beds were full all year round, mostly with heroin addicts." Anyone, from a child aged 12 to a grandfather of 60, can find drugs in Lebanon within an hour," she said." In the past drugs were related to the civil war but now we receive many university students and almost all aged 15 to 30." For Farid, a 23-year-old heroin addict originally from the Shia-majority village of Taybe in south Lebanon, there's no such help: having tried to check into a rehab centre Farid was told all the beds were full. The young man, rake-thin and homeless, said he started smoking cannabis resin after his parents divorced and his mother died of lung cancer.

When Farid needed to fund his increasing addiction he would steal money from his father and travel from the southern suburbs of Beirut, where they had settled, to the Bekaa to buy large bags of hash, as well as heroin and ecstasy to deal on the capital's streets.

" All kinds of drugs can be found in Bekaa and sometimes I used to get weapons for some people," said Farid.

" The best place to sell drugs was the American University of Beirut(AUB).

I started to deal to some rich kids and made lots of money." But after he began injecting heroin, Farid's life quickly fell apart. He lost his job at AUB and returned home to the southern suburbs. His father threw him out when he saw him injecting and he has lived on the streets ever since, begging money for his next fix.

As Hezbollah prepares for elections that could see its opposition alliance come to power, the drug barons of the Bekaa valley might not feel as protected as they once did. But under the bombed-out bridges of the southern

MULLAHS& MARIJUANA EYEWITNESS THE RULES OF THE GAME MAY HAVE CHANGED FOR
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suburbs there are corners of darkness that Farid, and too many like him who graduated from joints to needles, now call home.

" I am stuck with this poison. I am still working as a drug dealer and I probably always will," said Farid in a weak voice.

" But I want to stop heroin now because it's really killing me."

Graphic

An armed guard inspects a field of cannabis plants in the Bekaa Valley, home to a host of drug barons who until recently have considered themselves 'untouchable' Photograph: Ramzi Haidar/AFP/Getty Images

Load-Date: June 12, 2009

End of Document

Wanni patients transferred to Trinco hospital

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 12, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 375 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 12 -- Some 369 patients transported from Puthukkudiyiruppu were admitted to the Trincomalee general hospital yesterday while two of them succumbed to their injuries on admission.

The hospital had also been readied to admit more than 350 patients expected by last evening. After an observation visit to the hospital, Eastern Provincial Council Health Minister M.L.A.M. **Hizbullah** said that there were more than 100 critically injured persons who needed emergency treatment. He said that the Provincial Health Ministry, with the help of the Line Ministry, took measures to bring surgeons and special doctors from Colombo and Batticaloa to attend on them.

The Health Ministry had also delivered a truck load of essential medical supplies to the hospital, and another one was to be sent yesterday, he said. "Among the injured are children, women and old men. The LTTE has issued passes releasing them to the cleared areas for treatment only. I spoke to some women who cried asking for help to get their young sons and daughters released from LTTE clutches. Only those with injuries have been allowed to leave the areas," he said. Mr. **Hizbullah** quoted some patients as having told him that the mothers with injured babies were also allowed into the Government-held areas. "There are around 15-20 injured children who have come with their mothers," he said. Asked whether there are any Tiger casualties among the patients, he said that several young boys and girls could be seen, but it could not be ascertained whether they were LTTE fighters or not. The hospital authorities have discharged normal patients and reserved four wards for those patients from the LTTE-held areas. Besides, St. Methodist College, Trincomalee has also been converted to a makeshift hospital to house patients with minor injuries. The Government Agent has arranged facilities for the provision of breakfast to these patients yesterday, and the Provincial Health Ministry was to provide lunch and dinner to these patients on a continuing basis. Meanwhile, President Mahinda Rajapaksa has also contacted Mr. **Hizbullah** yesterday morning and instructed him to look into the needs of these patients. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2009

After all, politics was not that 'domestic' in Lebanon

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

June 12, 2009 Friday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1446 words

Byline: Kamal Dib

Body

In the period leading to June 7, 2009, observers stressed the importance of the local scene in every riding in the Lebanese elections. They recalled the quote that "all politics is domestic," and therefore all foreign policy is merely an allegory for domestic factional politics. The Lebanese elections proved the opposite - that, after all, politics was not that domestic.

First person By Kamal Dib

In the period leading to June 7, 2009, observers stressed the importance of the local scene in every riding in the Lebanese elections. They recalled the quote that "all politics is domestic," and therefore all foreign policy is merely an allegory for domestic factional politics. The Lebanese elections proved the opposite - that, after all, politics was not that domestic.

A variation of the same quote says, "All politics is local," and this version is attributed to Tip O'Neill, former speaker of the US House of Representatives. But O'Neill thanked his father for it after he had lost a local election: "This was the only race I ever lost in my life ... My father pointed out that I had taken my own neighborhood for granted. He was right: I had received a tremendous vote in the other sections of the city, but I hadn't worked hard enough in my own backyard. My father said: Let me tell you something I learned years ago: all politics is local."

One is tempted to stress the domestic factors in the outcome of the elections in Lebanon. However, some facts show that a high degree of foreign intervention did take place. What happened is a showcase of how a small country came under the lens of important regional and international powers.

At the regional level, the observer cannot escape the fact that much of what is going on in the region is part of the fallout of the Iranian revolution in 1979 that challenged Sunni Muslim leadership of the Arab and Muslim worlds. The Saudis, with their money, and Egypt with its demographic clout, stood up for Shiite Iran. They did that with US and European help, and armed Saddam Hussein of Iraq to the teeth to wage a war against Iran in 1980. They also did that by reining in the Lebanese warlords in 1989 by imposing an impossible peace through a Saudi-US sponsored agreement called the Taif Accord (Taif is a town in Saudi Arabia). In the 1990s, Saudi influence grew steadily in Lebanon, through Rafik Hariri, but Iran was omnipresent through **Hizbullah**.

After all, politics was not that 'domestic' in Lebanon

There are other examples of this battle between Sunni Arab Saudi Arabia and Egypt on the one hand and Shiite Persian Iran on the other, but in the case of Lebanon, there was never a decisive victory for either side. If Saudi Arabia could sway Saddam Hussein to fight the fight for Sunni Arabs and stand up to Iran at the cost of Iraq's destruction and 25 years of war and agony, tiny Lebanon would surely be small change in the battle against Iranian influence.

For many years much of Saudi-dominated and funded Arab and Lebanese media outlets (world class TV stations and newspapers) have portrayed the struggle in Lebanon as one against Iranian hegemony over Lebanon through Hizbullah, Tehran's proxy in Beirut. This propaganda made its way to the international media, where it became acceptable wisdom that the Lebanese elections bid enlightened Western democrats against oriental obscurantism represented by the chadored women and wild-eyed Mullahs. Major US newspapers were no exception. Even when reporters dispatched their stories from Beirut, copy editors casually added the essential clichés. This worldwide media support helped the Saad Hariri camp cut their campaign issue - that Hizbullah with its weapons and fundamentalist ideology were out to control Lebanon. The media almost always ignored the fact that major Christian factions were part of the opposition (Michel Aoun was still the leader of the largest Christian parliamentary faction with 27 MPs, against only 11 for Hizbullah). On the morning of June 7, when people headed to the polls, it sank in that a vote for the Hariri camp was a vote for the West.

Nowhere was it mentioned that Saad Hariri was no secularist or modernist, and that his regional supporter was conservative Saudi Arabia, where stability comes before anything else. The victory of Hariri was indeed a win for the Saudis, as one major news agency declared "Saudis gleeful at Lebanon vote." Here Saudi Arabia has scored yet another victory against Iran in the ongoing contest since 1980, with the implicit connotation that it was a win of Sunnis against Shiites, etc.

Whether one believes it or not, even Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir, the head of the Maronite Catholic Church jumped in the campaign against Iran, as he warned that "Lebanon was at risk of losing its 'Arab identity.'"

Now, Sfeir was never known for any affinity or identification with Arabism or Arabs, with a long history of association with a unique Lebanon and a Phoenician/Western heritage. It was reported that he did not abide by the pope's plea in 1996 that the Maronites ought to open up some more to the Arab world. On June 5, two days before the elections, his statement was planned and carefully designed, within the Saudi campaign, as another important shot at Persian Iran and, a call to Maronite Lebanese to vote against Hizbullah, the Iranian-funded party.

Syria's role in the elections was curiously lame compared to its activism over the past 50 years. Iran on the other hand did not step in, similar to Saudi Arabia, in funding its Lebanese allies and in massively transporting opposition supporters from the Lebanese Diaspora. The Iranian president even hurt the chances of the Lebanese opposition when he announced two weeks before the elections that a victory for the opposition (the Aoun- Hizbullah coalition) would signal a tilt for Lebanon to be in the Iranian sphere of influence. This alarmed many Lebanese voters, Christian and Muslim alike, who had a very negative view of fundamentalist Iran.

Frequent visits from top US administration figures (Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton), and continuous interventions by Arab and foreign ambassadors posted in Beirut, also made a difference in influencing the outcome of the Lebanese election. Amounts reaching \$700 million were poured in by foreign governments to guarantee the victory of the Hariri-led coalition.

While it was clear that the fight was between Saudi Arabia and Iran through proxy Shiites and Sunnis in Lebanon, the big surprise was Aoun's failure to win enough seats. Some said that Aoun's continued call for fighting corruption did not bode well with voters. While the Lebanese educated middle class saw Aoun's campaign against the corruption as good for democracy, poor and lower-middle-class people felt that this was a threat to the services and perks they get for free from corrupt politicians. Aoun and his advisers did not realize that corruption had social roots in Lebanon and is not limited to politicians. In Lebanon, corruption goes a long way, from students who cheat in sophisticated ways in exams, to government civil servants who follow immoral ways in making money, to politicians who get into monetary deals and help themselves to the national treasury. Americans and Britons who worked in West Africa know what is meant here.

After all, politics was not that 'domestic' in Lebanon

Observers also argued that the Aoun-Hizbullah alliance was not that serious. The 2006 agreement between both sides was never well explained to the Christians. Aoun's TV station, OTV, in two years of broadcasting was lukewarm about the accord and almost shy about an alliance with a fundamentalist group. It stressed the Christian face of Aoun's organization and never adopted Hizbullah's resistance ideology. Although Aoun, a former general and army commander, considers Israel as the enemy of Lebanon, has visited Syria and Iran, and believes in a secular state similar to France, his electoral campaign went the other way. It focused on "winning back Christian rights," spiced with anti-corruption slogans and the usual reminiscing about the previous struggle against Syrian occupation, all to satisfy a Maronite constituency.

Whether Aoun's lopsided election strategy was designed to keep Hizbullah away from Christian eyes or not, it was traditional in every sense, as it did recognize that the Lebanese are essentially sectarian and won't be won by progressive or virtuous talk. But isn't distancing from the sectarian mentality exactly what Aoun was all about and the reason why he was different from everyone else? It seems his politburo has a lot to discuss in the next few months.

Kamal Dib is a Canadian economist with research interest in Lebanese affairs and an observer of German culture, kamaldib@videotron.ca

Load-Date: June 12, 2009

Lebanon needs both security and freedom

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 17, 2009 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 991 words

Byline: Ghassan Rubeiz

Body

In Lebanon, the rulers are proud of existing freedoms and the reformers are obsessed with national security. All summer the Lebanese have been waiting for a new cabinet of ministers to emerge, with no results yet. For the people it feels like going through a ten-month pregnancy. Lebanon's sectarian formula of power sharing offers a demographically shrinking Christian community the prestige of the country's presidency. A Christian president designates a Muslim prime minister, a Sunni. But the prime minister, as the chief of cabinet, has more power than the president. The current chief of Parliament, a Shiite, has less formal power than the prime minister or the president, but his alliance with a militarized party - Hizbullah - gives him disproportional power.

In a way, the formal equilibrium in power sharing among the representatives of the four religious communities (Shiite, Sunnite, Christian and Druze) serves national stability, but this balance also seems to weaken national leadership, stifle efforts for reform and maintain sectarian tension. Too much energy is spent on political calibration of power.

Since the end of the Civil War, Lebanon has faced a number of crises: a series of political assassinations, a devastating war with Israel in 2006, an 18-month strike that crippled the economy. And now, a young designated Prime Minister is having difficulties in forming a new post-election government without securing approval of regional and international powers, powers which have too much influence on domestic politics.

However, Lebanon remains unique in the region. Despite weak national security, freedom thrives. There is suspense in Lebanese elections. Politicians win with narrow margins. Criticism of the government is a national sport. Capitalism thrives. Students organize lively political rallies. Thinkers publish controversial ideas. Unconventional art and theater are appreciated. People dress fashionably; women can chose to wear daring Western styles or affirm their identity through traditional dress. How long will these freedoms last?

The freedoms which Lebanon enjoys disappear during national upheavals. The Civil War lasted 15 years, from 1975 to 1990. In this domestic war survival of the individual citizen trumped both freedom and national security.

All Lebanese want political reform. National debt has climbed to dangerous levels and is growing. Decent politicians take a back seat allowing opportunist leaders to run a country which lacks the discipline of law and order. A sectarian system of power sharing is bound to fail in the future because demography, the system's underpinning,

Lebanon needs both security and freedom

has already changed radically. Lebanon's borders with neighboring countries are porous. The Israeli air force violates Lebanese skies on a regular basis.

The situation ought to change, but reform occurs only when the reformer has a better system to replace the old one. The opposition is a unique alliance between Hizbullah - a political party with a strong military wing - and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), lead by General Michel Aoun. Other minor parties play a secondary role in the opposition.

Observe the inconsistencies in the opposition camp. A "patriotic" party is in alliance with a militia-based party, which many view as a threat to the sovereignty of the state. Moreover, a secular Christian "Movement" - FPM - is in alliance with a Shiite "Party of God" - Hizbullah. Furthermore, the Lebanese opposition calls for political reform with major backing from Iran and Syria, two countries where the priority of national security is used as a pretext to marginalize freedom. But the opposition remains popular because those who rule appear less credible than those who challenge the system.

This political marriage of convenience is less based on common ideology than on political benefits. A Shiite movement looks "national" in scope and less tribal as it partners with FPM, a secular Christian party. In return, FPM gains electoral weight as it joins a militarized party that represents the largest faith community in the country.

The March 14 bloc is also a pragmatic alliance which lacks consistent ideology, charismatic leadership and confidence.

Critics of the majority bloc passionately argue that the opposition is a solid partnership across the religious divide; such critics claim that this reform front is a genuine political mass movement to save Lebanon from a future sectarian civil war. Some observers believe that a Christian-Shiite populist alliance has the potential to evolve into a full national liberation movement to free Lebanon from external hegemony and to reform it internally.

Following the logic of the opposition requires an overdose of positive thinking. The popularity of Aoun may be an awakening that rejects the current sectarian power sharing formula, a formula which gives Christians only a temporary guarantee of power.

To some extent, Lebanon owes its flair for political freedom to well-established Western educational and cultural institutions, particularly to the heritage of French and American schools and universities. The free political system of Lebanon is structurally geared to be friendly to the West.

But Lebanon's connection with Iran and Syria through Hizbullah is growing. Regardless of its past contributions to Lebanon, Hizbullah's armed wing today intimidates other parties and the state, gives excuse to other groups to organize secret militias, open the Shiite community leadership to external influence and reinforces sectarianism. Hizbullah's Shiite composition, its clerical leadership and its symbols appear sectarian.

Can Lebanon undergo reform without losing freedom? The chances are slim since the two major reform movements do not share the same vision of the future. Lebanon deserves a new political system which integrates freedom with security.

Ghassan Michel Rubeiz is an Arab-American commentator. He wrote this commentary for THE DAILY STAR.

Load-Date: October 17, 2009

High incidence of cancer patients in Eastern province

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 4, 2009 Monday

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Length: 269 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 4 -- The Eastern Province has witnessed a higher number of cancer patients compared to the other provinces in the country, the provincial health authorities said.

The Eastern Provincial Council Health Ministry said yesterday that 400 women die of breast cancer alone in the country every year, and the percentage reported in the East is relatively high. However, the authorities are yet to estimate the exact number of patients dying due to cancer. The Provincial Ministry had an awareness programme in this regard on Saturday. Eastern Provincial Council Health Minister M.L.A.M Hizbullah told the Daily Mirror yesterday that though breast cancer could be cured through early detection, the eastern people did not have access to the medical facilities due to the prolonged war situation. "Therefore, there is a high number of women suffering from breast cancer in the area," he said. Mr. Hizbullah said that they decided to put up 81 centres covering the entire province to screen women as a measure to arrest this trend. He said that the situation is all the more acute in the coastal areas of the Ampara district. Provincial Health Director Dr. S. Thevarajah said that their plan is to examine 300,000 women in the Eastern Province for hypertension, diabetics, breast cancer and cervical cancer and screen them within six months. "We want to educate the public and get them to clinics. Normally, they come to clinics only when they fall sick. We want to detect their diseases at a curable stage and treat them subsequently," he said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 4, 2009

Israeli killings of civilians

The Irish Times

March 23, 2009 Monday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 13

Length: 295 words

Body

Madam, Nadav Cohen of the Israeli Embassy (March 14th) is being disingenuous or economical with the truth when he writes that the bombing of a UN compound in Qana in 1996 was a tragic accidental killing and that Hizbullah was using the civilians as human shields.

On the day of the bombing, April 18th, there were several hundred civilians mostly women, children and old people from surrounding towns and villages taking refuge in the compound, which was a long-established headquarters for the UN's observer force Unifil.

The bombing of the compound by Israeli artillery resulted in the deaths of 106 civilians and serious injuries to scores more, as well as four Fijian peacekeepers. Israel immediately claimed the attack was accidental and an unfortunate mistake, blaming Hizbullah for using the compound as a shield, just as Mr Cohen claims.

The UN secretary general at the time, Boutros Boutros Ghali, immediately commissioned a report carried out by Maj Gen Von Kappen. The report documented clearly, despite repeated Israeli denials, the presence of one remotely piloted vehicle (a drone) and two Israeli helicopters in the immediate area before, during and after the bombing. The report concluded: It is unlikely that the shelling of the United Nations compound was the result of gross technical and/or procedural errors.

Human Rights Watch concluded, in its investigation: The decision of those who planned the attack to choose a mix of high-explosive artillery shells that included deadly anti-personnel shells designed to maximize injuries on the ground violated a key principle of international humanitarian law. And Amnesty International reported: The IDF intentionally targeted the UN compound. Yours, etc,

TOMAS McBRIDE,

Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Load-Date: March 23, 2009

Yasoda De Silva and Chanaka Wickramasinghe win diving triples

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

October 24, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 266 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 24 -- Yasoda De Silva of St. Bridget's Convent and Chanaka Wickramasinghe of the Navy won diving triples at the National and Junior Aquatic Diving Championships conducted by the Sri Lanka Aquatic Sports Union (SLASU) at the Sugathadasa Swimming Complex last weekend.

Yasoda De Silva got off the board with the Platform event for **women**, she then went onto win the three metre Spring Board and completed her hat trick with the one metre Spring Board event.

Wickramasinghe notched up his hat trick with wins in the Platform event for men, the one metre Spring Board and the three metre Spring Board events.

Results.

Platform **Women**: (1) Yasoda De Silva (2) Jithmi Gunaskera

Platform **Women**: (1) C. Wickramasinghe (2) H. **Hizbullah** (3) M. Uvais

One metre Spring Board Junior Boys: (1) R. Uvais (2) S. Peiris (3) D. Fernando.

One metre Spring Board Junior Girls (1) Nethmi Liyanage (2) J. Fernando (3) R. Jayamanne

Three metre Spring Board **Women** (1) Yasoda De Silva (2) Niluka Subasinghe (3) Sonali Samarakoon. One metre Spring Board Men (1) C. Wickramasinghe (2) Shae Lee (3) U. Uvais. One metre Spring Board **Women** (1) Yasoda De Silva (2) Sonali Samarakoon (3) Niluka Subasinghe Three metre Spring Board Junior Boys (1) R. Uvais (2) S. Peiris (3) D. Fernando.

Three metre Spring Board Junior Girls (1) J. Fernando (2) N. Liyanage (3) R. Jayamanne

Three metre Spring Board Men (1) C. Wickramasinghe (2) U. Uvais (3) H. **Hizbullah**. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 24, 2009

Yasoda De Silva and Chanaka Wickramasinghe win diving triples

End of Document

In short

The Irish Times
May 25, 2009 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 322 words

Body

A round-up of today's other world news in brief ...

Eleven killed in Moroccan stampede

RABAT Eleven people were killed in a stampede at a stadium in the Moroccan capital Rabat when thousands of spectators hurried to leave at the end of a concert wrapping up a music festival.

The stampede caused a fence to give way, killing five women, two teenagers and four men. Forty people were injured, eight seriously.

The victims were among 70,000 spectators at a concert by Moroccan pop star Abdelaziz Stati at the Hay Nahda soccer stadium. (Reuters)

Gay minister s position upheld

EDINBURGH A gay minister said he was humbled after the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland upheld his appointment.

In a ground-breaking move the Kirk s ruling body voted by 326 to 267 in support of the Rev Scott Rennie.

Mr Rennie (37) had the support of the majority of his congregation and Presbytery at Queen s Cross Church in Aberdeen, but the move to appoint him sparked strong protest from traditionalist members. (PA)

Six arrested after Sikh temple attack

VIENNA At least nine people were wounded when armed men attacked a preacher and worshippers in a Sikh temple in the Austrian capital Vienna yesterday.

A police spokeswoman said six suspects had been arrested and were among the injured after the incident. She said the casualty toll could rise. Local authorities said the violence involved members of several Sikh temples who had been at odds for several years. (Reuters)

Hizbullah denies Hariri killing link

BEIRUT Lebanon s Hizbullah has rejected charges in a German magazine that it was behind the 2005 killing of Rafik al-Hariri and said the fabrications were made to try to influence next month s general election.

In short

A suicide truck bomber killed Mr Hariri and 22 other people in Beirut in 2005. A UN investigation first implicated Syrian and Lebanese officers but it later held back from giving any details on its findings. (Reuters)

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

End of Document

PM brands Iran's intercepted arms-shipment a 'war crime'. 320 tons of weapons on the 'Francop' were intended to kill civilians, says Netanyahu * 'UN should be condemning Teheran, not us,' he fumes * Israel urges world to cease all dealings with Iran's state shipping firm

The Jerusalem Post

November 6, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1050 words

Byline: TOVAH LAZAROFF, AP contributed to this report

Body

In the wake of Israel's interception of the Iranian arms-laden Francop cargo ship, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Thursday accused Iran of "war crimes" and called on the United Nations to investigate it instead of Israel for attacking innocent civilians.

Israel's envoys overseas, meanwhile, were instructed to urge their host countries to cease all dealings with Iran's state shipping company, the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines - IRISL - which shipped the weapons from Iran to Egypt, in containers marked with its logo. Britain last month barred all such dealings.

Netanyahu spoke at a short Tel Aviv press briefing, which was part of an extensive public relations campaign Israel has launched since it intercepted, late on Tuesday night, the 140-meter-long Francop loaded with 320 tons of Katyushas, rockets, mortar shells and other weapons from Iran. The weapons were due to be delivered to Hizbullah by way of Syria.

The "sole objective" of these Iranian weapons, Netanyahu said, "was to attack and kill as many civilians - women, children and the elderly - as possible. This is a war crime."

He noted the timing of the ship's seizure, which occurred just as the UN's General Assembly was debating the Goldstone Report, which accused Israel of committing war crimes against Palestinians in Gaza.

"The UN General Assembly, which is meeting today, should investigate, discuss and condemn [the Iranian shipment]. This is a war crime that should prompt the UN Security Council to convene in special session, especially since it was in gross violation of UN Security Council resolutions," said Netanyahu.

"This is what the international community should concentrate on at all times - but especially today. But instead, they have chosen to assemble and condemn the IDF and the State of Israel, and to try and undermine our legitimate right to defend ourselves."

The prime minister added that the IDF was a moral army of the highest caliber. "We know that it is the IDF and the security services of the State of Israel that stand against the war criminals who plan to perpetrate war crimes against Israeli citizens."

PM brands Iran 's intercepted arms-shipment a 'war crime'. 320 tons of weapons on the 'Francop' were intended to kill civilians, says Netanyahu * ' UN should be....

"I think that the time has come for the international community, at least its more responsible countries, to recognize the truth and not promote a lie," Netanyahu said.

IDF Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, Defense Minister Ehud Barak, OC Navy Admiral Eli Marom and Military Intelligence chief Maj.-Gen. Amos Yadlin were also present with Netanyahu.

Yadlin added that besides the weaponry, there was a large amount of money on board the Francop which was meant to fund terror.

Defense officials privately told the media that had the weapons cache reached its destination, it would have given **Hizbullah** the ability to fight a full month longer in the event of a clash with Israel on the scale of the 2006 war.

The press conference was part a wider Israeli diplomatic initiative. The Foreign Ministry on Thursday brought ambassadors to Palmahim to view the intercepted materiel; on Wednesday Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon had spoken with them at the Foreign Ministry.

In Palmahim on Thursday, Foreign Ministry Director General Yossi Gal accused Iran of cynically manipulating innocent countries and hiding behind their flags.

He called on the international community to stop terrorist activity supported and organized by Iran and its satellites.

In a letter which the Foreign Ministry sent to its ambassadors Wednesday, its urged them to speak with the officials in their host country to pressure Iran.

They were instructed to also ask the governments to be more vigilant with respect to commercial shipping and in particular to follow the UK, which earlier this month banned companies from dealing with IRISL.

"Countries should take preventive measures in order to protect themselves and their companies, as mentioned in UNSC resolutions. The designation of IRISL by the government of UK last month is a good example of such a preventive measure," the letter stated.

In spite of the Israeli PR effort, international and even American media gave relatively coverage to the ship seizure. The New York Times ran a brief item on Thursday, while The Washington Post published a story in the paper's international section under an analysis of what the Obama administration's doing wrong in the peace process.

A Foreign Ministry source ascribed the low-level media attention to the fact that the international community already expected this kind of activity from Iran and thus was not too surprised by it.

But European diplomatic sources said that subject was being approached cautiously, and more investigation was needed on the matter. Some intimated that there was a strange coincidence in the seizure occurring precisely in the midst of the Goldstone debate at the UN General Assembly.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman told the media he had no doubt that the weaponry was bound for **Hizbullah**. Israel, he said, had done a thorough job of tracing the weapons origin and route, and had documentation to back up its claims.

State-run Iran TV said in a commentary that the "Israeli propaganda" was aimed at diverting attention from allegations of Israeli war crimes in Gaza. A Syrian Foreign Ministry official expressed the same view.

Iran's English-language Press TV said Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki had dismissed the allegations on the cargo's destination and route.

A Palestinian authority spokesman said Israel might pounce on the seizure as an excuse to avoid peacemaking.

PM brands Iran 's intercepted arms-shipment a 'war crime'. 320 tons of weapons on the 'Francop' were intended to kill civilians, says Netanyahu * ' UN should be....

"Since the Israeli leadership and society are not ready for peace, they are using any pretext to shun peace obligations, and one is the issue of the Iranian shipment," said Ghassan Khatib, a spokesman for the West Bank-based Palestinian government.

Hizbullah on Thursday denied any links to the shipment - as Syria had done on Wednesday, when its Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem accused Israel of "piracy."

In a statement faxed to the Associated Press on Thursday, **Hizbullah** said it "categorically denies" any connection to the weapons. It also called Israel's actions "piracy."

Once the cargo was removed from the ship, and Israel was satisfied that the crew was not involved, the vessel was allowed to sail away. The IDF took the cargo from the Ashdod Port to be stored at the Palmahim army base.

Graphic

Photo: FOREIGN DIPLOMATS examine arms taken from the 'Francop' cargo ship, at the IDF's Palmahim base yesterday. (Credit: IDF Spokesman)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Baabda stations see flood of citizens eager to shape Lebanon's future

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

June 8, 2009 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1079 words

Byline: Osama Habib

Body

In the suburbs of South Beirut and the villages of the surrounding foothills, pleas from both March 14 and March 8 blocs for high voter participation seemed to have been heeded. In Baabda, where six parliamentary seats - three Maronite, two Shiite and one Druze - were contested, a lack of voters was never likely to be a problem.

BAABDA/ALEY: In the suburbs of South Beirut and the villages of the surrounding foothills, pleas from both March 14 and March 8 blocs for high voter participation seemed to have been heeded. In Baabda, where six parliamentary seats - three Maronite, two Shiite and one Druze - were contested, a lack of voters was never likely to be a problem.

In the villages dotted around Aley, voting for five seats - two Druze, two Maronite and one Orthodox - was as frantic as anywhere in the country.

Contrary to the previous parliamentary elections in Lebanon, this was one of the few occasions where the Lebanese divided along political instead of confessional and sectarian lines.

However, as voting began on Sunday morning, many polling stations became overwhelmed with voters supporting all parties eager to participate in the shaping of Lebanon's future.

BAABDA

The picture couldn't have been clearer. Organizers dressed in the orange of Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) leader Michel Aoun clustered under gazeboes, dispensing coffee to supporters in small plastic cups. They sat on orange chairs and drank water from orange-topped bottles.

Hizbullah supporters, dressed in yellow polo shirts and baseball caps thrust ballot papers through car windows as the traffic ground to a standstill around polling stations.

In Harek Hreik, a March 8 stronghold and birthplace of Aoun, voters huddled on plastic chairs in the shade as election volunteers kept the sun off elderly women with sheets of cardboard.

Baabda stations see flood of citizens eager to shape Lebanon 's future

A higher-than-anticipated turnout left a number of voters visibly irritated with what they saw as inefficiency and poor organization by the heads of voting centers.

"This is really ridiculous. Many of these people have been waiting more than four hours just to cast their votes," one FPM official told The Daily Star.

"It takes more than 10 minutes for one citizen to drop his list in the box and sign his name. Some of the citizens have left the polling centers in frustration," the FPM official added.

Haret Hreik, a predominantly Shiite area in South Beirut, was shunned by many March 14 Christians who claimed that Hizbullah was intimidating voters.

A coordinator of March 14 and independent list in Baabda, who wished to remain anonymous, admitted that the suburb could be a daunting place for its supporters.

"Many of them refused to come to this area because they fear for their lives. However, Aoun supporters came in big numbers," he said as he examined the names of March 14 supporters who did brave the vote.

Monitors from European and Arab countries were observing the election process in the area with particular scrutiny.

"Things are very crowded around the voting center with very, very slow queues," said one Islamic Conference observer. "The [locations of polling stations] are not big enough. It could stop people voting."

Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) leader Michel Aoun managed yesterday to cast his vote in Harek Hreik shortly before midday.

Aoun then told reporters it was outrageous that many people had to sit in the sun for hours in order to vote.

The National News Agency (NNA) reported incidents of fighting and unrest throughout Baabda. Several women reportedly fainted under the heat and were unable to cast their votes.

Aoun urged Interior Minister Ziad Baround to increase the number of heads of polling centers to speed things up. Baabda's eventual turnout was 55 percent.

In the first of a series of press conferences, Baround - who is charged with overseeing the electoral process - conceded there had been problems.

"High voter turnout caused some difficulties in some districts," he said.

ALEY

In the hills around Beirut, not all polling stations were running so slowly. By 1 p.m., of the 690 eligible male voters in Wadi Sharhour, 400 had cast their ballot.

One female voter had been queuing all morning in the searing heat. "I am voting to have a free and more independent Lebanon. I have been waiting a very long time and it is a bit slow," she said.

"But even if it takes all day I am going to wait and I am going to vote. Many people have left because it's too busy. They don't want to wait but they will come back before 7 p.m. tonight.

"I know a lot of people who are not voting because they don't support either [alliance]. They want completely new people. But even if you're angry with the system, you must vote.

"Hopefully something good will happen. I think, though, that there will be trouble after today. That's normal in Lebanon," she added.

Baabda stations see flood of citizens eager to shape Lebanon 's future

Nevertheless, as the day wore on and with many voters still waiting to have their say, the Interior Ministry was forced to install extra voting booths in polling stations throughout Aley. Voter turnout in the district was 53 percent, suggesting that such measures had only a limited effect in increasing voter turnout.

The NNA reported that, throughout the district, several voting centers saw no Arab or foreign observers.

In Qmatieh, a mainly Shiite town, Grace Abi Rachid was voting for the FPM for economic reasons.

"I am not worried about Hizbullah's arms but I am more concerned about the economy," she said.

But some citizens, patiently queuing on the stones outside the town's church, were not so indifferent to the Shiite group.

Michel Haddad, an elderly man who was sitting in a chair near the long queue of voters, said that the first thing the government should do is to disarm Hizbullah.

"I don't want to see Iran or Hizbullah in this country," he said, staring at Aoun's supporters, waving orange flags with apparently unending enthusiasm.

"I had to wait for over an hour. It takes too long but people are voting," said one female resident.

"People are hoping for a change. I hope that all the needs of the Lebanese people will be achieved. We have too many common needs. If the government is more representative then we have a better chance to live in peace and live together."

But opinion differed in the rest of the voting centers in Aley. The area, mainly denominated by Druze, was set to vote for March 14 list, according to a Progressive Socialist Party official. "I don't think we will see any surprises in Aley because most of the residents will vote for our list," he added.

Load-Date: June 8, 2009

Siniora: Lebanon benefits from Arab reconciliation

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

March 16, 2009 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1083 words

Byline: Nafez Qawas

Body

Prime Minister Fouad Siniora welcomed on Sunday recent efforts toward Arab rapprochement, saying that Lebanese-Syrian reconciliation would benefit Lebanon. Speaking during an interview with Al-Jazeera news channel, Siniora said Lebanon would "benefit the most from Arab reconciliation."

BEIRUT: Prime Minister Fouad Siniora welcomed on Sunday recent efforts toward Arab rapprochement, saying that Lebanese-Syrian reconciliation would benefit Lebanon.

Speaking during an interview with Al-Jazeera news channel, Siniora said Lebanon would "benefit the most from Arab reconciliation."

The premier added that Syria's "key role in the region cannot be ignored."

"Syria embraces Arab causes and blocks foreign interventions in Arab affairs and Lebanon in turn should embrace Syria," he said.

Siniora, however, emphasized that Lebanon was not in need of a "chaperon" with regard to peace talks with Israel.

"We can speak for ourselves," he said, adding that Lebanon was committed to UN Resolutions 425 and 1701, and to the Arab Peace Initiative.

Siniora was responding to remarks made by Syrian President Bashar Assad, who last week expressed his wish to engage Hizbullah and Hamas in his country's indirect peace talks with Israel.

Siniora said criticisms that the Special Tribunal for Lebanon is politicized were "unfair."

"We are determined to keep the tribunal away from politics," Siniora said.

In a separate development, President Michel Sleiman travels to Paris on Monday on a three-day official visit that will focus on French military and economic assistance to Lebanon, as well diplomatic ties with Damascus.

French sources told Al-Anwar daily in remarks published Sunday that Paris will also stress "its commitment to work in the interest of Lebanon's unity, independence and sovereignty."

Siniora: Lebanon benefits from Arab reconciliation

In other news on Sunday, Minister of State Nassib Lahoud stressed that rapprochement with MP Michel Murr did not mean he has "authorized him to make alliances in the Metn province."

"We will ally with the forces we did not agree with in the past; this rapprochement is now possible because MP Michel Murr's stances recently improved," Lahoud said in a news conference.

He said Murr supported the seat of the Maronite church and its principles. "This development in his stances leads to rapprochement," Lahoud said.

"However," he added, "this possibility does not mean that we authorize MP Murr to form the alliances he wants in Metn," Lahoud stressed. "His vision of the [electoral] battle in the northern Metn is different from ours," he added.

"We will eventually agree through talks and discussions on the division of seats," Lahoud said.

"Metn is full of highly credible women and men ... We do not favor importing candidates from outside the province," the minister added.

Meanwhile, Speaker Nabih Berri said it was crucial to form a national unity cabinet after the upcoming parliamentary elections, regardless of the results, "because Lebanon cannot live except through consensus."

In an interview with Kuwaiti daily Al-Dar published Sunday, Berri said previous experiences proved that unilateralism drove Lebanon to crises.

Berri said he told all the participants in the March 5 session of the national dialogue in Baabda that a national unity cabinet would be established after the elections.

He refused to comment on reports which said that a Syrian-Saudi understanding was set to reconcile Lebanese politicians, but said that any Arab understanding would have positive effects on Lebanon.

Also on Sunday, Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah cautioned that disputes among Lebanese, particularly among Christians, weaken Lebanon. He also expressed willingness to help Lebanon in any way possible. "We are willing to exert every effort to help Lebanon, but we will not interfere in any Lebanese-Lebanese conflict," he said.

His comments, which were carried by the state-run National News Agency, came during talks with visiting Phalange Party leader Amin Gemayel. The report said the two leaders discussed bilateral ties and Kuwait's efforts to achieve Arab reconciliation.

Gemayel, who is on an official visit to Kuwait, lauded Kuwait's position in standing by Lebanon during difficult times.

Separately, Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun said Saturday that the upcoming parliamentary elections were going to be "a head-to-head battle between two plans."

"Upcoming elections are going to be a head-to-head battle between two projects - one that calls for reforms and another which is corrupt," Aoun said in an address during an FPM dinner at Habtour Grand Hotel.

"You have to exercise your rights and choose the reformist group," Aoun said.

He said the "battle now is aimed at putting an end to theft, and, God willing, the political legacy which began in 1992 will end on June 7."

"He who votes for a clean administration is clean, and he who votes for a corrupt administration is corrupt," Aoun said. "You cannot have a corrupt administration and a good community at the same time."

He emphasized that Lebanon is "split" between two political ideologies. "This is why a reformist force will be formed."

Siniora: Lebanon benefits from Arab reconciliation

On the controversial issue of a centrist parliamentary bloc, Aoun said that when he criticizes the bloc "we are not attacking the concept but its application."

Echoing Aoun, Loyalty to the Resistance bloc leader MP Mohammad Raad said the path of reform and state-building had been adopted by Hizbullah "ages ago."

"Social justice and reform has long been our motto," he said during a rally in the southern town of Nabatieh on Sunday. Raad said Hizbullah hoped that their electoral platform would be the "choice of voters."

Raad said his party was not seeking the elimination other political groups and rather wanted to preserve partnership in Lebanon.

He said Hizbullah would not hesitate to offer concessions, "even at our own expense," adding that it had done so during the formation of the current Cabinet. "We will do it again during the electoral battle if we have to," Raad said.

Also tackling election-related issues, Lebanese Forces (LF) MP George Adwan said "the upcoming parliamentary elections will either take Lebanon further along the path of independence or on that of the opposition."

During a rally in the Chouf village of Damour, in which he launched his electoral campaign on Sunday, Adwan stressed "the need to preserve unity and reject any compromise on the principles for which the LF fought." He also lashed out at Hizbullah, saying the party monopolized the "decision of war and peace."

Load-Date: March 15, 2009

Vote for bombs or business

Weekend Australian

June 13, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 1290 words

Byline: John Lyons

Body

Last week, Lebanon voted against the militarist **Hezbollah**. Now Iran goes to the polls. John Lyons reports

THE man in the money exchange booth in Beirut has an analysis of Lebanon's election as good as any I've heard. Holding up a \$1 note he says: "Hariri means dollar." Then, pretending to hold a gun in the air, he says: "**Hezbollah**. Boom!"

They don't like boom around here in Hamra, one of Beirut's thriving tourist areas.

It's different in some parts of Lebanon; the 40,000 missiles that **Hezbollah** claims to have along the border with Israel suggest someone doesn't mind it.

But, around here, boom kills business and people.

Meanwhile, in Iran, thousands take to the streets of Tehran and openly criticise the regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as they campaign for reform candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi for this weekend's election.

The Mousavi campaign has run various slogans targeting the stricter religious rules Ahmadinejad has enforced, including **women** being liable to lashes if they wear clothes that reveal flesh or body shape or do not cover their hair with a scarf, or hijab. One Mousavi slogan has been: "No to hijab, no to whipping, yes to freedom of choice."

In a country officially called the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was founded by an ayatollah and whose supreme leader is an ayatollah, this is radical.

While Iran's election has yet to be decided, Lebanon went to the polls peacefully last weekend and voted to keep **Hezbollah** from formally taking control, a huge leap in a country awash with weapons.

The result highlights two Lebanons: the victorious March 14 Alliance, led by Saad Hariri, which is popular among young Lebanese who want to engage with the world, and the defeated March 8 Alliance whose support base, **Hezbollah**, is made up of fundamentalist Shi'ite Muslims who look to Iran for religious and financial support. It is to Hariri that the man in the money exchange booth looks for the future wellbeing of Lebanon.

The rise of **Hezbollah** -- the Party of God -- seemed inevitable. One of Shia Islam's best organised machines, **Hezbollah**'s central policy is resistance against Israel. In May last year its fighters took over the streets of Beirut

Vote for bombs or business

because the government decided to close Hezbollah's secure telecommunications system, which helps it avoid Israeli and Lebanese interception, and to remove Hezbollah control at Beirut airport.

The Lebanese army was unprepared to take the fighters on, knowing who would win. The government backed down and Hezbollah was given power of veto over all government decisions where it can muster one-third of the votes in the parliament, which is a given.

The money exchange man says he desperately wants to keep Hezbollah and its leader Hassan Nasrallah out of government "for Lebanon's sake".

So do many of the young people in Hamra. So, too, it seems, do the majority of the 12,000 Lebanese Australians who voted; so do the men working at the rental car company.

"Nasrallah would turn Lebanon into Gaza," one tells Inquirer. Hezbollah's resistance against Israel is as far from the reality of these people's lives as it is for people living in Melbourne or London.

At the same time there have been some equally significant developments in Iran.

Under the all-powerful ayatollahs, dissent has not been allowed. But as Iran prepares for this weekend's election something unprecedented is happening; people have started openly expressing opposition to Ahmadinejad's regime.

Iran and Lebanon reflect the broader Arab and Muslim worlds where younger people, in particular, are questioning whether Islamic fundamentalism and government are a good combination.

It was unprecedented for the regime to back down on a ban three weeks ago on the use of Facebook for campaigning. And it was unprecedented that Mousavi campaigned with his wife alongside him.

Mousavi believes in greater freedom for women and argues that Ahmadinejad's rhetoric denying the Holocaust and attacking Israel and Jews is unacceptable. His campaign has asked Iranians a central question: what has Ahmadinejad's anti-Western rhetoric achieved?

While the West focuses on Ahmadinejad's ambition for nuclear weapons, the economy has been the centrepiece of the election campaign.

As the oil price has fallen and sanctions have bitten, Iranians have felt hardship.

Under Ahmadinejad the role of the religious police also has increased. It is common for women, particularly in northern Tehran, who are not properly dressed to be put in the back of a police car and taken for questioning.

One foreign woman who works in Iran tells Inquirer that recently she was walking along the street in Tehran when two female officers stopped her and told her to wipe off her lipstick.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that everything is changing. In Lebanon, Hezbollah still controls the weapons.

The biggest judgment Hariri must make is whether he is strong enough to wind back Hezbollah's power. Hariri campaigned to remove Hezbollah's one-third blocking veto over government decisions and to reduce Hezbollah's weapons. Both actions would almost certainly trigger a violent response by Hezbollah.

"The majority must commit not to question our role as a resistance party, the legitimacy of our weapons arsenal and the fact that Israel is an enemy state," Hezbollah MP Mohammed Raud said after the result.

The two Lebanons are obvious to see when Inquirer takes a tour of one of Hezbollah's strongholds, the southern suburbs of Beirut.

Vote for bombs or business

Leaving the city we drive past the Sabra and Shatila camps for Palestinian refugees, made famous in 1982 after 800 Palestinians were massacred there by militia allied to Israel.

Not far from here is Hezbollah's media office. New media director Ibrahim Mousawi must be one of the few people anywhere who has not just one gun on his business card but two; one in gold and one in grey. Pacifist Hezbollah is not.

“We have run a good campaign,” he says. “Not perfect, but good.”

While Nasrallah, with his firebrand speeches vowing wrath on Israel, is the face of Hezbollah across the world, Mousawi, a PhD from the University of Birmingham, attempts to be the accommodating face.

Entering Hezbollah territory is like entering a different country: the heavy Lebanese army presence is nowhere to be seen and is replaced by Hezbollah's army, complete with uniforms.

Although the location of Nasrallah's home is secret because of fears that the Israelis want to kill him, one local tells me he knows where it is, then takes me down a side street. Uniformed Hezbollah soldiers sitting on the corners of an otherwise abandoned block suggest someone of importance is being guarded.

Recently a Canadian journalist thought he had an interview with Nasrallah. After several hours of moving to different locations he was about to go through the final door when suddenly Hezbollah's security men panicked and rushed him away, convinced the Israelis had somehow monitored his mobile phone and could tell where he was.

The enthusiastic local takes me past Hezbollah's military headquarters, behind a large gate guarded by Hezbollah soldiers. Around here are dozens of new buildings that have replaced those bombed by Israel in 2006. Iranian funding is obvious from the many buildings displaying Iranian names.

One of the reasons for Hezbollah's popularity is that it fills the vacuum of an inefficient government. The party builds schools and houses, runs welfare services, provides jobs in its construction companies, which rebuild the destroyed houses and provides clean drinking water.

Yet Lebanon this week chose Hariri's dollar over Hezbollah's boom. Now Iran has an equally stark choice, between opening doors to the international community and remaining in the veiled world of fundamentalism and firebrand rhetoric.

Load-Date: June 12, 2009

While media reports hint agreement is near, obstacles still remain

The Jerusalem Post

November 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 646 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: ANALYSIS

Body

The rapid pace of recent media reports leaves no doubt that something is afoot with regard to Gilad Schalit and his possible release.

However, even if the media reports are correct, judging by past prisoner swaps, including the most recent one in July 2007 with **Hizbullah**, the process is still only in its initial stages and there are several major hurdles left to overcome.

Once the details of a deal are finalized between Hamas and Israel - the number of prisoners to be released and the way the deal will be carried out - the proposal will still need to be brought to the cabinet for approval. While government ministers are currently refusing to speak about the Schalit negotiations, judging by some of their past remarks, the vote may not go as smoothly as Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu might prefer.

Take Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon as an example. In an extensive interview with The Jerusalem Post earlier this year he asked: "From experience, we also know that terrorists who are released return to terrorism and cause more bloodshed. Do we want to cause bloodshed by releasing hundreds of terrorists?"

Other cabinet members, such as Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau and even Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, have all, at one point or another, expressed opposition to mass-prisoner releases in exchange for captive soldiers.

This does not even take into account the potential opposition from Israeli security chiefs. In the July 2008 swap with **Hizbullah**, Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) chief Yuval Diskin and Mossad chief Meir Dagan came out against the deal, which included the release of live **Hizbullah** captives for two dead Israeli soldiers.

On the other side was Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi who, according to media reports at the time, slammed his fist on the cabinet table and said that the nation needed to do everything in its power to win its soldiers' return.

Despite the opposition that the deal may encounter it will likely pass since, given what appears to be immense public support for the release it will be difficult to envision ministers putting their political careers on the line and voting against the proposal.

Once this happens, the defense establishment will need several days to complete preparations.

While media reports hint agreement is near, obstacles still remain

Due to the heavily-imposed military censorship, the media have not been allowed to divulge at the moment whether Schalit will be released to Egypt or Israel, how he will get there and what the format of the release of prisoners will be - will the exchange take place simultaneously or will Schalit be released first and then the prisoners, or the opposite.

This will depend on how determined Hamas is to go through with the deal, something that the Israeli defense establishment is not completely convinced about yet. The release a few months ago of **female** prisoners in exchange for a videotape of Schalit was aimed on the one hand at obtaining a sign of life, and on the other at ensuring that the Hamas members Israel has been talking with - through Egyptian and German mediation - are the right address and can actually deliver.

The ban on publication of details of the deal has so far prevented a public debate on some of the critical issues. These include, according to some reports, the unprecedented release of a significant number of Israeli- Arabs, as well as some of the most notorious terrorists Israel has known, such as former Tanzim leader Marwan Barghouti and PFLP leader Ahmed Sadat.

Once they surface, these issues will draw additional questions for Israelis to ponder, such as the effect the deal will have on the Palestinian political map - it will likely strengthen Hamas and weaken Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas - and most importantly the possibility that it will motivate terror groups to continue making every effort to kidnap another soldier.

Graphic

Photo: Gilad Schalit in a video released by Hamas in October. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Hariri striving for 'real partnership' in cabinet

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

July 20, 2009 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 995 words

Byline: Elias Sakr

Body

Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri stressed on Sunday that discussions to form the next cabinet were ongoing so as to reach an agreement on a structure that guarantees "real partnership." After talks with President Michel Sleiman at the Baabda Palace, Hariri said he aimed to form a national-unity cabinet.

BEIRUT: Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri stressed on Sunday that discussions to form the next cabinet were ongoing so as to reach an agreement on a structure that guarantees "real partnership." After talks with President Michel Sleiman at the Baabda Palace, Hariri said he aimed to form a national-unity cabinet that comprised all major political parties in order to resolve the country's economic and social issues, as well as to face Lebanon's future challenges.

Hariri said the formation process was moving forward as "it should be," adding that he would keep up his ongoing consultations with political parties.

On Sunday, Sleiman also met French Senator Ladislav Poniatowski, who congratulated the Lebanese on their June 7 elections and wished Lebanon stability and security.

Earlier on Sunday, media reports claimed that a secret meeting took place on Saturday between Hariri and Sleiman at Baabda presidential palace.

A source close to the Future Movement leader dismissed the reports and told The Daily Star that such media leaks "aimed to pressure Sleiman with regard to the upcoming cabinet by depicting him as responsible for the delay in the formation process."

While Future Movement figures reiterated on Sunday that opposition groups were hampering the formation of the next government by insisting on being granted the blocking-third vote, **Hizbullah** blamed the delay on foreign intervention.

The source close to Hariri said the opposition's "high-pitched demands" with regard to the structure of the next cabinet were hindering its formation.

Hariri striving for 'real partnership' in cabinet

"The opposition groups are still insisting on being granted the obstructing third in the next government which delays the agreement on the cabinet's shape," the source added.

He explained that **Hizbullah** leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's advice not to pressure Hariri into quickly forming the government was an indicator that the opposition "was in no hurry to reach an agreement."

Concerning Nasrallah's remarks on Friday that **Hizbullah** wanted no guarantees on his party's arms, the source said the statement implied that **Hizbullah** "needed" no assurances.

Commenting on Loyalty to the Resistance bloc MP Mohammad Raad's statement on Sunday blaming the delay in the cabinet's formation on foreign intervention, the source stressed that it was up to Lebanese leaders to decide on the government's makeup.

"The March 14 Forces never denied that there is foreign influence on Lebanon's political situation, however, such influence should remain limited and the Lebanese leaders should domestically reach an agreement on the cabinet's form," the source said.

Raad said earlier on Sunday that foreign obstacles were hindering the formation of the cabinet, adding that domestic circumstances were favorable for speeding up the process.

"We don't consider the domestic difficulties as obstructive - on the contrary, circumstances are favorable for the prompt formation of a representative national-unity cabinet," Raad said.

Speaking during a rally to mark the 60th anniversary assassination of Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) founder Antoun Saadeh, Raad stressed that attempts by foreign sides to hamper the formation of the next cabinet could only be surpassed through cooperation and unity among the Lebanese.

"Given Lebanon's geopolitical status, only unity can preserve the country's stability and allow the people to accomplish true independence away from foreign intervention," Raad said.

Concerning the Israeli violations of Lebanese territories, Raad slammed the bias of the international community, accusing it of interfering to impose security "only when the aggressors experience failure."

"The international community intervenes once the assailants face trouble, however, when the Lebanese people call for security they take side to [protect] the aggressors' interests," Raad said, in reference to Israel.

Meanwhile, Amal Movement MP Ali Hassan Khalil on Sunday urged all Lebanese political parties support the resistance and the Lebanese Armed Forces, adding that they complemented each other.

Speaking during the same SSNP rally, Khalil said Lebanon was ready to deal with any Israeli offensive. Nevertheless, the Amal MP stressed the country's commitment to UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

In other news, Frederick Hove, assistant of the US president's special envoy to the Middle East George Mitchell, is expected to arrive in Beirut next week following visits to Syria and Israel, according to the Central News Agency (CNA).

The CNA report said Hove's visit would pave the way for Mitchell's Middle East trip which will include visits to Israel, Syria and Lebanon, before the end of the month.

Berri calls for abolishing sectarianism

BEIRUT: Speaker Nabih Berri stressed on Sunday the need to form a national committee to abolish political sectarianism. Berri explained that sectarianism undermined state authority and had led to disappointments in the past era.

Berri, who was re-elected as the Amal Movement's leader, called during the movement's 12th convention for boosting partnership among the Lebanese.

Hariri striving for 'real partnership' in cabinet

"I'm not referring to sectarian partnership between Lebanese factions, but to the participation of expatriates, women and the young generation in state affairs and Lebanon's civil society," Berri said.

Tackling the concerns of the residents of south Lebanon and Hermel, Berri criticized the government's negligence, adding that developmental projects in the regions were as important as plans to drill for fuel oil along the coastline.

Berri also said Amal would work toward lowering the cost of debt servicing in order to implement "just and comprehensive developmental programs." - The Daily Star

Load-Date: July 20, 2009

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Lebanon Arrests 3 on Charges of Spying for Israel

The New York Times

April 26, 2009 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 394 words

Byline: By ROBERT F. WORTH; Hwaida Saad contributed reporting.

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

The authorities in Lebanon arrested three men on Saturday on charges of spying for Israel, the latest chapter in a long-running intelligence war between the countries that has led to the arrests of at least nine people here over the past year.

The three men arrested Saturday, two Lebanese and one Palestinian, do not appear to have worked together, said a Lebanese security official who spoke on the condition of anonymity. He identified the Lebanese men as Ali Mantash and Robert Kfoury, and the Palestinian as Mohammad Awad.

Lebanon considers Israel, which carried out a major bombing campaign here during the 34-day war with **Hezbollah** in 2006, an enemy state. If convicted, collaborators could receive the death penalty.

The arrests on Saturday were based on information from Adeeb al-Alam, a retired Lebanese general who was arrested this month and charged with spying for Israel for over at least a decade. Mr. Alam traveled regularly to Europe to meet with Israeli officials, and at their behest he set up a business that brought **women** to Lebanon to work as maids to help disguise his activities, Lebanese security officials said.

Mr. Alam's wife and nephew were also arrested and accused of spying with him.

It is not clear how long the three men arrested Saturday were believed to have spied for Israel.

In many cases, **Hezbollah** has discovered and captured spying suspects before handing them to the authorities in Lebanon. **Hezbollah**, a Shiite militant group, whose political wing has strong representation in the Parliament and cabinet, is the most powerful military force in Lebanon, and it is also widely thought to have the best intelligence network.

This year, **Hezbollah** captured Marwan Faqih, a businessman in Nabatiye who is believed to have sold dozens of cars to **Hezbollah** officials with tracking and listening devices inside them, on behalf of Israeli intelligence. Mr. Faqih was handed over to the authorities in Lebanon and charged with collaborating with Israel.

Last year, **Hezbollah** captured Ali al-Jarrah, a Lebanese man who was later charged with spying for Israel for 25 years. Lebanese prosecutors are seeking the death penalty for Mr. Jarrah.

Lebanon Arrests 3 on Charges of Spying for Israel

Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, has said repeatedly that the group would retaliate against Israel for the 2008 killing of Imad Mugniyah, a top **Hezbollah** military commander.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: April 26, 2009

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A new cold war in the Mid-East

The Australian

June 11, 2009 Thursday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 12

Length: 1220 words

Byline: Greg Sheridan, foreign editor

Body

The usual power structure prevails despite the outcome of the election in Lebanon

WAS the surprising Lebanese election result, in which the pro-Western government won a clear victory over the Hezbollah-led opposition, the first flower of Barack Obama's new spring for the Muslim and Arab worlds? Were enough Lebanese voters won over by the charm and eloquence of the handsome young American President to give the fading Western power one more try?

I am tempted to write a wholly optimistic column. I want to declare "Let Lebanon be Lebanon", as Ronald Reagan at the height of the Cold War so famously and effectively declared "Let Poland be Poland". Lebanon, its sons and daughters will tell you, used to be the best country in the world. Beirut was the Paris of the east. It was the cradle of much civilisation. Its offspring have been magnificent citizens of Australia, from the last Victorian premier to the incumbent NSW Governor.

Can this glory come again? Well, sadly, it is better to tell the truth.

This election result is good news, but it is very modest good news.

Hezbollah won all the seats it contested. The alliance it leads will have just under a half of the parliament. Hezbollah is a devoutly Shi'ite terrorist group controlled by Iran.

It will continue to wield by far the most powerful army in Lebanon. It will continue to receive weapons and financial support from Syria and Iran at will. It will continue to possess 50,000 rockets deployed on Israel's border. It will continue to exercise dominance within Lebanon whenever it wants to by force of arms.

The best piece of writing on Lebanon in recent months was a brilliant cover story in the May 20 issue of The New Republic. In it, journalist David Samuels recounts an interview with former Lebanese president Amin Gemayel, in which he outlines Hezbollah's strategic value to Iran.

Gemayel says: "In the form of Hezbollah, they [Iran] get a brigade on the Mediterranean and on the border with Israel. So \$100 million a year they spend here is nothing."

In 2007, Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah made a famous speech in which he answered directly the charge that Hezbollah was not complying with UN resolutions that forbade it from bringing armaments into Lebanon.

A new cold war in the Mid-East

Nasrallah said: ``We are being very clear and we have arms. We have arms of all shapes and sizes. The resistance [Hezbollah often refers to itself as the resistance] has arms. It is saying it in public, adding that it is rearming and increasing the scope of its armaments in order to get more dangerous arms ... We are transporting the arms secretly and in straw trucks so as not to embarrass you [the Lebanese government]. I am saying we will remain on the border, in Beirut and everywhere in Lebanon."

You've certainly got to hand it to Nasrallah and Hezbollah generally: they say what they mean, even if a thousand Western commentators try to find some other meaning in their words.

One of the most striking features of Samuels's long essay is his description of his interview with Saad Hariri, son of Lebanon's assassinated former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, and the leader of the winning coalition in the recent election. Hariri, the successful and just-elected senior politician in Lebanon, lives behind a fortress, seldom leaving his stockade, with street traffic kept at least a block away so no car bomb can kill him as it killed his father.

If he wants to go out for an evening meal at a restaurant, he goes overseas.

Of course, much normal life goes on in Lebanon. The Lebanese have a national genius for making the most of what normality is afforded to them. But giant, convulsive and violent forces are at work within their society, and from outside.

In one sense, the Lebanese election was the latest episode in what is becoming a fairly clear cold war in the Middle East. On one side of this cold war are the US, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and, despite Arab unease with them, the Israelis. On the other side are Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip. Communal, ethnic, religious and national identities and loyalties are infinitely more complex than these cold war divisions, naturally, but the strategic competition between the US and Iran is a central axis around which the region revolves.

This was reflected in the alliances in the Lebanese election. Hariri's group was called the March 14 alliance. It consists of the main Sunni parties, the Druze group led by Walid Jumblatt and some Christians who were associated with the old Phalangist Party. They got strong political support from the US and a lot of money from Saudi Arabia.

The Hezbollah group is called the March 8 coalition and involves Hezbollah, another Shia group called Amal and the Christian forces of former general Michel Aoun.

Aoun's forces were the big losers in the election.

The inherent madness of Lebanese politics and the sheer desperate scramble to survive is evident in Aoun's electoral alliance with Hezbollah. This is an alliance against nature and against conviction.

Aoun was once the hero of Lebanese resistance to Syrian hegemony. One of Aoun's election posters featured a dazzlingly beautiful, bare-armed young woman wearing saucy orange lipstick and with plucked eyebrows. The caption urged women to ``be beautiful and vote".

Yet Aoun's allies, Hezbollah, are Islamic fundamentalists who want an Islamist state. Go figure.

Samuels argues that Lebanon offers a taste of the future of the Middle East, once Iran has a nuclear weapon and can operate anywhere without fear of military retaliation. For Iran and Syria today operate with a virtually free hand in Lebanon.

The UN has been investigating for a very long time the assassination of Rafik Hariri, but the UN's various actions and inactions have put no serious curb on Damascus or Tehran.

Hezbollah has accepted the election result but it has also said clearly and repeatedly that it is never giving up its arms, that it requires its arms for anti-Israeli resistance. Hariri wants Hezbollah to join the government. There is no force in Lebanon that can disarm Hezbollah. Thus Lebanon is a state that cannot exercise sovereignty over its own territory.

A new cold war in the Mid-East

One reason American strategic players are so keen to push an Israel-Syria peace deal is the hope that this could be a process by which Syria is strategically reoriented away from Iran. Middle East expert Martin Indyk argues this position with particular eloquence. But how realistic is it? For Syria to cut off its assets in Hezbollah, to betray its other proxies in Lebanon, to earn the hostility of Tehran, which everyone in the region believes will soon enough possess nuclear weapon: all this for what from the Syrian point of view? So that the Americans can bring them into the disciplines of the World Trade Organisation and lecture them about the virtues of democracy?

People of goodwill everywhere should wish the Lebanese government good fortune, and we should do what we can to help it build its state and deliver as normal a life as it can for as many of its citizens as possible.

But strategic matters in the Middle East are seldom solved by elections. This was a good election result, but it doesn't much change the Lebanese status quo, which is pretty grim. Perhaps we'll have better luck in tomorrow's presidential election in Iran. But I wouldn't bet the house.

Load-Date: June 10, 2009

End of Document

Is Al Jazeera part of the Muslim Brothers' program?

The Jerusalem Post

June 26, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 28

Length: 2273 words

Byline: ZVI MAZEL

Highlight: Commentators in the Arab world have wondered exactly who or what is behind what appears to be the network's main purpose: promoting incitement against Arab regimes, while holding to an extreme Arab nationalist attitude against the US and Israel and extolling conservative - sometimes extremist - Islam. It did not take long for one name to emerge. The writer has served as ambassador to Romania, Egypt and Sweden. He currently directs the Jerusalem Center's Arabic-language Web site - infoelarab.org.

Body

Could Qatar and Al Jazeera's satellite channel located there be secretly manipulated by the Muslim Brotherhood? This is a question frequently asked by Arab media trying to puzzle out the high profile adopted by the ruler of the tiny desert country and the nationalistic and radical Islamic content of the channel he owns.

The Brotherhood exerted a profound influence on the conservative Beduin society of Qatar, which numbered less than 100,000 people in the 1950s. In a paper he wrote in 2007, Abdallah Alnefissi, a well-known Kuwaiti philosopher, explains that the then ruler of Qatar, Ali Ben Abdullah Al- Thani, was so impressed by their piety and morality that he gave them his trust and let them carry out a wide range of religious and cultural activities.

The creed that the Brotherhood was teaching was that of its founder, Hassan al-Banna, and his master theologian, Sayed Qutb.

Their radical Islamic movement was created in 1928 in Egypt but saw itself as endowed with a mission to bring enlightenment to the whole world and reinstate the caliphate - a Muslim empire ruled by Shari'a, Islamic law. As a first step the movement targeted Islamic nations but intended to spread to the rest of the world. Indeed, branches were set up in most Arab countries in the early 1940s.

IN QATAR, the Brotherhood grew more influential when the present emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, deposed his father in a bloodless palace coup in 1995 (he called the old man who was vacationing in Switzerland, told him he was taking over and advised him to prolong his vacation).

One of his first steps was to establish Al Jazeera in 1996, while at the same time closing down the Ministry of Information and abolishing censorship. He also set up the Shura Council, an Islamic version of a consultative parliament - with no real power. In addition, he granted women the right to vote for the few limited political institutions he created. These measures were intended to show that he was both a liberal and a democrat. However, Hamad bin Khalifa still rules alone and appointed a distant cousin, Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al-Thani, as chairman of the board of Al Jazeera to keep a close watch on its activities.

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Qatar became a hub of political activity, with dozens of important meetings held in its capital city, Doha. A partial list includes the World Trade Organization, 2001; Asian Olympic Games, 2006; Sunni-Shi'a Roundtable, 2007; and the first Arab Commission for Human Rights, 2008. In June 2008 Doha was the scene of negotiations between Hizbullah and representatives of the majority coalition in the Lebanese parliament which brought about the "Doha Agreement," paving the way for a national unity government with Hizbullah given veto power on all decisions.

This could not have been done without heavy pressure being brought to bear on behalf of Hizbullah from Syria and Iran. Their intervention threw light on the rapprochement between the emir of Qatar and the radical Islamic camp in the Arab world. This did not come as a complete surprise. The year before, the emir had stunned and embarrassed the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council by inviting President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran to their yearly summit without asking them, and in violation of the rules since only Arab nations can participate.

At the same time, however, Qatar is host to a number of American military installations which had previously been based in Saudi Arabia. That country had felt compelled to ask the US to help it fight a wave of internal terrorism by evacuating its soldiers in the period following the 9/11 attacks. There are today three US military bases in Qatar.

Thus, while assured of American backing and protection because of the bases, and enjoying an aura of moderation and aspiration to peace because of the Israeli commercial office (until January 2009), Qatar's hyperactive emir took on the stature of a serious player in the Arab arena - and was able to move closer to the extremist camp without serious repercussions.

While some commentators went as far as saying that Qatar was becoming a diplomatic force to be reckoned with at the expense of the dwindling influence of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, it is still a small country populated by Beduin, with no history to speak of, no developed economy and no army. It does enjoy handsome revenues from the export of gas. However, this alone is not enough to put it in a position to mediate in the serious issues troubling the Arab world, such as Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinians and Iran.

THIS IS where Al Jazeera comes into play. The influential satellite channel brings to Qatar what it lacks to be a serious player. It is generally thought that the creation of a satellite channel in Doha in 1996 marked the beginning of a new era for the Arab world. The emir recruited seasoned personnel fluent in English and Arabic, most of them from the unsuccessful BBC Arabic channel. Soon the new station was broadcasting news and commentary around the clock.

In a matter of years Al Jazeera had assumed a leading role in Arab telecommunications. It is today a vast empire comprising an English news channel, a sports channel, a documentary channel and a children's channel. Its broadcasts can be accessed through cellular phones and it has a Web site updated constantly with the latest news from all over the world. Its latest endeavor is a shortwave radio station broadcasting to the Arab world.

There was never any doubt about the network's political orientation. Al Jazeera immediately launched scathing attacks on Israel during the second intifada and went on to incendiary broadcasts against the US at the time of the Afghanistan conflict and later over Iraq. It was well received by audiences in the Middle East and among Arab communities in Europe. Its reports appeared truthful and factual to its audience.

At the same time it was opening its studios to opposition figures from Arab countries and hosting fascinating debates on the sorry economic and social situation in the Arab world, something that had never been previously seen on television. Politicians, including heads of state, journalists, academics, and religious leaders representing mainline conservative views are confronted with a sprinkling of liberal intellectuals not afraid to speak up publicly.

One of the most provocative programs deals with socioeconomic issues and radical Islam. Though some progressive and liberal views are expressed, they are often interrupted by the moderator, who usually defends nationalist and radical Islamic opinions and does not hesitate to challenge the speakers.

Needless to say, Arab leaders do not like being criticized and see in the broadcasts a threat to the stability of their regimes. Some countries, such as Algeria and Saudi Arabia, did not let Al Jazeera set up offices on their soil; others, who had first allowed it, among them Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and the Palestinian Authority, closed them down

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quickly - but not for long, having come to the conclusion that closure did not help change the contents of the broadcasts.

Saudi Arabia, already on bad terms with Qatar, did take an effective step against Al Jazeera by not letting it broadcast advertisements. Since it is the largest market in the region, this effectively prevents Al Jazeera from achieving financial independence. Saudi Arabia also launched its own satellite channel, Al Arabiya. Though this channel progressed rapidly because of the quality of its programs, it did not overtake Al Jazeera, which remains the one most viewed with an estimated audience of some 60 million.

The meteoric rise of the network and its increasing popularity have led many political and media commentators in the Arab world to wonder exactly who or what was behind what appears to be its main purpose: encouraging opposition and promoting incitement against Arab regimes, exposing the corruption of their leaders and their entourage, while holding to an extreme Arab nationalist attitude against the US and Israel and extolling the values of conservative - and sometimes extremist - Islam. It did not take long for one name to emerge: the Muslim Brotherhood.

THIS HYPOTHESIS is supported by a number of facts. The director-general of the network, Wadah Khanfar, was a member of the organization in Jordan, where he was arrested. Today he is one of the closest advisers of the emir. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi is also a member of the inner circle of the emir and is known to work closely with Khanfar. Both support Hamas. Arab researchers have succeeded in uncovering a number of other Brothers working for the network, but it is surmised that there are many more.

The general consensus is that Qaradawi is the visible tip of the iceberg. In an article published in 2003 in the London-based Arabic daily Asharq al-Awsat, Maamun Fendi, a well-known Egyptian liberal thinker today living in the US, wrote that some 50 percent of the network's personnel belong to the Muslim Brotherhood. He added that their influence in Qatar was rising both in the network and among government circles. According to him, the Brotherhood had intended to hold its world summit in Qatar in 2003 but had to scuttle its plan when it became known. These summits are usually held in a European capital far from Arab countries, in conditions of the utmost discretion, if not secrecy.

Fendi believes that Qatar, by embracing the Brotherhood, an extremist Islamic organization quite popular in the Arab world, while hosting American bases, has found the perfect formula against retaliation by Arab leaders and attacks by all other Arab and Islamic extremists including al-Qaida.

Having vainly tried threats, diplomatic pressure, and closing down its offices, Arab countries made a last, collective effort to curb Al Jazeera's broadcasts. In February 2008 Egypt and Saudi Arabia convened in Cairo an extraordinary meeting of the ministers of information of all members of the Arab League. The purpose was to impose a series of restrictions on all satellite channels in the Arab world. The proposed rules, which were supposed to be applied in all Arab countries, included a sweeping prohibition against insulting a country's leaders or impugning its religious and national symbols.

Infringement of the rules would give countries the right to freeze or cancel the offending network's permit to operate. The rules would have made it possible for the regime to stop the broadcasts at will without having to resort to a court decision. However, Qatar and Lebanon refused to endorse the agreement and it never came into effect. So Al Jazeera keeps on being a threat to Arab regimes.

Al Jazeera leads an all-out war against Israel in which there is no room for true reporting. The purpose is to bring all Arabs to support the Palestinians and, more specifically, Hamas, which is, after all, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. No efforts are spared to present the Palestinians as the ultimate victims. Hamas representatives are warmly received by news anchors and commentators and they receive far more air time than the Palestinian Authority - a fact often bemoaned by Yasser Arafat who tried vainly to change it.

IN THE course of the Second Lebanon War in 2006, Al Jazeera behaved as a Hizbullah spokesman in all but name. It broadcast all Hizbullah communiques without bothering to check them, as well as footage from Hizbullah's satellite network, Al Manar, which was deliberately distorting the facts and grossly exaggerating the

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actual damage. At no time did Al Jazeera take into consideration what Israel had to say about the situation on the ground.

During the Gaza war, a senior Al Jazeera reporter stationed himself at Shifa Hospital, from where he broadcast a stream of carefully selected horror pictures. Once again, they were accepted unreservedly and used to show what was purported to be the endless killing of civilians and especially children.

Al Jazeera has evaded all attempts to curb it and its broadcasts respect no boundaries. In Egypt, following the recent discovery of a ***Hizbullah*** plot inside the country, media have included Qatar and its network in the Iranian axis of evil, together with Syria, ***Hizbullah*** and Hamas. On April 18, Egypt's Al Ahram described the Qatar/Al Jazeera duo as "the Qatari propaganda network that belongs to the country of Al Jazeera."

"Sudanonline," a Sudanese Web site, goes a step further and links Qatar with the Muslim Brotherhood: "What is dangerous is that their organization has the potential to launch a violent conflict and to try by any available means to take over the country. We are very much afraid that Qatar will be consumed by the fire of that organization if it keeps on letting it act. The Brothers do not know the meaning of friendship and keeping faith. Their history shows, especially in Sudan where they are active, that they are all suckling from the same source - the creed of Hassan al-Banna and Sayed Qutb."

Qatar and Al Jazeera are indeed a very dangerous phenomenon. With the help of the powerful satellite network he created, the emir of Qatar is trying to assume the mantle of a great power, aided and abetted by the Muslim Brotherhood - one of the most extreme movements in the Muslim world. He is seen to be getting closer and closer to Iran, in keeping with the dangerous, revolutionary and wayward vision of the Brotherhood. Indeed, with the Muslim Brotherhood increasingly aligned in recent years with Iran, by repeatedly attacking the Sunni Arab regimes and inciting against them, Al Jazeera is serving as an important instrument for Teheran and its effort to undermine their internal stability.

Graphic

3 photos: Al Jazeera anchor Ghida Fakhry goes on-air on the first day of the channel's debut of its 24-hour English-language service. Qatari emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani speaks at the the UN. After deposing his father, one of the emir's first steps was to establish Al Jazeera. Emblem of The Muslim Brotherhood. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad speaks at a 2007 news conference in Doha. (Credit: Bloomberg)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Where are all the usual suspects?

The Jerusalem Post

July 1, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 749 words

Byline: SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Highlight: The writer is a PhD student in geography at the Hebrew University and runs the Terra Incognita Journal blog.

Body

Following the contested Iranian election, the green armbands of the opposition and pictures of bloodied and dying Iranian protesters were being held aloft by Iranians from Los Angeles to Paris. Noticeably absent from the international scene were Westerners, particularly students.

The reaction to events in Iran has shown once again the double standards and hypocrisy of those in Europe and the West who jump at the slightest opportunity to protest Israel but remain stoic in the face of events in Iran.

While many have compared the outpouring of anger in Iran to what presaged the 1979 revolution, there is one key difference; this time around, no Western students care. Before the shah fell from power, he often visited the capitals of major European and North American cities. Every time he did, tens of thousands of progressive students and human-rights activists poured out onto the streets calling him a fascist and protesting his visit.

In one such protest on June 2, 1967 a German student, Benno Ohnesorg, was even killed.

But now there is no such outpouring of emotion. Neither is there any interest from the UN or from Jimmy Carter.

YET IN January, when Israel was embroiled in a war with Hamas, the anger directed at her in Europe was apoplectic. When Israel fought a war against **Hizbullah** in 2006, Western students even proudly wore the symbol of **Hizbullah**, a clenched fist holding an AK-47.

So where were the Western students to hold aloft the green armbands of Iranian opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi?

Why will Western students who call themselves progressives wear green for Hamas and **Hizbullah** - terrorist organizations that murder civilians - and not for Iranian dissidents?

Why have CNN and other major media been so coy when it comes to covering the outrages perpetrated by the regime in Iran?

Describing the deaths of protesters, CNN never once, in the coverage I watched, mentioned who had killed them. It simply said they were "shot." But when Iranian dissidents in Washington were interviewed with "death to the dictator" placards, the CNN reporter challenged them, demanding to know if they were calling for "murder."

Where are all the usual suspects?

Murder? The only murder that has taken place so far is the murder of Iranian protesters.

For members of my parent's generation, protesting the shah was one of the things you did as a sign you were a good person. It was up there with the civil rights movement. So where is this generation in its opposition to the modern shah of Iran, the ayatollahs and their lackey, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad?

THE REASON for the disconnect on Iran has strange roots. It was encapsulated in the support that Michel Foucault, a major figure in Western philosophy, gave the Islamic revolution.

Foucault, angry at what he found to be a conservative Western attitude toward his homosexuality and feminism, came to support Iranian Islamism in the warped belief that it was the newest "revolutionary" idea.

Even when women were smothered in chadors and gays were executed by the ayatollah, he didn't admit that he was wrong.

During the years of the second Bush administration, there was a belief among some on the extreme Left that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Even the indefensible Ahmadinejad was rewarded by those choosing to see his evil through the lens of "realism," "interests" and "historical meddling by the West."

The BBC claimed that should Mousavi win the election, it would be "hard for Israel to ratchet up opposition to Iran" and CNN claimed that "Iran's main enemy, Israel," was watching the protests closely.

Those who oppose Israel therefore justify supporting Iran. This strange logic has led to support for Ahmadinejad's right to "free speech" by inviting him to Columbia University and supporting his "right" to speak at Durban II.

It is a disgrace that those who don keffiyehs as a fashion symbol in universities and fiercely protest Israeli actions in Gaza and Lebanon will not lift a finger in defense of democracy in Iran.

It is a sad testimony to the warped logic of "human rights" that it was a cause celebre to riot against the shah in the streets of Europe in 1978, but that no one can be called away from their coffee houses and belly dancing classes to raise their hands against the rigged election in Iran.

There are many in the West who are on the wrong side of history, and just as Iranians did not forgive the West for coddling the shah, neither will Iran's next generation forgive us for our silence on this momentous crackdown.

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Graphic

Photo: IRANIANS IN FRANCE demonstrating against Teheran's violation of human rights. Neither the UN nor Jimmy Carter nor Westerners in general showed much interest. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Fighting fit

The Jerusalem Post

August 20, 2009 Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 1150 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: 'We found soldiers who couldn't carry their necessary equipment into Lebanon. What we realized is that the soldiers didn't have problems walking the distance; it was the loads' - senior officer in the Ground Forces Command

Body

The turning point, as Col. Avi Moyal calls it, was on August 14, 2006, the day the cease-fire went into effect, ending the month-long Second Lebanon War with Hizbullah.

The IDF began to pull out of Lebanon and officers from Ground Forces Command were ready, deployed along the border with questionnaires for soldiers and commanders to assess their level of fitness during their operations against Hizbullah.

That is when the stories began to emerge. First came reports of small squads that had difficulty climbing the steep Lebanese hills, then a story of a company commander who had to return to Israel after his troops got muscle cramps trying to climb a crucial mountain to gain access to the Hizbullah-stronghold of Bint Jbail.

After hundreds of interviews and questionnaires, the conclusion was clear: IDF combat troops were in bad shape to the point that they had difficulty fighting against an enemy like Hizbullah.

The immediate lesson in the IDF was to appoint an officer in charge of combat fitness. Until then, the officer in charge of combat fitness also served as commander of a brigade. Combat fitness was always the second priority. The man chosen for the job was Col. Avi Moyal, who in the past three years has revolutionized the IDF in terms of fitness. Moyal - who served for 20 years as the fitness instructor for the elite General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal) - has carried out this revolution from a small office inside the Wingate Institute near Netanya, together with a tiny staff.

His energy seems to be endless and over the past two years he has established spinning classes for the General Staff on the roof of the Kirya Military Headquarters in Tel Aviv, jogging groups for senior officers on the Tel Aviv beachfront and lectures at faraway bases. He has also increased the IDF's participation in local marathons and also in some races around the world.

IN THE IDF he is called "Israel's Fitness Trainer." The name is not an exaggeration. When Ehud Olmert was prime minister, Moyal used to work out with him twice a week at Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) headquarters in Jerusalem. Now, he spends two mornings a week training Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. He was also the fitness trainer for the national soccer team and was rumored at one point to be a candidate to become its next head coach.

Fighting fit

The first step after the Lebanon war was to create an official fitness scale for all combat units - basically a list of what commanders are allowed to do with their soldiers and at what stage of their training.

All training regimens need to be approved by Moyal and his team of fitness trainers.

"Soldiers are built in a long and slow process," a senior Ground Forces Command officer explains. "We can't draft a soldier today and tomorrow expect him to run 80 kilometers. This takes time."

Under this new scale, GFC completely changed the concept of long hikes. Until the 2006 war, infantry units used to take 80- and 90-kilometer treks during basic training. Now the length has been cut almost in half and instead the soldiers are carrying heavier loads - sometimes up to half their body weight - on their backs.

"We found soldiers who couldn't carry their necessary equipment into Lebanon," the officer says. "What we realized is that the soldiers didn't have problems walking the distance; it was the loads."

At the same time, Moyal took soldiers from almost every IDF unit and trained them to be fitness instructors. Last week, the largest course ever - of 82 instructors - graduated, bringing the total up to close to 500.

"These are regular combat soldiers who in addition to being fighters are also fitness trainers," the senior officer says. "Just like there are medics who are fighters, now there are trainers who are fighters."

DURING OPERATION Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip earlier this year, Moyal heard from commanders about intelligence that Hamas was planning to kidnap soldiers. He immediately drove to the border with a team of combat instructors and trained commanders and soldiers how to fend off a kidnapper.

One of the skills taught was how to fight off kidnappers not just with an assault rifle, but also when the soldier's ammunition runs out or when he is attacked from behind and by surprise.

Another course he is hoping to soon establish is a mandatory self-defense course for all **female** soldiers.

Moyal has already discussed the idea with Brig.-Gen. Gila Klifi-Amir, the General Staff's adviser on **women's** affairs, and the two are hoping to secure a budget for the program. Under the plan, all **female** recruits will participate in a week-long self-defense course to provide them with the skills to fend off potential attackers, rapists and kidnappers.

"This course will be aimed at providing the **female** soldiers with self-confidence to travel around the country in the framework of their military service as many of them need to," explains the senior officer.

After all the above, though, what Moyal really takes pride in is his flagship program called "Healthy Lifestyle in the IDF" under which soldiers in 25 units across the country were chosen to be tested for fat levels in their blood. The units found to be "overweight" received visits from civilian chefs who taught their cooks how to make healthy food, met weekly with dieticians, received detailed workout regimes and personal trainers and one-on-one talks with Moyal.

The results, the senior officer says, were astounding, and within the first six months, the weight levels in the units dropped by more than 30 percent. Despite the success, the program lost its budget. Moyal, however, did not give up and went straight to the General Staff before which he presented the results. The decision was to expand the program to 25 more units and to allocate a budget for the next three years.

MOYAL ALSO established several running groups. The first is made up of close to 400 career junior officers who meet every Friday on the Tel Aviv beachfront. The second group meets on Saturday and consists of officers with the rank of colonel and higher. The condition to join this group was that the officer had to bring his or her spouse.

"The purpose here is to change the culture," the officer says. "To do this we need to reach as many people as possible."

Fighting fit

The culture change can be seen by the number of soldiers signing up for marathons over the past two years. In 2006, for example, 6,430 soldiers ran in marathons. In 2008, the number skyrocketed to close to 20,000. In 2007, nine soldiers ran in the Tiberias Marathon. This year, there were more than 150.

Moyal is also much more than just talk and he actually puts his feet where his mouth is, running with all of the groups he has set up. In addition, he runs almost daily with a different IDF unit. One day Givati, the next day Naval Commandos and a day later the elite Yahalom Engineering Corps unit.

What about you? Are you ready to run?

Graphic

2 photos: COL. AVI Moyal exercises with Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. MOYAL, WHO served for 20 years as the fitness instructor for the elite General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal), runs along the beach. (Credit: IDF)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Sfeir draws fire for wading into electoral waters

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

February 9, 2009 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 867 words

Byline: Hussein Abdallah

Body

Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Butros Sfeir was the target of criticism by March 8 media and politicians over the weekend following remarks to Al-Massira magazine in which he warned against "historic mistakes" if the March 8 Forces win the majority of seats in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

BEIRUT: Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Butros Sfeir was the target of criticism by March 8 media and politicians over the weekend following remarks to Al-Massira magazine in which he warned against "historic mistakes" if the March 8 Forces win the majority of seats in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

While Free Patriotic Movement MP Camille Khoury told Hizbullah's Al-Manar television on Saturday that he wished Sfeir would issue a statement denying or clarifying his comments, news reports said that the FPM's leader, MP Michel Aoun, would respond by boycotting a traditional Saint Maroun Mass scheduled for Monday.

However, FPM sources said on Sunday that Aoun's decision had nothing to do with the patriarch's recent comments, adding that a number of Aounist lawmakers would be attending the service.

Former Prime Minister Omar Karami, another March 8 politician, also tacitly criticized Sfeir on Saturday, without naming him, urging clerics not to interfere in politics in order to avoid criticism.

Lebanese Forces (LF) lawmaker Antoine Zahra came to the defense of the patriarch on Sunday, accusing Karami of adopting double standards.

"Why does Karami accept intervention in politics by all other clergymen, at all levels, starting with Hizbullah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah?" he asked. "We don't accept this attack and similar attacks by irrelevant people on our religious symbols."

Sfeir met on Sunday with the commander of Lebanese Armed Forces, General Jean Kahwaji, who attended the regular Sunday service at Bkirki.

In his sermon, the patriarch addressed Kahwaji, asking God to help him in managing his duties and overcoming difficulties.

Sfeir draws fire for wading into electoral waters

LF lawmaker George Adwan also visited Sfeir on Sunday, after which he told reporters that the patriarch's worries were always driven by his concern for national interests. Adwan called on all Lebanese to take responsible decisions as they head to ballot boxes on June 7.

Asked whether a seat was reserved for him on the March 14 list in the qada of Chouf, Adwan said that the issue had been settled a "long time ago."

"The Lebanese Forces have reached an agreement on this issue with the Progressive Socialist Party [PSP] and Future Movement," he said.

Adwan currently occupies one of three Maronite seats in Chouf, but he is likely to face competition from allied candidates in the June polls.

Future on Sunday issued a statement in response to Adwan's remarks, stressing that none of the nominations on March 14 lists have been settled. "All nominations are still subject to discussions and consultations," the statement said.

Also Sunday, former President Amin Gemayel told local daily An-Nahar that MP Michel Murr had taken the right decision by extending his hand to the Phalange Party in the upcoming elections. "We in turn are ready to extend our hand to any party that shares our national aspirations," he said.

Murr, who last week declared his candidacy atop an independent Christian list, said that his allies in the qada of Metn were the Phalange Party and the Armenian Tashnak Party.

Sources close to Murr and Gemayel told An-Nahar that the two veteran politicians would meet soon.

Gemayel also defended Sfeir on Sunday, arguing that the patriarch had the right to worry about Lebanon's destiny.

"Patriarch Sfeir does not practice politics in the narrow sense. The Cedar Revolution of 2005 was launched on the basis of his understanding of sovereignty," he said. "The fears expressed by the patriarch are shared by most Lebanese."

Also Sunday, Speaker Nabih Berri said sectarian divisions represented the real threat to national unity in Lebanon.

"The results of the upcoming elections will not threaten the fate of the country, but sectarian divisions can shatter national unity," he told members of his Amal Movement's women's wing. "All factions should realize that this country can only be governed on the basis of partnership and consensus."

On a separate front, PSP leader MP Walid Jumblatt said after meeting Prime Minister Fouad Siniora at the Grand Serail on Sunday that he had decided to suspend his party's participation in a committee designed to discuss a defense strategy for Lebanon. The committee is the result of four rounds of national talks between the country's rival leaders.

Jumblatt had previously named former military officer Sharif Fayyad as his party's representative in the committee.

Minister of State Wael Abu Faour, also a PSP member, justified Jumblatt's decision on Sunday, arguing that committee discussions were only theoretical and would not be able to change the ground situation.

"This decision is not directed against the president or the national dialogue. It is rather a belief by MP Jumblatt that the work of the committee will have no effect on the ground," Abu Faour said.

Hizbullah's arsenal is at the heart of the national talks, which were agreed to in last May's Doha Accords that ended an 18-month power struggle.

Sfeir draws fire for wading into electoral waters

End of Document

***Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights Watch: Action still doesn't justify army response *
Group's report due today on alleged killing by IDF of 11 Palestinians holding white flags***

The Jerusalem Post

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1149 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG, YAAKOV KATZ and HERB KEINON

Highlight: Lead Story

Body

For the first time, an international human rights organization has publicly declared that there is evidence to indicate that war crimes were committed by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who allegedly used civilians as "human shields" during Operation Cast Lead.

The statement was made to The Jerusalem Post by Bill Van Esveld, the Jerusalem-based researcher for Human Rights Watch (HRW), following a report on the military operation in Gaza issued last week by the Foreign Ministry.

However, Van Esveld stressed that the fact that Palestinians may have used civilians as human shields during the fighting did not justify what HRW believes to have been war crimes committed by Israel.

Until now, neither of the two major international human rights groups, Amnesty International and HRW, had acknowledged one of Israel's main accusations against Hamas, one which it has used to explain the heavy damage the IDF inflicted on Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure during the fighting.

Last week HRW presented a report in which it stated that members of Hamas and other groups in Gaza had perpetrated war crimes by deliberately firing at Israel's civilian population. The organization also charged that the groups had put Palestinian civilians at risk by firing from within residential areas in the Gaza Strip.

However, the organization stopped short of declaring that Hamas fighters had committed war crimes by deliberately endangering the civilian population in the hopes that Israeli forces would not shoot back to prevent civilian casualties.

In last week's report, entitled "Harm to Civilians From Palestinian Armed Groups' Rocket Attacks," HRW wrote, "Deliberately using civilians to deter attacks on military targets amounts to 'human shielding,' which is a war crime. Human Rights Watch either could not determine, or the evidence did not indicate, that militants launched rockets from areas close to civilians with the intention of deterring Israeli forces from counterattacking."

Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights Watch :
Action still doesn't justify army response * Group's r....

The report did mention, however, that another organization, The International Crisis Group, had interviewed three Hamas fighters in January who said they "often fired [rockets] in close proximity to homes and from alleys, hoping that nearby civilians would deter Israel from responding."

The Foreign Ministry report included additional evidence that war crimes had been committed. It quoted a report by Newsweek correspondent Rod Nordland on January 20 in which he wrote, "Suddenly there was a terrific whoosh, louder even than a bomb explosion. It was another of Hamas' homemade Qassam rockets being launched into Israel - and the mobile launchpad was smack in the middle of the four [apartment] buildings, where every apartment was full."

Van Esveld added that the fact that the rocket launcher was located in the middle of four residential buildings proved intent on the part of those who fired the rockets.

On Thursday, HRW is due to hold a press conference to present its new report on Cast Lead and specifically the alleged killing of 11 Palestinians who were holding white flags - a sign that they are civilians - by IDF soldiers.

According to the HRW, most of the 11 were women and children and they were killed in seven different incidents during Cast Lead.

HRW said it conducted extensive investigations into each of these incidents by visiting the attack sites, examining ballistic evidence, collecting medical records, and interviewing multiple witnesses, at least three people separately for each attack. In one case, forensic pathologists examined a survivor.

In each of these incidents, the evidence strongly indicates that, at the least, Israeli soldiers failed to take feasible precautions to distinguish between civilians and combatants before attacking. At worst, the soldiers deliberately fired on persons known to be civilians.

Gerald Steinberg, the director of NGO Monitor who saw excerpts of the report, said there was a fundamental problem with HRW's methodology.

"HRW had no people in Gaza during the war, so therefore everything they have to say is by definition based on hearsay and speculation - it is all based on secondary and tertiary reports," he said.

"A Palestinian says he took a white flag out, and says Israelis shot him. We don't know if that was part of tactics Hamas used, like Hizbullah did in Lebanon. Remember, Hamas used ambulances to smuggle in and launch rockets. HRW doesn't know," Steinberg said.

Steinberg said that all the organization's reports on Gaza were based on what Palestinians said, or what other NGOs reported, or on what some journalists - who for the most part were also not in Gaza during the war - heard about afterward.

"This is a basic methodological problem," he said. "If you are looking for a target, you will find people who will tell you what you are looking for."

Steinberg said that HRW made similar allegations about the IDF firing at people waving white flags after the Second Lebanon War, but that these turned out to be false.

He said that in one instance HRW alleged that there was no Hizbullah presence when the IDF allegedly killed three people, and wounded 14 other people who were waving a white flag while fleeing in a van from the village of Kafra.

"Independent analysis showed that Hizbullah admitted flying white flags to prevent IDF attacks, 17 rockets were fired from within Kafra village houses, and Hizbullah regularly transported arms in vans," he said.

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"The release of a third lengthy publication condemning Israel over Gaza within the space of a few months, is reflective of HRW's Israel obsession," Steinberg said, adding that a critical report of Hamas issued last week for firing on civilians in the western Negev was a "fig leaf."

Steinberg said the "white flag" report was edited by Joe Stork, who, he said, was anything but an impartial observer of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Steinberg said that Stork, one of the founders of the Middle East Research Information Project (MERIP) has "a long history of anti-Israel incitement.

"MERIP's line was in many ways more radical than Yasser Arafat and the PLO's. He is not someone with any credentials in universal human rights, and this reflects the core disease eating away at Human Rights Watch, including its recent fund-raising activities in Saudi Arabia."

The IDF said it would release an official response to the new HRW report Thursday but added it was already investigating several similar allegations, including an incident that occurred on January 13 when four civilians were reportedly killed even though they were waving a white flag.

Another incident took place on January 4, when a tank crew allegedly fired a shell at a group of civilians that were carrying white flags.

The incidents were brought to the IDF's attention by HRW as well as other NGOs and even Palestinians themselves.

The IDF is conducting over 100 investigations of soldiers involved in Operation Cast Lead.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Obama shouldn't forget the democrats

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

April 10, 2009 Friday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 946 words

Byline: Rayyan al-Shawaf

Body

Barack Obama recently addressed Iran's people and rulers in a televised address. The US president, who has been accused by detractors of being soft on the Islamic Republic, reaffirmed longstanding US opposition to the Iranian regime's sponsorship of terrorism and pursuit of arms, alongside his respect for Iranian culture and its achievements.

Barack Obama recently addressed Iran's people and rulers in a televised address. The US president, who has been accused by detractors of being soft on the Islamic Republic, reaffirmed longstanding US opposition to the Iranian regime's sponsorship of terrorism and pursuit of arms, alongside his respect for Iranian culture and its achievements. While his skepticism about Iranian behavior allayed the fears of those worried about Obama's supposed ingenuousness regarding Iran's leadership, it remains unclear whether the new administration will adopt a similarly unequivocal stance toward other despotic Middle Eastern regimes.

Iran's case has always differed from that of its many undemocratic neighbors, due to the rupture between the United States and Iran following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the subsequent hostage crisis involving American diplomats, the Islamic regime's support of terrorism, and its pursuit of nuclear technology. As a result, it remains unlikely that the Obama administration will significantly alter the firm US line toward Tehran. What may happen in light of this, however, is that President George W. Bush's initial "tough love" approach to undemocratic allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt, on the wane since the disastrous aftermath of the Iraq war, will disappear. Similarly, the US might ease up its support for democratic and moderate political forces in Lebanon and Iraq, in addition to the Palestinian Authority, and consider making concessions to Syria.

This might appear sensible. Whether in Palestine or Lebanon, America's allies have lost ground in recent years. In Gaza, Hamas mounted a coup against the Palestinian Authority, while in Lebanon **Hizbullah** overran western Beirut last May in response to a pair of government decisions the party opposed. However, should the Obama administration go so far as to modify the strategy of supporting American allies in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories? If so, the consequences would be grave, not least because of the inevitable increase in the power of **Hizbullah** and Hamas, as well as of radical Shiite parties in Iraq, all backed by Iran.

As for making concession to Syria on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which aims to uncover those responsible for the assassination of the former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri, that too would pose several problems. Not

Obama shouldn't forget the democrats

only would such a step be immoral, it would allow Syria to avoid taking any decisive decision on distancing itself from its ally Iran.

There would also be something deeply ironic about a significant shift in US policy toward Lebanon and Iraq, as upcoming elections in both countries may well result in increased gains for democratic and moderate coalitions there. In Lebanon, where parliamentary elections will be held in June, the March 14 alliance might benefit from defections in the electorate of Michel Aoun, who has allied himself with Hizbullah. And in Iraq, where recent provincial elections showed a decline in support for extremist sectarian parties, the national elections scheduled for next December will likely continue this trend. Indeed, the democratization and moderation of ideology that American neoconservatives thought would quickly follow in Iraq following that country's liberation in 2003, might only fully manifest itself now that the neocons are out of power.

The neocons undoubtedly fouled up the critical post-war period in Iraq. It is also exasperating that they did not distinguish between Israel's legitimate refusal to deal directly with a Hamas-led Palestinian government and its illegitimate embargo of the Palestinians of Gaza afterward. Additionally, the neocons failed to appreciate the nuances of Lebanese politics, and may have exacerbated an already charged situation in Lebanon, just as they seem to have done in the Palestinian territories, by encouraging adventurism on the part of their allies.

Yet none of this means that the democratic moderates in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories should now be ignored and left to the tender mercies of their Iranian-backed rivals. Similarly, while the neocons cynically overlooked Moammar al-Gadhafi's totalitarianism once he gave up on Libya's unconventional weapons program; and while they backtracked on pushing for democratic reforms in Egypt and Saudi Arabia once they saw that Islamists had emerged as the election winners in Iraq and later in the Palestinian areas, the argument that Middle Easterners deserve freedom and equal rights as much as Westerners do remains cogent and - perhaps surprisingly to some - inherently liberal.

With this in mind, the Obama administration would be wise to retain certain aspects of neocon thought by supporting its democratic allies, without repeating the neocons' mistakes. The Middle East, after all, is a mess. However, were Obama to shepherd the Palestinian entity through to statehood (instead of just paying lip service to the idea of a Palestinian state), pressure undemocratic US allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt to democratize and grant greater rights to women and non-Muslims, and continue to support democratic moderates in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories, the region's fortunes might finally improve.

Rayyan al-Shawaf is a freelance writer and reviewer based in Beirut. He wrote this commentary for THE DAILY STAR.

Load-Date: April 10, 2009

Brother of Hamas spokesman arrested in Arish

Daily News Egypt

April 28, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 407 words

Body

CAIRO: Yousef Abu Zuhri, brother of Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, was arrested in Al-Arish Monday night on suspicion of entering Egypt illegally through an underground tunnel.

Abu Zuhri was arrested in a rented apartment on Mustapha Kamel Street in Al-Arish, which is 40 km from Egypt's border with Gaza. The owner of the flat was also arrested for not alerting the authorities to Abu Zuhri's presence.

According to Rafah-based journalist Mustapha Singer, Abu Zuhri might be taken to Cairo for further questioning regarding how he entered Egypt and that his arrest might be a link to the recently discovered Hezbollah cell that was operating in the area.

Security forces amassed on areas south of Rafah Tuesday at Wadi Amr near Al-Oja crossing after passing through Al-Gora village midway between the town of Rafah and the crossing.

Security forces also descended on the main road in the town of Sheikh Zowayed, 5 km from the Gaza border.

Until press time no raids had been conducted, but a heavy troop presence was seen in those areas. It is unclear whether the security increase was linked to the arrest of Abu Zuhri, but authorities are still searching for some 25 people in the area they suspect are linked to the Hezbollah cell.

Head of the Tagammu party in North Sinai Ashraf El-Hefny said that the arrest of Abu Zuhri was meant "to pressure Hamas for dialogue in the negotiations with Fatah in Egypt."

El-Hefny said that there had been a heavy security presence in many areas of Al-Arish since Monday with the aim of seeking out the Hezbollah suspects.

Security forces discovered another smuggling tunnel Monday in Rafah and confiscated an array of goods that had not yet been transported. No arrests were made and the entry was to remain guarded until the tunnel had been destroyed.

Bedouins in Sinai had attempted to protest Saturday south of Rafah against increased security raids in the wake of the Hezbollah cell capture.

Brother of Hamas spokesman arrested in Arish

Security forces managed to scupper the protest but the assembled Bedouins who gathered near Al-Oja in an area called Abu Hashad decided that another protest would be held on the first of June, especially if the raids continued.

"Because of the Hezbollah case, there has been an increased security campaign and raids on houses," said Democratic Front Party member in Rafah Mohamed El-Menei, "the protest is because of the raids. There are women in these houses and security raids on these homes violate our traditions."

Load-Date: April 28, 2009

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Middle East Reality Check

The New York Times

March 9, 2009 Monday

The New York Times on the Web

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Section: Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. ; OP-ED COLUMNIST

Length: 882 words

Byline: By ROGER COHEN

Body

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton grabbed headlines with an invitation to Iran to attend a conference on Afghanistan, but the significant Middle Eastern news last week came from Britain. It has "reconsidered" its position on Hezbollah and will open a direct channel to the militant group in Lebanon.

Like Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah has long been treated by the United States as a proscribed terrorist group. This narrow view has ignored the fact that both organizations are now entrenched political and social movements without whose involvement regional peace is impossible.

Britain aligned itself with the U.S. position on Hezbollah, but has now seen its error. Bill Marston, a Foreign Office spokesman, told Al Jazeera: "Hezbollah is a political phenomenon and part and parcel of the national fabric in Lebanon. We have to admit this."

Hallelujah.

Precisely the same thing could be said of Hamas in Gaza. It is a political phenomenon, part of the national fabric there.

One difference is that Hezbollah is in the Lebanese national unity government, whereas Hamas won the free and fair January 2006 elections to the Legislative Council of the Palestinian Authority, only to discover Middle Eastern democracy is only democracy if it produces the right result.

The United States should follow the British example. It should initiate diplomatic contacts with the political wing of Hezbollah. The Obama administration should also look carefully at how to reach moderate Hamas elements and engineer a Hamas-Fatah reconciliation.

A rapprochement between the two wings of the Palestinian movement was briefly achieved at Mecca in 2007. The best form of payback from America's expensive and authoritarian allies -- Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan -- would be help in reconciling Gaza Palestinians loyal to Hamas with West Bank Palestinians loyal to the more moderate Fatah of Mahmoud Abbas.

Resolve is not the most conspicuous characteristic of those three allies. But Obama must push them to help. As long as Palestinians are divided, peace efforts will flounder.

Middle East Reality Check

With respect to Hamas, the West has bound itself to three conditions for any contact: Hamas must recognize Israel, forswear terrorism and accept previous Palestinian commitments. This was reiterated by Clinton on her first Mideast swing.

The 1988 Hamas Charter is vile, but I think it's wrong to get hung up on the prior recognition of Israel issue. Perhaps Hamas is sincere in its calls for Israel's disappearance -- although it has offered a decades-long truce -- but then it's also possible that Israel in reality has no desire to see a Palestinian state.

One view of Israel's continued expansion of settlements, Gaza blockade, West Bank walling-in and wanton recourse to high-tech force would be that it's designed precisely to bludgeon, undermine and humiliate the Palestinian people until their dreams of statehood and dignity evaporate.

The argument over recognition is in the end a form of evasion designed to perpetuate the conflict.

Israel, from the time of Ben Gurion, built its state by creating facts on the ground, not through semantics. Many of its leaders, including Ehud Olmert and Tzipi Livni, have been on wondrous political odysseys from absolutist rejection of division of the land to acceptance of a two-state solution. Yet they try to paint Hamas as irrevocably absolutist. Why should Arabs be any less pragmatic than Jews?

Of course it's desirable that Hamas recognize Israel before negotiations. But is it essential? No. What is essential is that it renounces violence, in tandem with Israel, and the inculcation of hatred that feeds the violence.

Speaking of violence, it's worth recalling what Israel did in Gaza in response to sporadic Hamas rockets. It killed upward of 1,300 people, many of them women and children; caused damage estimated at \$1.9 billion; and destroyed thousands of Gaza homes. It continues a radicalizing blockade on 1.5 million people squeezed into a narrow strip of land.

At this vast human, material and moral price, Israel achieved almost nothing beyond damage to its image throughout the world. Israel has the right to hit back when attacked, but any response should be proportional and governed by sober political calculation. The Gaza war was a travesty; I have never previously felt so shamed by Israel's actions.

No wonder Hamas and Hezbollah are seen throughout the Arab world as legitimate resistance movements.

It's time to look at them again and adopt the new British view that contact can encourage Hezbollah "to move away from violence and play a constructive, democratic and peaceful role."

The British step is a breakthrough. By contrast, Clinton's invitation to Iran is of little significance.

There are two schools within the Obama administration on Iran: the incremental and the bold. The former favors little steps like inviting Iran to help with Afghanistan; the latter realizes that nothing will shift until Obama convinces Tehran that he's changing strategy rather than tactics.

That requires Obama to tell Iran, as a start, that he does not seek regime change and recognizes the country's critical role as a regional power. Carrots and sticks -- the current approach -- will lead to the same dead end as Hamas and Hezbollah denial.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: March 9, 2009

Middle East reality check; Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

March 9, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 885 words

Byline: Roger Cohen - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

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A rapprochement between the two wings of the Palestinian movement was briefly achieved at Mecca in 2007. The best form of payback from America's expensive and authoritarian allies - Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan - would be help in reconciling Gaza Palestinians loyal to Hamas with West Bank Palestinians loyal to the more moderate Fatah of Mahmoud Abbas.

It won't be easy. Resolve is not the most conspicuous characteristic of those three allies. But it's not impossible. As long as Palestinians are divided, peace efforts will flounder.

With respect to Hamas, the West is bound to three conditions for any contact: Hamas must recognize Israel, forswear terrorism and accept previous Palestinian commitments. This was reiterated by Clinton on her first Mideast swing.

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Speaking of violence, it's worth recalling what Israel did in Gaza in response to sporadic Hamas rockets. It killed upward of 1,300 people, many of them women and children; caused damage estimated at \$1.9 billion; destroyed thousands of Gaza homes and 80 percent of crops. It continues a radicalizing blockade on 1.5 million people squeezed into a narrow strip of land.

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No wonder Hamas and Hezbollah are seen throughout the Arab world as legitimate resistance movements.

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The British step could be a game-changer. By contrast, Clinton's invitation to Iran is of little significance. There are two schools within the Obama administration on Iran: the incremental and the bold. The former favors little steps like inviting Iran to help with Afghanistan; the latter realizes that nothing will change until Obama convinces Tehran he's changing strategy rather than tactics.

That requires Obama to tell Iran, as a start, that he does not seek regime change and recognizes the country's critical role as a regional power. Carrots and sticks - the current approach - will lead to the same dead end as Hamas and Hezbollah denial.

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Load-Date: March 17, 2009

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Middle East reality check; Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

March 9, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 885 words

Byline: Roger Cohen - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: NEW YORK

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Load-Date: March 17, 2009

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Sinai Bedouins protest hiked security raids

Daily News Egypt

April 26, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 312 words

Body

CAIRO: Bedouins in Sinai attempted in vain to protest Saturday against increased security raids in the wake of the Hezbollah cell case.

Security forces managed to scupper the protest but the assembled Bedouins who gathered near Al-Oja in an area called Abu Hashad decided that another protest would be held on June 1.

The protest had been announced on Friday against the increased raids by security forces on Bedouin houses since the exposure of the capture of the Hezbollah cell. They were also called to draw attention to the continued incarceration of two Bedouins who had police officers hostage after the killing of four Bedouins who were left half-buried in the desert.

"Because of the Hezbollah case, there has been an increased security campaign and raids on houses," said Democratic Front Party member in Rafah Mohamed El Menei. "The protest is because of the raids. There are women in these houses and security raids on these homes violate our traditions."

Security forces have stated that they are searching for some 25 people in Sinai who they believe are involved with the alleged Hezbollah terror cell that was exposed and captured in Egypt. Since the cell's existence was announced, raids have intensified in Sinai as the search for the remaining suspects continues.

This increase in the number of raids has given the Bedouins further reason to protest. Bedouins have always complained of being mistreated by authorities in the region, which includes continued and repeated incarceration as well as issues over land ownership.

Though it was decided that there would be another protest on the first of June, it would be subject to the recurrence of security raids, according to El Menei.

"The June protest has not been officially announced," he said, "it depends on whether the raids continue or not. Then the decision will be made."

Load-Date: April 26, 2009

Sinai Bedouins protest hiked security raids

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'One people, one city'

The Jerusalem Post

August 21, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 26

Length: 1570 words

Byline: TORI CHEIFETZ

Highlight: Community relations in blue-collar Windsor, Ontario - located just over the border from Dearborn, Michigan, home to the largest Arab community in the West - are generally described as 'cordial,' but tensions nevertheless flare every time things heat up between Israel and the Palestinians

Body

When a billboard praising Hizbullah graced the skyline of Windsor, Ontario, in August 2007, the blue-collar border city made international news. "Lebanese and Arab communities in Windsor city congratulate the Lebanese people for their steadfastness and endeavor to establish peace in Lebanon," read the billboard, which featured Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah prominently sporting his trademark turban. The billboard was put up by Windsor's Lebanese Muslim community in commemoration of the first anniversary of the Second Lebanon War.

For Windsor's Jewish community, the billboard was worrying. For many in the community, the billboard incident brought into sharp focus the possible perils of living in a city with an overall population of 210,000, which is host to around 30,000 Muslims and only 1,200 Jews, according to representatives of the respective communities.

With Jewish students having been attacked in February by anti-Israel activists at York University in Toronto, the question remains are Jews in small-town Canada any safer than their big-city counterparts?

"As the numbers in our community decrease, our voice could become more of a whisper than a roar, but we're not anticipating any significant issues here," says Harvey Kessler, executive director of the Windsor Jewish Federation and Community Center.

IN THE last few years two main incidents have put the Jewish and Muslim communities at variance. In 2006 during the Second Lebanon War, Windsor was host to nightly "peace" rallies in which Lebanese Muslim residents spoke out against the Jewish state while waving Hizbullah flags. At one such rally on July 20, Hizbullah supporters attacked three members of the Windsor Jewish community and a visiting Israeli.

According to an individual present, Lebanese demonstrators tore Israeli flags off the backs of some of the Jewish supporters and pushed them around. They shouted anti-Israel slogans, which soon turned into anti-Semitic remarks of "dirty Jews." As the Arab demonstrators turned to leave, they vowed to defile the Israeli flag.

Policemen were not present at the time of the incident and no one was apprehended.

A little over one year later, the same group put up the Hizbullah billboard very near the area in which the demonstration took place, on Wyandotte Street, where Kessler's family had had a furniture store when he was growing up.

'One people, one city'

"At the time there were over 20 Jewish-owned furniture stores on the street," he recalls, "now there is only one left. There's a very physical Arab presence. There are Middle Eastern markets, restaurants and stores. It's very different than what it was like with all the Jewish stores."

ILAN Ishai, president of the Jewish Students' Association at the University of Windsor, says the Arab Muslim presence is also felt on campus. "Things obviously aren't as bad as they are at places like York or Concordia, but there are tensions between individual Jews and Muslims that flare up every time something big happens in the Middle East," he says.

"For conveying support for Israel's operations in Gaza last year, one Jewish student was told that he and his whole family deserve to die, along with all the Israelis."

For the most part though, he sees relations between Muslims and Jews on campus as cordial and says, "as long as both groups ensure that it's the moderate voices that are heard, the atmosphere on campus between Jews and Muslims should remain calm."

For her part, Reem Haidar, a Lebanese-Canadian Muslim and a first-year student at the University of Windsor, calls relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities in the city "premature. On both sides, we have the educated Jews and Muslims that have come together as a community, as coworkers, as neighbors and as friends. Sadly, we have uneducated, small-minded, ignorant Muslims and Jews who are full of hate for one another."

She refers to the recent wars Israel has fought in Lebanon and Gaza, which have resulted in rallying by the Windsor Arab Muslim, mostly Lebanese, population. "Many issues over the past few years have affected the Windsor community and although these are unfortunate events, I hope the Jewish and Arab communities here can put it behind them and be civilized people living under civilized circumstances," she says.

Comparing the Muslim community in Windsor to that of nearby Dearborn, Michigan, Haidar says the communities couldn't be any more different.

"In Windsor, the community is small and the Arabs here aren't developed yet. We don't have a strong community and there's no money coming in for events or causes. The Arabs in Windsor don't know how to finish something once it's been started," she charges.

Haidar's family moved to Windsor from London, Ontario, when she was younger to be closer to her family in Dearborn. "The Arabs in Dearborn have a prosperous, well-educated community, with great connections to the city. They are businesspeople in the mind-set of getting things done. There is also a beautiful mosque in Dearborn. The Arab community in Dearborn has really settled down and made a name for themselves."

The Islamic Center of America, the mosque Haidar refers to, which opened in 2005 and caters mostly to Shi'ites, is the biggest mosque in North America. Dearborn, a blue-collar city much like Windsor, is home to the largest concentration of Arabs outside the Middle East.

In 2004, Hamtramck, east of Dearborn, became the first city in North America to allow the call to prayer to be heard five times daily from the loudspeakers of the city's mosques.

Windsor's proximity to Dearborn is a big reason why Muslims are attracted to Windsor, agrees Kessler. Asked about the Jewish residents' response to the growing Muslim community, Kessler says, "We had to respond as a community to the changing demographics. Members of the Jewish community have been part of councils created over the last 10 years to make sure that the Arab Muslim community was included in the conversation."

ONE SUCH council is the Windsor Race and Ethnic Relations Committee, which has a mandate to advise the mayor and city council on matters of diversity.

"We discuss specific incidences of racism and discrimination in the community and network to find ways to change attitudes," explains Noreen Slack, the representative for the Windsor Jewish Federation.

'One people, one city'

Slack's involvement with diversity issues began just after she moved to the city 26 years ago from Ottawa and experienced anti-Semitism at the hands of Eastern European immigrants. "It was a rude awakening," she says. "People were saying to my face, 'I hate Jews,' not knowing that I... was Jewish."

Slack stood up to the comments, declared herself a proud Jew and as a result she began to discuss diversity issues within the Jewish community. "At the time I was president of the B'nai B'rith women's group, and we started a program which brought education about Jewish holidays to primary schools in less financially stable neighborhoods."

The Race and Ethnic Relations Committee uses the motto "One people, one city." But according to Slack, although relations between different members of the committee are cordial, certain issues are not discussed. "Everything is incredibly politically correct," she says.

In addition to her work on the committee, Slack has campaigned for better relations between Jews and Muslims in her own community. "At a Jewish Community Center meeting, we spoke about how important it was to get together with Muslims. I figured in Ottawa the Jewish and Muslim communities are always getting together. I was always trying to get something going, but they were always 'unavailable.'"

Asked about her vision of the future for the Jewish community, Slack's outlook is uneasy. "I am fearful. If Israel has problems, we are in trouble in the Diaspora. We've been really lucky in Windsor and we haven't had anything major happen."

Rabbi Jeff Ableser, of Temple Beth El, agrees with Slack's evaluation of the Muslim community's desire to interact with the Jewish community. "We see that there is a genuine interaction between Muslims and Jews in places like Toronto, but in Windsor we have meetings for an initiative and then they stop when it's brought to the larger Muslim population."

For Kessler, the reason for this lack of progress has a lot to do with the heterogeneity of the Muslim population. "Muslims who live in Windsor come from a number of different countries of origin. This means that we can't have dialogue with a homogeneous group. It's not like the Jewish community, which usually speaks with one voice."

DR. ABDELKADER Tayebi, secretary of the board of directors of the Windsor Islamic Association, says there's nothing out of the ordinary about relations between Muslims and Jews in Windsor.

"Windsor is a very peaceful and calm city and we want to keep it that way. We haven't had problems in the past and we don't want to have any problems in the future," he says.

Asked about the rallies in 2006 and January 2009, Tayebi says that although present at the rallies, he did not witness any disturbances and that, "during the rally against the war in Gaza, there was a call to the Jewish community to take action, but it was friendly and civilized."

According to Tayebi, his organization is interested in making relations more significant in the future by building common ground. "There will always be differences and irreconcilable positions, and we have to live with that, as well," he says.

Graphic

4 photos: The Windsor Jewish Community Center. Harvey Kessler, Executive Director of the Windsor Jewish Federation. Billboard in Windsor. Windsor's main mosque, Al-Hijra (Credit: Tori Cheifetz)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

'One people, one city'

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Disproportionate response does no good

Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)

April 15, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A6

Length: 420 words

Byline: Dennis Peacock, The Daily News

Body

In 1948 Jewish zealots from the Stern Gang massacred some 300 Palestinians at the village of Deir Yasin, proving that they would kill with the best of them.

But this action is in many ways understandable. Many of the Jews who took part in this particular killing would have seen their friends, perhaps their whole families, disappear into the fires of Dachau and Buchenwald. Not much room for compromise here!

Forward to 1982 -- Israeli forces invade Lebanon to ally themselves with the Christian Phalange and destroy the PLO. They engage the Syrians who earlier came in to do the same!

Israeli bombardment of Beirut causes some 20,000 deaths. Then when things turn bad the Israeli army "bugs out" so fast it leaves its Christian allies in the lurch to be in turn slaughtered by Muslim forces such as the Druze: **Hezbollah** is the product of this ill-thought Israeli action.

Forward to 2006 when in response to the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers Israel once again launches a poorly thought out campaign into Lebanon. They bomb bridges, roads, an oil depot, a UN observer post which kills four UN observers.

Ironically this action more or less ended when the Israeli army was fought to a standstill by **Hezbollah**, the very force that Israel sought to destroy but missed in its frenzy to bomb everything in sight! **Hezbollah** formed out of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and became the great hero of many Lebanese just at a time when the Syrians had been forced to withdraw from Lebanon. As the noted journalist and historian Robert Fisk pointed out, Israeli's tendency to overreact has caused it a lot of trouble.

2008-2009, the Gaza invasion. Palestinians some 700 killed! Ten Israelis! At least one UN observer. Disproportionate or what? So why the stupid cartoon Jan. 8, The Daily News editorial page?

Is it because of a toadying to Israel Canadian press? Is it because the editor's name is Rothenburger? I want to know!

If Hamas or **Hezbollah** are somewhat snakelike it is largely a reptile of Israelis' own making. **Hezbollah** especially consists of those young men (and some **women**) who watched their parents being killed and homes destroyed in Lebanon by Israeli forces in 1982-83.

Disproportionate response does no good

Ironically this one-sided nonsense in the long run does Israel itself no good! They know they can have over 200 plus atomic weapons of mass destruction and not be forced to account for them!

And they can pull overreactive follies like Lebanon in 2006 and this ongoing Gaza nonsense and be excused for them. I want to know why!

Dennis Peacock

Clearwater

Load-Date: April 15, 2009

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Israel winning secret war; Elite Israeli commandos pounce on a ship they say was bringing Iranian weapons to guerrillas in southern Lebanon. It's the latest victory in an intelligence war with Israel's enemies

The Toronto Star

November 7, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A28

Length: 538 words

Byline: Linda Gradstein, SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel's national obsession with Iran bore fruit this week when an Israeli naval crew captured a ship in the Mediterranean that Israel says contained thousands of rockets from Iran bound for Hezbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon.

"Israel sees Iran as the next Holocaust and they take that threat very seriously," said Hirsh Goodman of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University.

And as a result Israel has made major strides in the intelligence arena against both Iran and Hezbollah, whose militia fired about 4,000 rockets into Israel from Lebanon during a 34-day war in 2006.

"We are witnessing a major recovery of Israeli intelligence in the last few years vis-a-vis Iran, Hezbollah and Syria," said Ronen Bergman, a journalist and author of *The Secret War with Iran*. "Israel now has the upper hand."

He cites a series of events in the past year, including the recent discovery of hidden sites connected to the Iranian nuclear program, Israel's bombing of a large arms convoy in Sudan last March, and the assassination of a senior Hezbollah figure, Imad Mughniyah, in Syria.

Bergman cites several reasons for the improvement in Israel's intelligence capabilities including a decision by Mossad head Meir Dagan to focus his spy agency on only foreign terrorism and Iran's nuclear project. Bergman said the fact there were no Iranian officers on the Antigua-flagged ship, the *Francop*, showed Iran was confident the arms shipment would arrive in Syria with no problem.

Both Iran and Hezbollah denied they were involved in the shipment but several Israeli officials said the containers that held the rockets were marked IRISL - the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines, a state-controlled company.

The ship was boarded by commandos from an elite Israeli unit called Shayetet 13. A former commander of the Israel navy, Maj.-Gen. Yedidya Ya'ari, told the *Haaretz* newspaper that Israel's naval commandos have developed capabilities allowing them to take over naval vessels "in principle, anywhere in the world."

Israel winning secret war Elite Israeli commandos pounce on a ship they say was bringing Iranian weapons to guerrillas in southern Lebanon . It's the latest vic....

At a news conference, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu waxed eloquently about the significance of the interdiction.

"The main component of this war materiel was rockets, whose sole objective was to attack and kill as many civilians - women, children and the elderly - as possible," Netanyahu said. "This is a war crime. This is a war crime that the UN General Assembly should investigate, discuss and condemn."

Israeli analysts said that while the quantity of weapons seized this week is impressive, Hezbollah already has thousands of medium-range 107-mm and 122-mm rockets like those captured.

Many Israeli commentators compared it to Israel's capture in 2002 of another Iranian ship, the Karine A, with a smaller quantity of arms destined for the Palestinian Authority under Yasser Arafat.

Writing in Haaretz, Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff said the capture of that ship had convinced U.S. president George W. Bush's administration that it could not trust Yasser Arafat. The U.S. then gave tacit approval to Israel to launch a large incursion into the West Bank that almost toppled Arafat's rule.

"In the coming days Israel will use this affair to try to do to Iran what it did to Yasser Arafat," they wrote.

Graphic

AFP GETTY IMAGES Lebanese soldiers open a cargo container on the Francop upon its arrival in Beirut Friday. Israel's navy earlier intercepted the ship in the Mediterranean.

Load-Date: November 7, 2009

Daring rescue of civilians launched

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 622 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Feb. 10 -- The ICRC yesterday launched what was termed by some as a "daring sea rescue" of injured civilians trapped in Mullaitivu while the military separately attempted to rescue some of the civilians in the safe zone by land.

However the military said the LTTE attempted to thwart the operation by opening fire towards the fleeing civilians killing at least 19 and injuring more than 60. The critically injured were airlifted to hospitals in Anuradhapura and Vavuniya. "Seventeen bodies of civilians killed due to LTTE fire were recovered and transferred to cleared areas yesterday morning by fellow civilians who reached cleared areas in Udayarkattukulm from Puthukuduiruppu South," military Spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said. He said the bodies of 17 people had been brought to the area held by Task Force II troops last morning by civilians who reached cleared areas seeking protection from the Security Forces. "Nineteen in the exodus fell dead before the eyes of their next of kin due to indiscriminate LTTE firing while 69 others were seriously injured. Two children and five **females** were among those killed," Brig. Nanayakkara said. He said the Army troops who took immediate measures to attend to the injured had dispatched them to hospitals for urgent medical treatment on board Air Force helicopters. Eleven children, 27 **females** and 31 males were among those who arrived in the cleared areas with gunshot injuries since yesterday morning. Sources said 1057 civilians had crossed over to the army-held areas by noon yesterday. Meanwhile the ICRC had launched a rescue operation to evacuate some 400 sick and wounded civilians from LTTE held Puthukkudiyiruppu by sea route. ICRC spokesperson Sarasi Wijeratne told the Daily Mirror that a specially chartered vessel had left Jaffna towards Mullaitivu yesterday evening to rescue the civilians. She said some 400 sick and wounded civilians were being sheltered at makeshift camps in Putumattalan. "We have chartered a ferry flying the Red Cross flag and it is on the way to Mullaitivu, where it will evacuate the stranded sick and wounded civilians," the spokesperson said. However, ground military officials said with the news that the ICRC was to ferry wounded civilians, a large number of civilians in Puthukkudiyiruppu area started to move to the Mullaitivu seas to escape from the area. When asked if any action would be taken to evacuate those civilians, the ICRC spokesperson said as far as she knew only the wounded and sick civilians were being evacuated for the moment. The ICRC said yesterday that 240 sick and wounded persons had been evacuated from the Pudukuduiruppu hospital in the uncleared areas. They were to be transferred to Trincomalee by ship last night. The remaining patients are expected to be removed today. Meanwhile, Eastern Provincial Council Health Minister M.L.A.M. **Hizbullah** told Daily Mirror that they had made arrangements to receive around 400 patients from Pudukuduiruppu. Mr. **Hizbullah** said that four wards of the Trincomalee hospital had been kept vacant to accommodate these patients. "We discharged some patients and transferred others to other wards to make room for those from Pudukuduiruppu. Some of the patients from Pudukuduiruppu will be sent to the Thambalagamuwa hospital in Trincomalee as well," he said. The Provincial Minister said that the Kinniya base hospital too had been readied to be used if necessary. "We have put new beds, mosquito nets and other essentials in the four wards reserved for the Pudukuduiruppu patients at the Trincomalee hospital. The security forces, the

Daring rescue of civilians launched

ICRC and government officials are assisting us in this," he said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 5, 2009

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Rocket fired from Lebanon prompts Israeli barrage

Times of Oman

October 28, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 601 words

Byline: AFP

Body

JERUSALEM: A Katyusha rocket fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel on Tuesday night without causing casualties, prompting Israel to retaliate with artillery, sources on both sides said.

The attack, which was not immediately claimed, was the latest incident in growing cross-border tensions, and an Israeli military spokeswoman laid ultimate blame on the Beirut government.

The rocket landed in open ground east of the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona and started a fire but caused no serious damage, sources there said.

A security source in Lebanon said eight rockets fired from Israel then hit near the border village of Hula. There were no immediate reports of casualties. At about the same time, witnesses in Kiryat Shmona said Israeli artillery retaliated by firing on southern Lebanon.

An Israeli military spokeswoman later confirmed that "artillery had opened fire on the sector from which the Katyusha (TM)s rocket was fired." She said the army considered the attack as "serious, and considers that responsibility for it falls on the Lebanese government."

UN peacekeeping troops and the Lebanese army cut off the road to Hula and searched the area, an AFP correspondent said. Hula residents said they heard a rocket being fired from the brush outside the village shortly before the rockets hit the area.

While no group claimed responsibility, Israel will have its eyes on Shiite movement **Hezbollah**, which fought a devastating 34-day war with Israel in 2006 and which has its stronghold in south Lebanon.

A rocket exploded in a village there on October 12 in the home of activist Abdel Nasser Issa. The Israeli military released footage from a drone that it said showed rockets being removed.

But **Hezbollah**'s Al-Manar television broadcast pictures it said showed men outside a garage putting a rolled up metal shutter into a truck, watched by a Lebanese soldier and two UN troops.

Israel's military said the blast "proves again the presence of weapons forbidden in southern Lebanon" under UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 war.

Rocket fired from Lebanon prompts Israeli barrage

The conflict killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers. Resolution 1701 called for the removal of weapons in southern Lebanon from the hands of everyone except the Lebanese army and other state security forces.

Israel has repeatedly accused Hezbollah of rearming, and an Israeli military spokesman has claimed the group has "dozens of arms caches containing hundreds of rockets."

Following the October 12 incident, Israeli President Shimon Peres accused Hezbollah of turning Lebanon into a powderkeg. "It s not Israel that is endangering Lebanon, but rather Hezbollah, just as Hamas is endangering the Palestinians.

"There is no reason for Israel not to make peace with Lebanon," he said, adding that Israel s northern neighbour "could be, with the help of this peace, the Switzerland of the Middle East. But itâEUR(TM)s clear to everyone who is preventing this." Tuesday s attack on Israel was the fourth from Lebanon this year.

On September 11, at least two rockets fired from the southern village of Al-Qlaileh slammed into Israel without causing casualties but triggering retaliatory artillery fire. A group linked to Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility, according to US monitoring group SITE Intelligence.

In February, Israeli artillery bombarded Al-Qlaileh in response to a rocket attack. There were no casualties in Lebanon, while a few Israelis were lightly wounded. In January, during Israel s assault on the Gaza Strip, four rockets fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel, wounding two women.

Load-Date: October 29, 2009

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Israel's rare opportunity

The Jerusalem Post

June 19, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 24

Length: 1873 words

Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK

Highlight: Column One

Body

Israel today finds itself in unfamiliar territory. The revolutionary atmosphere building in Iran presents Israel with a prospect it has rarely confronted: a safe bet. With the Obama administration refusing to back the anti-regime protesters, and the European Union similarly hemming and hawing, millions of Iranians who are on the streets, risking their lives to protest a stolen election and a tyrannical regime, have been cast adrift by those they thought would support them. To date, Israel has joined the US and Europe in rejecting the protesters. This should change.

In refusing to stick their necks out - and so effectively siding with the mullahs against the pro- democracy activists in the streets - US President Barack Obama, like Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Mossad chief Meir Dagan, have all rightly pointed out that Mir Hossein Mousavi, Iran's former prime minister and the titular head of the protest movement, is just as radical and extreme as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad whom he seeks to unseat.

Moreover, Western officials and analysts point out that Mousavi's primary backers from within the regime - former presidents Muhammad Khatami and Rafsanjani - are themselves anything but anti-regime revolutionaries.

What apparently motivates these men is the sense that through Ahmadinejad's heavy-handed attacks against the revolution's "old guard," the presidential incumbent has shunted them aside. They feel slighted. And they are doubly humiliated by the fact that Ahmadinejad has acted with the open support of Iran's real dictator - so-called "Supreme Leader" Ali Khamenei. The likes of Mousavi, Khatami and Rafsanjani don't want to overthrow the regime whose aims they share. They just want to restore their power within the regime.

It is these twin assessments of Mousavi and his backers that stand at the center of Western leaders' decision to give a wide berth both to the presidential race and to the protests that have arisen in its aftermath.

For Israel, the arguments for staying clear of events in Iran align with those informing much of the rest of the Western world. Israel's primary concern is Iran's foreign policy and specifically its nuclear weapons program and its support for anti-Israel terror groups. There is no reason for Israel to believe that a Mousavi government will be more inclined to end Iran's race to the bomb or diminish its support for terror groups like *Hizbullah* and Hamas than Ahmadinejad's government is. As prime minister in the 1980s, Mousavi was a major instigator of Iran's nuclear program and he oversaw the establishment of *Hizbullah* and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Beyond that, there is the fact that Israel - like the US - is the regime's bogeyman. If Israel is identified with the protesters, the likes of Khamenei will use this connection to justify their brutal repression.

Israel 's rare opportunity

Finally, there is the distinct possibility, indeed the likelihood, that these protests will go nowhere. They will be brutally repressed or fizzle out of their own accord. So would Israel gain by sticking its neck out?

While reasonable on their face, these arguments for doing nothing all ignore the significance of recent developments. Consequently they fail to grasp the new opportunities that have arisen - opportunities which left untouched will likely disappear in short order.

The fact of the matter is that with each passing day, Mousavi's personal views and interests are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Whether he realized it or not, Mousavi was transformed last Friday night. When Khamenei embraced the obviously falsified official election results as a "divine victory" for Ahmadinejad, Mousavi was widely expected by Western observers to accept the dictator's verdict. When instead he sided with his own supporters who took to the streets to oppose their disenfranchisement, Mousavi became a revolutionary. Whether he had planned to do so or not, a week ago Mousavi became an enemy of the regime.

The significance of Mousavi's decision could not be more profound. As Michael Ledeen from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies wrote Wednesday at the Pajamas Media Web site, last Friday night Mousavi tied his personal survival to the success of the protesters - and pitted his life against Khamenei's. In Ledeen's words, "Both Khamenei and Mousavi - the two opposed icons of the moment, at least - know that they will either win or die."

For their part, by the end of this week, the protesters themselves had been transformed. If last week they were simply angry that they had been ignored, by Thursday they had become a revolutionary force apparently dedicated to the overthrow of the regime. This was made clear by a list of demands circulating among the protesters on Wednesday. As Pepe Escobar reported in Thursday's Asia Times, the protesters demands include Khamenei's removal from power, the dissolution of the secret police, the reform of the constitution under anti-regime Ayatollah Hossein Montazeri, who has been living under house arrest for the past 12 years, and the installation of Mousavi as president. These demands make clear where the protesters are leading. They are leading to the overthrow of one of the most heinous regimes on the face of the earth and its replacement by a liberal democracy.

As far as Israel is concerned, this is a win-win situation. If the protesters successfully overthrow the regime, they will have neutralized the greatest security threat facing the Jewish state. And if they fail, Israel will still probably be better off than it is today. For if the mullahs violently repress the pro-democracy dissidents, the Obama administration will be hard-pressed to legitimize their blood bath by embracing them as negotiating partners.

Were Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to publicly announce Israel's support for the protesters, Israel would stand to gain politically in a number of ways. First and foremost, it would be doing the right thing morally and so would earn the respect of millions of people throughout the world who are dismayed at their own governments' silence in the face of the brave Iranian protesters risking their lives for freedom.

Moreover, by acting as the loudest and first democratic champion of the protesters, Israel would catapult itself to the forefront of the campaign for democracy in the Muslim world. Doing so would make it far easier for Israel's representatives throughout the world to defend against false accusations by self-described human rights organizations that Israel is a human rights abuser.

Beyond that, Israel would be building an important alliance with the Iranian people themselves. Contrary to what the mullahs would have us believe, Iranians by and large do not share the widespread hatred of Israel and the Jews that their regime promotes and the Arab world embraces. Over the years, Iranian regime opponents - from the students to the trade unionists to women's rights activists to minority Kurds, Azeris, Ahwaz Arabs and Baluchis - have all appealed to Israel for support. Israel Radio in Farsi, which broadcasts into Iran daily, has more than a million regular listeners.

Were Netanyahu to explain that the same mullahs who seek to disenfranchise and repress the Iranian people seek to destroy Israel with nuclear bombs; were he to call for Iran to stop financing Hamas and Hizbullah terrorists who are reportedly now deployed in Iran to brutalize the protesters, and instead invest in the Iranian economy for the benefit of Iran's people, he would be sending a message that already resonates with the people of Iran.

Israel 's rare opportunity

Finally, Israeli outreach to the Iranian people now struggling to overthrow the regime would expose the Obama administration's effective support for the mullahs against their people in all its absurdity and moral blindness. What's more, the administration would be unable to launch a counterattack. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Obama would be in no position to attack Israel for supporting Iranian dissidents demanding freedom. And their stammering reaction would make their attacks against Jewish building in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria look ever more ridiculous.

Although Israel is far away from Iran, it has significant capacity to help the demonstrators. It could use its communication satellites to break through the communications blackout the regime has attempted to enforce. Its Internet capabilities can be offered to the protesters to reopen closed networks. Israel could temporarily expand its radio broadcasts into the country and allow its airwaves to be used to broadcast events on the ground in real time so that protesters won't have to rely on word of mouth to know what is happening or where things are leading.

Again, it is more than possible that Khamenei will move to crush the dissidents or successfully buy enough of them off to subvert them. But in the meantime, Israel has a clear interest in keeping the Iranian cauldron boiling. The mullahs can only concentrate on so much at once. If they are preoccupied with domestic dissent, they will have less time to devote to Hamas and Hizbullah. If they are busy quelling armed insurrections by Kurds or Azeris or Baluchis, they will have less time to devote to negotiating the purchase of the S-300 anti-aircraft system with Russia, or keeping tabs on their nuclear scientists. Strategically, Israel stands only to gain - either marginally or massively - from the ayatollahs' discomfort.

In an interview this week with National Review Online, Iranian expatriate Amir Taheri explained that Iran suffers from a divided psyche. On the one hand, the mullahs view Iran as a revolutionary vanguard of Islam. They do not see Iran as a nation-state. For them, the normal things that make up a life - economic stability, public safety and the hope that one's children will do better - are of little use as they march forward under the flag of jihad. Israel and the US are necessary enemies.

On the other hand, the vast majority of Iran's people wish to live in a normal and free nation-state. For them, the revolution means nothing but privation, suffering, repression and death. They do not hate America and they do not hate Israel. They do not seek nuclear weapons and they do not support the likes of Hamas and Hizbullah.

As Taheri put it, "When we consider Iran as a nation- state, we see Israel as its natural ally. The reason is that Israel, like Iran, is opposed to an exclusively Arab Middle East. Both want a pluralist Middle East in which there is room for diversity; a Middle East where one finds Iranians, Turks, Kurds, Christians and Jews, as well as Arabs."

If Israel extends a hand in friendship to these Iranian patriots, the worst that can happen is that they fail to overthrow the mullahs and we are left to acknowledge that we wished them well. There is no shame in that.

Indeed, if they fail to overthrow the regime, and Israel is compelled to attack their country's nuclear installations, it is hard to imagine that they will take it personally. Rather, recalling that it was Israel that stood with them first, they would no doubt understand why we were forced to act, and perhaps be inspired to try again to free themselves from the shackles of their hideous regime.

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Load-Date: October 4, 2011

International briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 27, 2009 Sunday

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Section: A; Pg. 8

Length: 584 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Explosion rocks Hezbollah stronghold BEIRUT - Three bombs planted under a car exploded south of Beirut on Saturday, killing one person and wounding several others in an attack that apparently targeted an official from the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the state-run news agency said. The official National News Agency said the explosion was caused by "three bombs tied to each other" that were placed under the car of an official believed to be from Hamas. It did not identify the targeted official or the victims.

One of the wounded was in serious condition, the report said. Explosions in the area, which is almost completely controlled by the Shiite Hezbollah, are rare. Hezbollah has its own arsenal with tens of thousands of rockets and missiles, which it says it needs to fight off any threat from Israel. The area was bombed out by Israel during the monthlong 2006 war with Hezbollah. India governor, 86, resigns after sex tape HYDERABAD, India - The 86-year-old governor of a southern Indian state resigned Saturday, a day after a television news channel broadcast a tape allegedly showing him in bed with three women, an official said. Gov. Narain Dutt Tiwari's office has denied the allegation, denouncing the tape as fabricated. Tiwari, a veteran governing Congress party leader in Andhra Pradesh state, sent his resignation letter to the Indian president on Saturday, citing health reasons, a state official said on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to reporters. The scandal hit as Andhra Pradesh is engulfed in social unrest. Outrage over a delay in creating a new state there erupted into violent demonstrations in several cities earlier this week. Meanwhile, more than 40 people are feared dead after a bridge collapsed during construction in western India, police said as hope faded for finding survivors. Rescuers had recovered the bodies of 12 workers from the site in Rajasthan state by Saturday, and they feared that the 30 others still missing could be dead. Report: Iranian forces, demonstrators clash TEHRAN, Iran - Iranian security forces beat protesters in central Tehran on Saturday while hardline activists disrupted a speech by the country's moderate former president, reformist Web sites said, raising tensions ahead of opposition rallies expected during a key religious mourning ritual. Several injuries were reported in Saturday's unrest, which came a day before the Shiite Muslim mourning ceremony of Ashoura. Opposition activists have held a series of anti-government protests since the death of a dissident cleric last week, and other rallies are expected during Sunday's Ashoura rituals. Last Sunday's death of the 87-year-old Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, a sharp critic of Iran's leaders, has given a new push to opposition protests, which have endured despite a heavy security crackdown since disputed presidential elections in June. Morales moves to legalize small coca plots LA PAZ, Bolivia - President Evo Morales said Saturday that he plans to make it legal for Bolivia's farmers to grow small parcels of coca plants. Morales, who also heads a coca growers association, said he wants to permit individual farmers to cultivate coca plots of 40 meters by 40 meters (130 feet by 130 feet). Coca leaf is the key ingredient of cocaine. Bolivia's president has clashed with Washington over his efforts to allow some coca growing. Local authorities say they still are cracking down on large-scale cocaine trafficking. The Associated Press

International briefs

Load-Date: December 27, 2009

End of Document

Lebanese officer held amid Israeli spy concerns

AlArabiya.net

May 25, 2009 Monday

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Length: 430 words

Body

Beautiful women, secret trips abroad and a hurried escape across a mine-infested border are all aspects of so-called Israeli spy networks unraveling in Lebanon, which arrested one of its army colonels, security sources said on Tuesday, in a government campaign to crack down on espionage.

The sources said the colonel, who was not named, was arrested last week and was being questioned about links to spy agencies following the arrest of up to 30 suspected spies in recent months as part of a long-running probe by Lebanese intelligence into Israeli sleeper cells. More arrests are expected, security officials say. Suspected spies include a math teacher, housewife, butcher, a mobile phone salesman and a retired general, who were all found with sophisticated communications equipment and other gadgets in their homes or offices.

Senior Lebanese security officials say the arrests have dealt a major blow to Israel's spying networks in Lebanon, which considers itself in a state of war with the Jewish state.

Last week Beirut filed a complaint to the United Nations that Israel was violating its sovereignty by creating spy networks in Lebanon and at least 21 suspects have already been charged, some in absentia, and several have confessed.

Growing espionage

Lebanon says at least two spies have fled over the heavily fortified border to Israel last week and demanded Tel Aviv hand them back.

Israel has not commented on the arrests in Lebanon but warned its citizens that "Arab groups" were using social networking sites like Facebook to recruit and hire spies.

Israeli intelligence services claim an Israeli Facebook user was contacted by someone claiming to be a Lebanese agent and was offered money for information on Israel.

Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Shiite resistance group Hezbollah, last week called for the death penalty for all suspects convicted of spying for Israel.

Officials say many of the suspects played key roles in identifying Hezbollah targets that were bombed during a 34-day war between Israel and the Shiite group in 2006.

Lebanese officer held amid Israeli spy concerns

Other suspects have been charged with monitoring senior **Hezbollah** officials and at least one is alleged to have played a role in the 2004 assassination of a commander of the group.

In April a Lebanese prosecutor charged a former army general and three other people with spying for Israel and referred them to the military court.

Adeeb al-Alam, a retired brigadier general of the prominent General Security directorate, his wife and nephew were arrested on suspicion of espionage. A fourth person linked to the cell was still at large.

Load-Date: May 26, 2009

End of Document

Foul play in the Gulf

The Jerusalem Post

February 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 754 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

In yet another egregious instance of Arab men cutting off their noses to spite their faces, copies of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue featuring Israel's stunning Bar Refaeli on the cover have been removed from Dubai magazine racks.

And, after intense pressure from the Association of Tennis Professionals, Dubai has reluctantly granted an entry visa to Andy Ram to play in next week's Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships - after barring Shahar Pe'er from playing in the Women's Tennis Association tournament, affecting her earnings, if not her ranking.

International response to such anti-Israelism by the United Arab Emirates (of which Dubai is the commercial center and a self-governing city-state) has been understated. The Washington Post and Wall Street Journal were critical, and the Tennis Channel cancelled plans to broadcast the Dubai women's tournament. Pe'er's fellow players, hearing about her exclusion at the 11th hour, were sympathetic but decided to go ahead and compete rather than forfeit millions of dollars in sponsors' support.

Sadly, anti-Israel frenzy has reached such proportions that in Malmo, Sweden, where Muslim immigrants comprise 25 percent of the population, the Davis Cup tennis first round tie against Israel next month will be played in an empty stadium.

Back in the UAE, the first ever "Emirates Airline International Festival of Literature," set for next week, is becoming a real page-turner owing to official censorship of Geraldine Bedell's novel *The Gulf Between Us* featuring a homosexual relationship set in a fictional Gulf emirate.

The Emirates, where fewer than 20 percent of the 4.4 million residents are citizens, likes to be perceived as a tolerant, pro-Western oasis. And, to be fair, the Saudi-controlled, Dubai-based satellite news channel Al-Arabiya makes a stab at modifying Al-Jazeera's radicalism. Still, public antagonism toward Israel and Western values is getting ever harder to cloak.

QATAR plays an even more duplicitous game, presenting itself as cosmopolitan while shilling for the Islamists. Back in 1996, it hosted the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and seemed to be moving incrementally toward staking out a moderate position in Arab affairs. Indeed, as late as last year, Qatar allowed Pe'er to play in a WTA Tour tournament.

But at this week's three-day annual US-Islamic World Forum in Doha, co-hosted with the Brookings Institution's Saban Center, some Arab participants echoed a refrain commonly heard from Indonesia - where US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton just visited - to the Gulf States: If the US really wants to move closer to the Arab world, it will

Foul play in the Gulf

have to abandon its "near-blind" support for Israel and "overcome the veto power" of the Zionists on Washington's decision-making.

Qatar, which has the highest per-capita income in the world, has lately adopted a radically pro-Hamas foreign policy; in January, it suspended low-level diplomatic ties with Israel. Controlled by the family of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Qatar has the peculiar distinction of being 75-percent male thanks to its outsized expatriate workforce.

Sheikh Hamad is the main financial backer of the Doha-based Al-Jazeera. While Al-Jazeera's English-language website and television take a mild tone, the main, Arabic, enterprise aligns itself with the Hamas-Iran-Syria-**Hizbullah** bloc. For instance, it identifies those killed in the Gaza fighting as shahids. The Muslim Brotherhood has long been a presence in Qatar, and Al-Jazeera serves as a popular, attractive platform for spreading its extremist views throughout the region.

During Operation Cast Lead, Qatar hosted a meeting of radical Arab states, plus Iran, to mobilize support for Hamas and also pledged millions of dollars for Gaza's reconstruction. The al-Thani family also played a key role in facilitating **Hizbullah**'s incremental ascendancy in Lebanon.

But Qatar is shrewd enough to hedge its bets by hosting bases of the US military's Central Command, which oversees American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The State Department considers both Qatar and the UAE - two of the world's richest countries - as friendly states.

HOW HAS Qatar, which promotes the Muslim Brotherhood and bankrolls the poisonous al-Jazeera station, succeeded in maintaining its image as a friend of the West? And how is Dubai, with its on-off boycott of Israel, able to sustain its own moderate image?

The answer is money. Lots of it. To win friends, influence people, and manipulate perceptions.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Pakistan: Suicide bomber kills two persons, injured 19 in City

Daily Pak Banker

July 25, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 302 words

Dateline: PESHAWAR

Body

PESHAWAR, Aug. 25 -- Two persons including a woman were killed and 19 others sustained injuries in a deadly suicide bomb blast in Momin Town on Dalazak Road here on Sunday afternoon, police said.

Chief Capital City Police, Sifat Ghayoor told reporters at the site of explosion that it was a suicide attack. The attacker blew himself up in front of the house of one Liaq Shah in Momin town after exchange of firing with people. The dead identified are Laiq Shah and Jameela daughter of Gul Jan residents of Momin Town. The injured identified are Fazal Amin son of Shahib Zada, Izaz son of Israr, **Hizbullah** Khan son of Israr, Rohullah Khan son of Israr, Nizam son of Israr, Sumbal daughter of Israr, Abdul Rehman, Muhammad Rehman, children Imran, Hashim Khan, Adnan Khan and Noorul Hayat. The victims were coming to home for Iftari when the blast occurred, said a police official of Pehari pura in whose jurisdiction the incident occurred said. He said the suicide bomber first opened fire and then blew himself up in front of the house of Laiq Shah. At least 10 nearby houses were damaged while window panes of the buildings were smashed into pieces. DCO Peshawar Shahibzada Anis told reporters that condition of four of the injured were critical and they were rushed to Lady Reading Hospital for treatment. He said police are investigating the blast. As many as 19 injured persons including four **women** and six children were brought to Lady Reading Hospital for treatment. Soon after the incident, police cordoned off the area and started search operation. It was the second attack in last 36 hours as two persons were killed in car bombing at Hayatabad township on Saturday night. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Pak Banker. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: August 24, 2009

DCO reviews security arrangements for 2nd death anniversary of Shaheed
BB

Daily Regional Times

October 16, 2009 Friday

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Section: Vol. III; No. 1322

Length: 323 words

Byline: GR.Gorar & Abdul Ghaffar Khoso

Body

District Coordination Officer (DCO) Larkana, Muhammad Jaffar Abbasi presided over a meeting to review security arrangements for 2nd death anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed at the Circuit House Larkana on Thursday. The meeting was attended by the local PPP leaders including Ghulamullah Mahoto, Dr. Shafqat Hussain Soomro, Khair Muhammad Shaikh, **Hizbullah** Bughio, Nisar Bhutto, DPO Larkana Irfan Balouch and others.

Addressing the meeting, the DCO said that all the arrangements and security measures have been finalized for the 2nd death anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed.

The meeting was informed that all the roads heading towards the mausoleum of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed will be repaired so that the people can be provided facilities. In order to ensure availability of drinking water hand pumps will be installed and separate bathrooms for male and **female** will also be constructed to facilitate the visitors.

TMOs have been asked to ensure the cleanliness at Garhi Khuda Bux and the HESCO authorities have been directed to illuminate the Mazar and its surrounding areas. **Women** police will be deployed in order to provide security to the **women** besides a large number of policemen will also be deployed at Garhi Khuda Bux Bhutto on the occasion.

EDO Health, Dr. Abdul Fatah Bughio said that various medical camps would be established to provide medical facilities to the visitors. Doctors and paramedic will remain present 24 hours.

The DCO said that fire brigade officials will be put on high alert and close circuit cameras will be installed at different spots to monitor the situation.

It was also decided in the meeting that transport facility from Naudero and Garhi Khuda Bux will be provided to visitors.

It was also decided in the meeting that all the departments will complete their assignments by December 10, 2009, and will submit final report in this regard to the members of the Mazar Committee.

Load-Date: September 19, 2011

DCO reviews security arrangements for 2nd death anniversary of Shaheed BB

End of Document

God's foreign policy

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

April 20, 2009 Monday

All Editions

Copyright 2009 Bangor Daily News

Section: Pg. A6

Length: 238 words

Body

Robert McLaughlin's April 10 letter suggests that Israel has no right to defend itself and its suffering is phony. After the Jews went through the Holocaust, what does he expect them to do? The Israelis live in fear of being blown up at any time.

The Jews warned British and U.N. officials three times to get out of the King David Hotel before they blew it up. They chose not to leave. The Palestinian suicide bombers, Hezbollah, and Hamas don't give the Israelis the same warnings. In some cases, the Israelis don't strike back because these groups hide in the midst of women and children and know Israel will try to avoid civilian casualties. These groups couldn't care less if Arab women and children die as long as Israelis die.

The Jews never stole land from anyone. God gave the land in Israel to the Jews in a covenant between him and Abraham. A promise by God is forever. This is all in Genesis 12:1, 2, 7. The Jews have owned the land in Israel since then according to God. The Palestinian suicide bombers, Hezbollah, and Hamas should argue with God about this and leave the Jews alone.

God's foreign policy is short and to the point in Genesis 12:3. God will bless anyone who blesses Israel and he will curse anyone who curses Israel. God has blessed this country. The U.S. is the richest, freest, most powerful country that has ever existed. Could it be because we have always supported Israel?

Janice Bodwell

Kenduskeag

Load-Date: April 20, 2009

Terror trial accused told women he wanted to kill jews and us troops

Derby Evening Telegraph
December 2, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 6

Length: 487 words

Byline: SHAUN JEPSON

Body

A Suspected Derby terrorist told a jury that he boasted to women about wanting to kill Jews and US soldiers to make him sound like a hero.

Krenar Lusha made the claims during internet conversations with a series of women he had contacted through dating websites.

The 30-year-old also claimed he was a sniper with access to bombs and mortars, as well as saying he would like to kill special marines and private contractors.

Giving evidence at Preston Crown Court yesterday, Lusha said the claims were "hot air" and "fiction".

He said of his message to one woman: "I just wanted to pretend to be her hero and to make her love me. Sometimes women like a kind of Rambo man."

The court heard how the defendant made initial contact with women through websites such as Muslims for Marriage.

During one conversation with a female from Lebanon, he said he would like to send missiles over the heads of Jewish people.

In another he said that he would like to kill Jews, US soldiers, special marines and private contractors.

The Albanian Muslim told the court that he said these things because he felt "emotionally sad" and "enraged" after seeing footage of American soldiers using the Qur'an as a shooting target in Iraq.

The court previously heard how counter-terrorism officers found 71.8 litres of petrol in a cellar and more than two kilograms of potassium nitrate - a constituent of gunpowder - in a bedroom of Lusha's home in Moore Street.

During the hearing yesterday, Lusha said the potassium nitrate had been delivered to a previous address at the request of his brother. He said he had never opened the box it was kept in and did not know what was inside.

And he previously told the court that he was "stockpiling small amounts" of petrol because of the danger of a fuel shortage.

Terror trial accused told women he wanted to kill jews and us troops

Documents, including ones entitled the Hezbollah Military Instruction Manuals, Car Bomb Recognition Guide and The Bomb Book were retrieved by officers from computers or hard drives.

A video film entitled Mobile Detonators was also found along with fourteen mobiles.

Lusha told the court that not all the computers or hard drives found at his home belonged to him and that he was not aware of the material contained on them.

He said some of the material contained in the charges he faces had been downloaded by other people. Lusha denies 10 counts of possessing articles which give rise to a reasonable suspicion that they were for a terror-related purpose.

When asked by defence barrister Jeremy Baker QC about the download of the Hezbollah Military Instruction Manuals, found on his laptop, he said: "I thought it was historical evidence of Hezbollah or their conflicts."

When asked by Mr Baker about the quantity of mobile phones, Lusha replied: "It was for many, many reasons. One was some of them did not work.

"Another is that I was not use to these commodities when I was growing up.

"I was interested in having them in this country."

The trial continues.

Load-Date: December 3, 2009

End of Document

IN BRIEF

therecord.com

December 11, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A5

Length: 495 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

BEIRUT

Hezbollah will be allowed

to keep its weapons

The Lebanese parliament overwhelmingly approved a national unity government Thursday that will allow Hezbollah to keep its weapons, despite strong criticism from pro-Western lawmakers angry at the militant group's refusal to disarm. The vote in parliament was a further indication that Hezbollah will continue to defy a UN resolution calling for it to give up its weapons, which include rockets that can reach deep into Israel.

ALLENTOWN, Pa.

Man tries breaking into museum

owned by his artist father

A Pennsylvania man used a backhoe to break into a museum owned by his father - the pioneering fantasy artist Frank Frazetta - in an attempt to steal 90 paintings valued at \$20 million US, police said Thursday. State police charged Alfonso Frank Frazetta, 52, of Marshalls Creek, with theft, burglary and trespass after they say he was caught loading the artwork into his trailer and SUV.

CAIRO

Metal sheets installed along

border to keep weapons out

Egypt is installing a series of metal sheets some 20 metres deep along its border with Gaza in an attempt to block tunnels that serve as a key conduit to bring weapons into the Palestinian territory, border guards and area residents said Thursday. The work poses a risk to Egypt's relations with Hamas, a Palestinian militant group that has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007, and could undermine its role as a regional mediator.

HAVANA

IN BRIEF

Government supporters break up

human rights day marches

Government supporters screaming insults and slogans broke up two tiny International Human Rights Day marches Thursday and chased away a British diplomat onlooker, pounding on his car as he drove away. Hundreds of enraged Cubans confronted a march led by Yusnaimi Jorge, wife of Darcy Ferrer, a black physician and veteran dissident who had headed demonstrations every Dec. 10 but has been behind bars since this summer for buying black market cement.

PASADENA, Calif.

Space officials try to free

rover from Martian sand trap

A faulty wheel on the Mars rover Spirit is complicating efforts to free it from a sand trap on the red planet where it has been stuck for the past eight months. NASA said Thursday it will continue to run tests to see if there's any movement in the right rear wheel. Spirit, which landed on the red planet with six working wheels, lost the ability to move its right front wheel three years ago. BUENOS AIRES

Argentina may soon

start importing beef

Argentina, a nation that prides itself on having more cattle than people, may soon be forced to import beef to keep its meat-loving citizens happy at the dinner table. Intense government efforts to keep meat affordable through taxes, export restrictions and price controls have enabled Argentines to eat record amounts of beef this year, but the short-term bonanza has come at a very steep cost. With little or no profit left in meat, ranchers are selling out, slaughtering even the **female** cows needed to maintain their herds.

Load-Date: December 11, 2009

IDF mulling self-defense course for all female recruits

The Jerusalem Post

August 9, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 313 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

Citing fears of kidnappings and sexual assault, the IDF is considering establishing a special self-defense course for all **female** soldiers who enlist in the military.

The plan is the brainchild of Col. Dr. Avi Moyal, head of the IDF's Combat Fitness Division. Moyal has discussed the idea with Brig.-Gen. Gila Klifi-Amir, the General Staff's Adviser on **Women**'s Affairs and the two are hoping to secure a budget for the program.

Under the plan, all **female** recruits will participate in a week-long self-defense course to provide them with skills how to fend off potential attackers, rapists and kidnappers.

"This course will be aimed at providing the **female** soldiers with self-confidence to travel around the country in the framework of their military service as many of them need to" explained a senior officer in the IDF's Ground Forces Command.

Most **female** soldiers in the IDF serve in non-combat positions and undergo a very low-level basic training without receiving any real self defense skills.

"Very few **female** soldiers are given an introductory class in hand-to-hand combat but not enough to know how to fight off an attacker," the officer said.

The Ground Forces Command has also established a new training regimen to train soldiers how to fight off a Hamas or **Hizbullah** kidnapping attempt. The decision to establish the new course was made following Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip earlier this year, during which Hamas operatives made a number of attempts to kidnap IDF soldiers.

Following the operation, the Ground Forces Command set up a team of officers to recommend changes to the current training regimen based on findings from the almost two-week ground offensive in Gaza. One of the recommendations was to sharpen troops' skills on how to fight off kidnappers not just with their rifle but also when the soldier's ammunition runs out or when he is taken by surprise.

Graphic

IDF mulling self-defense course for all female recruits

Photo: **WOMEN** SOLDIERS may soon receive self-defense courses as part of their army training to ward off possible attackers or kidnappers. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolinski/The Jerusalem Post)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

It's Short Step From Authoritarian to Totalitarian

The New York Times

March 5, 2009 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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Section: Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. ; LETTERS

Length: 580 words

Body

To the Editor:

Re "Iran, the Jews and Germany" (column, The New York Times on the Web, March 2):

Roger Cohen maintains that his critics who compare Iran to totalitarian Nazi Germany are mistaken. He points to the relative freedoms of the Jews in Iran and to the pockets of democracy in Iranian society.

Hannah Arendt maintained that Nazi Germany became totalitarian only in 1938. Up until Kristallnacht, the Jews who were left in Germany tried to make the best out of their lives as second-class citizens. Kristallnacht changed the situation dramatically, when Jewish life came to a halt and everyone understood that there was no future for Jews in Germany.

The change from an authoritarian to a totalitarian state can be done in a fortnight, as the German and Soviet examples have shown, and the ramifications for the Jews in a society where they are vilified and symbolized as the reincarnation of evil should not be underestimated.

I agree that Iran is not as efficient as Germany. But even with the notable signs of discontent and rebellion against Islamist fundamentalism, which are the hallmark of many young people in Iran, I doubt that any of them will raise their voice if and when the Islamist regime redirects their venom from the Jewish state to the representatives of international Zionist imperialism in their midst.

Pinchas Goldschmidt Cambridge, Mass., March 2, 2009

The writer, the chief rabbi of Moscow and the chairman of the Conference of European Rabbis, is a visiting scholar at Harvard.

To the Editor:

Roger Cohen, apparently to indicate Iran's genuine acceptance of Jews, mentions the visit in 2003 of Mohammad Khatami, the Iranian president at the time, to a Tehran synagogue.

But one should take note of what Mr. Khatami actually said in the synagogue. He insisted on drawing a distinction between Judaism and Zionism and talked of "coexistence of Muslims, Christians and Jews in Palestine."

It's Short Step From Authoritarian to Totalitarian

It took no bravery on the part of Mr. Khatami to visit the house of worship of a small minority who dare not publicly disagree with him. A more believable sign of Iran's acceptance of Jews will be when Mr. Khatami returns to the synagogue and acknowledges Israel's right to exist.

Marc Mandell Norwich, Conn., March 2, 2009

To the Editor:

Roger Cohen asserts, "Iran has not waged an expansionary war in more than two centuries."

Is the operative word "expansionary"? Because Iran, through its proxies Hezbollah and Hamas, has been waging a continuing war of aggression against Israel for years.

Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas declare openly and repeatedly that their goal is the destruction of Israel and the death of every Jew in Israel. If they succeed, would not that be "expansionary"?

Many of the missiles that Hezbollah and Hamas have fired into Israel by the thousands have been supplied by Iran. These missiles are intended to kill and terrorize as many Jewish men, women and children as possible.

Michael S. Kolker Seattle, March 2, 2009

To the Editor:

Your column was like a breath of fresh air. American readers deserve to know both the good and the bad points of Iran, as you view it.

I am tired of the paranoia in our country about Iran and am disgusted by our government's general propaganda of demonizing countries that are not currently in our favor.

It is time that the educated class of this country is given a chance to sift through the hype and fabrication.

Sroor Asaduddin Houston, March 2, 2009

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: March 5, 2009

Lebanon protests condemn clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 10, 2009 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 393 words

Body

Numerous protests were held Friday in various regions in Lebanon to condemn the violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem. The Future Movement staged a protest in the northern province of Akkar in which Future Movement MPs participated. MP Khaled Daher renewed his support for all Palestinians refugees in Lebanon.

BEIRUT/SIDON: Numerous protests were held Friday in various regions in Lebanon to condemn the violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem. The Future Movement staged a protest in the northern province of Akkar in which Future Movement MPs participated. MP Khaled Daher renewed his support for all Palestinians refugees in Lebanon and warned that the Israel was targeting both the Lebanese and the Palestinians at Al-Aqsa. "If injustice is not stopped, then radical and uncontrollable situations will emerge," warned Sheikh Osama al-Rifi, an imam of one of the mosques in Akkar.

Protests were also staged in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in south Lebanon, where Osbat al-Ansar representative Sheikh Abu al-Sharif Aql called on Muslims to declare "jihad in order to save Occupied Jerusalem."

"If they want to call us terrorists, then we will become terrorists for Al-Aqsa and for our children and women," he said.

Hamas official in Sidon Abu Ahmad Fadel also gave a speech during the gathering at Ain al-Hilweh, saying Al-Aqsa was "not for sale." He asked that negotiations and compromises concerning the case completely stop and that the Arab League take a unified stand "against turning occupied Jerusalem into a Jewish city."

Protests were held as well in the southern city of Tyre at Al-Buss and at Burj al-Shamali refugee camps. Fatah organized the protest at Al-Buss camp where Hizbullah representative Khalil Hussein renewed the Shiite party's commitment to the Palestinian cause.

The protest at Burj al-Shamali was organized by Hamas, whose spokesperson Sheikh Mohammad al-Bajirmi condemned the decision to postpone voting on the Goldstone Report.

Also on Friday, student Committees from the Union of Palestinian Factions also expressed their anger in a statement. They demanded that "Arab and Muslim nations, especially Palestinians, stop all projects of compromise and commit to the project of resistance." - The Daily Star

Lebanon protests condemn clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque

Load-Date: October 10, 2009

End of Document

NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rather than focusing on issues of racism and discrimination in the Middle East

The Jerusalem Post
April 20, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 958 words

Byline: Jerusalem Post staff

Body

Creating a European "resistance model" based on Hizbullah and blaming Israeli swimming pools for guzzling water from Palestinian olive groves. These are just two ideas brought up at the pre-Durban II Israel Review Conference hosted by anti-Israeli NGOs Sunday in Geneva.

A parallel meeting to Durban II, held in a Geneva hotel, which was organized by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, the International Coordinating Network on Palestine and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Committee, kicked off Sunday, one day ahead of the UN's conference on racism.

Entitled the Israel Review Conference: "United Against Apartheid, Colonialism and Occupation, Dignity & Justice for the Palestinian People," it was attended by some 160 participants.

The Palestinian NGO Badil, accredited to Durban I and II, presented a 300-page report on "Israel's Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the International Legal Prohibition on Apartheid."

According to a report by Jewish activists on the scene, several lawyers spoke about bringing Israel to the ICC (International Criminal Court) and the European Court of Justice for war crimes. Workshops were held on an "International campaign against the Jewish National Fund;" "State responsibility and arms trade with Israel"; "Legal BDS - Popular Tribunals and Public Petitions."

A debate entitled "Israeli apartheid" paid credit to former US president Jimmy Carter's book Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid and political experience in the trade union movement in the combat against South Africa. The concept was vaunted as a valuable tool for political mobilization and solidarity.

Campaigns were proposed to launch international legal measures to reclaim Palestinian property. An initiative was proposed regarding water; to highlight the supposed distinction between Israeli swimming pools and the "meager amount available for Palestinian olive trees."

Countermeasures were discussed against those attempting to criminalize the boycott. Concrete examples reportedly mentioned an attack in Ireland on commercial/military suppliers to Israel: demonstrators apparently damaged Israel-bound computers at the Raytheon factory.

NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rath....

There was debate on construction of a European resistance movement, based on the idea that "we are all Hizbullah, we are all Hamas... The world stopped Nazism, the world stopped apartheid, we will stop Zionism."

According to a report by the Wiesenthal Center, PR experts analyzed language for campaigns, recommending focus on "population transfer," and cautioning against using the Nazi analogy as this opened the campaign to charges of anti-Semitism.

Badil suggested that South Africa and Israel not be presented as analogies, but that the apartheid experience was applicable as this identified "a program of racial engineering."

"Race, color, family, descent, are related concepts. The Jew, by virtue of descent, has taken rights over the land that non-Jews do not share... Jewish supremacy or Zionism through nationality or peoplehood has been the basis for ethnic cleansing."

It was noted that the participants were eager to find ways to impact upon the proceedings of the UN Durban Review Conference (Durban II), and to structure shared campaigns and resources after the conference concluded.

Wiesenthal Center officials presently in Geneva, Dr. Shimon Samuels (Director for International Relations) and Sergio Widder (Latin American Representative), commented on "the tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish State rather than focusing on issues of racism and discrimination in the Middle East... Where were the women, trade unionists, writers, homosexuals and indeed Christians and other religious minorities to lament the violation of their counterparts' fundamental rights in Palestine and Iran?

"How come this gathering did not condemn the scheduled visit of Iranian President [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad in view of his genocidal statements, his patronage of terrorism, his denial of the Holocaust and his country's nuclear designs?"

"This event was yet another example of Durban II's bankruptcy and it's kowtowing to tyrants," concluded the Center.

A related initiative was the NGO Civil Society Forum March against Racism. Groups of Tamils, Kurdish victims of the Iraqi Halabja gassing and sexual diversity activists clustered at the demonstration's edges. Dalits (Indian 'untouchables') were segregated across a busy intersection. At the Wiesenthal Center's suggestion they moved their banners under the main podium.

Nevertheless, the event was clearly monopolized by the Palestine issue and by spokesmen of other groups that addressed that cause.

A main speaker was MK Jamal Zahalka, an Israeli MK, who presented himself as a Palestinian victim of "Israeli racist apartheid." He ended his speech proclaiming: "No peace without justice."

Samuels noted "the absurdity of Zahalka's contention, in that as an Israeli-Arab, he enjoys a total freedom of expression denied to all other Middle East legislatures, the Libyan-chaired Durban II preparatory process and, above all, apartheid South Africa."

Zahalka was followed by former UN Human Rights Council Rapporteur on Racism, Doudou Diene. He endorsed the legitimacy of the gathering and Durban II as a political process - that Zionism was not racism, but a political ideology, which must be confronted politically.

At another alternative event, the Civil Society Forum for the Durban Review Conference, Diene laid out measures for a reparations campaign on behalf of trans-Atlantic slave trade victims.

Widder commented on "the narrow attention to only the Western slave trade, thus excluding African victims of Arab slavers and those targeted by the contemporary traffic in women and children."

NGOs bash Israel ahead of Durban II conference. Wiesenthal Center: It's a tragedy that so much hate was concentrated on maximizing harm to the Jewish state rath....

Graphic

Photo: SOME OF the material distributed yesterday at the Israel Review Conference in Geneva. (Credit: Simon Wiesenthal Center)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Jimmy Carter, we can have peace (without you) in the Holy Land

The Jerusalem Post

August 26, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 822 words

Byline: Michael D. Evans

Highlight: The former president's meddling - in his 2006 book, in his involvement with 'The Elders' and in his newly-released book in which he outlines a new plan for peace - is just not cutting it. The writer is a New York Times bestselling author of Jimmy Carter: The Liberal Left and World Chaos. A television special based on the book is currently being produced (www.carterbooktv.com)

Body

Former President Jimmy Carter has just released a new book, *We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land: A Plan that Will Work* in which he advocates a straightforward solution: Israel should embrace the Quartet [Russia, the UN, the EU and the US].

The plan is backed by a group known simply as The Elders, an NGO started by Nelson Mandela in 2007 to promote peace and assist in conflict resolution and funded partly by British entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson, who originally proposed the idea for the group, and musician Peter Gabriel. Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center are heavily involved with this endeavor; Carter is one of three appointed 'Elders' to the Middle East. The delegation currently in Israel accompanying Carter includes South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and former Irish president Mary Robinson (who recently received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from US President Barack Obama despite strong objections by Jewish groups over her leadership role in the 2001 UN Durban Review).

The group's objectives were met with skepticism by Israelis, but according to Carter, were eagerly embraced by the "Palestinians, peace groups and human rights activists in the region."

How could he ask the Jewish people to embrace a group known as The Elders? The controversial Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion is the biggest best-selling book in a bigoted world, and is charged with fueling anti-Semitism.

CARTER'S PLAN is to allow the Quartet to solve the Middle East conflict, plain and simple. He calls for peace-loving organizations such as Hizbullah and Hamas and states like Iran and Syria to be involved in the negotiating process in order to bring peace to the Holy Land. The Quartet, Hizbullah, Hamas, Syria, Iran - according to Carter, everybody but Israel can bring peace.

For Israelis only, Carter reserves the word 'radicals' in his book. He also calls former prime minister Menachem Begin by the same adjective and then describes him as the "most notorious terrorist in the region." Of course, he said the British said that, not him. Carter goes on to describe Binyamin Netanyahu as a "key political associate and naysayer" who was strongly opposed to Israel relinquishing control over the Sinai.

Jimmy Carter, we can have peace (without you) in the Holy Land

It appears that Jimmy Carter is revising history. The Binyamin Netanyahu I know was attending college during the Camp David meetings in the late 1970s. In fact, when I recommended him to Begin for a government job, the prime minister did not even know who Netanyahu was. I have no idea how Carter was so aware of Binyamin Netanyahu's political ideology; he was selling furniture at the time to help fund his schooling.

The former president also writes that at the time, Begin agreed to divide Jerusalem. I found that to be astonishing, especially since Begin had given me a copy of the letter he penned to Jimmy Carter on September 17, 1978, in which he wrote, "Dear Mr. President, on the basis of this law, the government of Israel decreed in July 1967 that Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel." According to Begin, Carter informed him that the US government did not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Begin told me he responded, "Excuse me sir, but the State of Israel does not recognize your non-recognition."

Carter further charges that Begin agreed to a freeze on building Jewish settlements but Begin told me he had not agreed to a total freeze; he only agreed not to build new settlements for three months, during the negotiations.

Carter also gives the impression that he and Begin were close friends by saying that Begin and then Egyptian president Anwar Sadat visited him in Plains to reaffirm the personal commitments each had made to the other, which I found quite humorous.

Begin told me he had refused to meet with Carter when the president traveled to Jerusalem. At that time, he was no longer prime minister but was outraged that Carter had misrepresented the events during their meetings.

COULD IT be that Jimmy Carter's ideals are formulated by the number of zeros before the decimal on the contributions to the Carter Center by oil-rich Gulf States? These same states do not now, nor will they ever, allow Jews to worship freely within their borders no matter how much land Israel relinquishes. It is then surprising and hypocritical to call Israel an "apartheid state" and to infer that the region's only democratic country is an obstacle to peace - thus the only solution to the Middle East conflict is through intervention.

Carter's final plea is for President Barack Obama to "shape a comprehensive peace effort between Israel and the Palestinians...then use persuasion and enticements to reach these reasonable goals with the full backing of other members of the International Quartet and the Arab nations."

It is likely he would call on The Elders for their expertise. The best thing President Obama could do is completely ignore Jimmy Carter and his plan.

Graphic

Photo: THE ELDERS: Jimmy Carter, former Norwegian PM Gro Brundtland, founder of the Self-Employed Women's Association Ela Bhatt, Desmond Tutu and Mary Robinson in Jerusalem yesterday. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Lebanon-Israel border calm after rocket attack

Times of Oman

September 13, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 377 words

Byline: AFP

Body

BEIRUT: UN peacekeepers were monitoring the Lebanese border with Israel on Saturday, a day after rockets launched from south Lebanon slammed into Galilee, but the situation was "calm," a spokeswoman said.

"UNIFIL in coordination with the LAF (Lebanese army) deployed additional troops in the general area to prevent any escalation of the situation, but the situation is pretty calm today," the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon spokeswoman Yasmina Bouziane told AFP.

At least two rockets fired from southern Lebanon slammed into Israel on Friday, triggering retaliatory artillery fire across the border.

"Several rockets hit western Galilee. They did not cause any casualties," an Israeli military spokesman told AFP. "We responded by firing 12 to 15 artillery shells towards the source of the fire."

The Lebanese army said the village of Al-Qlaileh was hit and ambulances were rushed from the port city of Tyre, nine kilometres (five miles) away.

A Lebanese security official said two rockets were fired earlier from the village, 15 kilometres (10 miles) from the border. No one immediately claimed responsibility.

Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers later found the wooden platforms from which the rockets were fired, the official said.

The peacekeeping troops continued to urge both sides to exercise maximum restraint and had launched an investigation into the incident, Bouziane said, but would not comment on who could be behind the rocket attacks.

"We will wait for the report," she said.

The attack is the third this year.

In January, during Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip, four rockets fired from Lebanon fell on the north of Israel, injuring two women.

In February, Israeli artillery bombarded Al-Qlaileh in response to similar rocket fire. There were no casualties on the Lebanese side while a few Israelis were lightly wounded.

Lebanon - Israel border calm after rocket attack

The Shiite militant group **Hezbollah**, which fought a devastating 34-day war with Israel in 2006 and has its stronghold in the south, denied responsibility for the attack.

The party has not yet commented on Friday s attack. UNIFIL was set up in 1978 to monitor the border with Israel and was expanded after Israel s devastating war on **Hezbollah** in 2006. The force currently numbers between 12,500 and 13,000 troops.

Load-Date: September 13, 2009

End of Document

Lebanon-Israel border calm after rocket attack

Times of Oman

September 12, 2009 Saturday

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Load-Date: September 12, 2009

End of Document

Eager Lebanese race to polls to cast their ballots

AlArabiya.net

June 6, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 909 words

Body

Cars struggled to pass each other in the long line of vehicles maneuvering on the narrow mountain road into the village of Mechan in Lebanon to the school that served as the polling station.

Jeeps filled with veiled women and bearded men pulled up to unload their passengers, ferried by bus from their homes in Syria to vote for Hezbollah in a historic election that drew an estimated 10 percent of voters from abroad to vote in Lebanon's parliamentary elections.

A sheikh in white headdress was the first to arrive, and every few minutes another carload arrived to drop off some 200 voters who had made the five-hour trek to dip their fingers in purple ink and cast their ballots.

Mechan, part of the Bylos district, gets to elect three representatives: one Christian and two Shites. The country's democratic system requires a rigid adherence to parliamentary representation based on sectarian allocations to each of the country's 18 religious factions. Muslims get 64 seats and Christians the other half of the 128 seats in parliament. "We came to have our voices heard," Mohamed Chamas told Al Arabiya, explaining why he had travelled from Syria to cast his vote in his hometown.

Lebanese Canadian expatriates flew into Lebanon on free tickets provided by pro-Western Future movement party supporters to vote in the high-stakes election where every vote could tip the balance, the CBC reported.

Lebanese must vote for one of the 580 candidates in one of 26 districts, which is determined by the hometown of their father or husband's family as recorded on their identity cards, regardless of where they live. Some 580 candidates are running.

Several youth dressed in bright red shirts of government stood just above the village school where people lined up for an hour to cast their vote while others dressed in yellow vests emblazoned with the green machine gun logo of Hezbollah stood watch across the street.

A cacophony of car horns attested to the passion of a society split between a Western-backed government loyal to former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri's Future movement and that of the Syrian and Iranian-backed opposition loyal to Christian General Michel Aoun and the Shiite party Hezbollah respectively.

Eager Lebanese race to polls to cast their ballots

Cars draped in the red, white and green of the March 14 movement-which included Saad Hariri's Future movement and Samer Geagea's Lebanese Forces and Amin Gameyel's Phalangists-tooted a distinctive honk while those draped in the orange of Aoun or the yellow and green of Hassan Nasrallah's Hezbollah tooted another theme. Honks echoed through the empty streets where shuttered stores and restaurants were reminders of the heightened tensions of a body politic concerned about clashes between rivals.

Lebanon's army was out in full force as tanks, strategically positioned at polling stations and throughout the cities, and soldiers in fatigues bearing rifles and machine guns kept a wary eye on residents they hoped would be dissuaded from causing any trouble.

Monitoring the election

Nearly 3.5 million people were expected to vote Sunday, with 10 percent of them returning from abroad to fulfill their civic duty. With an estimated population of about five million, their impact could be critical.

The authorities have suggested that some 16 million Lebanese citizens abroad will be able to vote through their embassies in the next election, but for the 2009 election they would have to travel back to a homeland that has been struggling to recover from a 20-year civil war that ended in 1991 and a 2006 Israeli war that decimated much of its recovery efforts.

European Union election observers were in Lebanon to monitor and assess the integrity of the elections, but even before election day their were reports of cheating and fraud.

One observer stationed in Byblos, the port city 35 km (22 miles) north of Beirut, told Al Arabiya that fake identity cards that were exact duplicates of the real ones required to vote were found in Beirut. Asharq al-Awsat, a pan-Arab newspaper, reported Thursday that ahead of the elections Lebanese authorities confiscated over 4,000 falsified ID cards.

In the days leading up to election day the various parties distributed ballots to the faithful listing the slate of candidates they supported. In Batroun, a beachside city in the north of Lebanon and home to a mix of Shite and Christian residents, ballots with disappearing ink were found, adding to the controversy over tactics used by the government-aligned forces to swing the election in their favor.

A week ago a new March 14 candidate named Gibran Bassil entered the race. But there was already a Gibran Bassil running with the March 8 opposition. The pro-government alliance hoped the confusion created by having two candidates with the same name would work in their favor, forcing the better-known opposition candidate to use a third name as an identifier thereby invalidating ballots that did not distinguish the two.

However the ploy backfired as the authorities, looking to French law for guidance, ruled that the lesser-known candidate would be the only one required to use a third name-his father's.

As the polls closed at 7 p.m., Michel Aoun's supporters were erecting a stage in the historic downtown area in preparation for what they hoped would be a victory celebration. Elsewhere the March 14 alliance was preparing for their own-hoped for victory.

In the 2005 elections the March 14th alliance gained 71 seats while the opposition won 57.

Load-Date: June 8, 2009

World Report

Windsor Star (Ontario)

October 6, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. C2; World Report

Length: 876 words

Byline: Star News Services

Body

CLERIC ORDERS GIRL TO REMOVE HER VEIL

JERUSALEM -- Egypt has begun a campaign to restrict the most conservative forms of Muslim dress after a respected cleric ordered a schoolgirl to remove her veil.

Sheikh Mohammed Tantawi was reportedly angered during a tour of a Cairo school when he saw a girl in a niqab, the full veil worn by some devout Muslim women which covers the entire face except for the eyes.

Sheikh Tantawi, regarded by many as Egypt's Imam and Sunni Islam's foremost spiritual authority, asked the teenager to remove it, saying: "The niqab is a tradition, it has no connection with religion."

He promised to issue a fatwa, or religious edict, against its use in schools. The ruling will not affect use of the hijab, the Islamic headscarf worn by most Muslim women in Egypt.

INTERPOL CHIEF 'TOOK CASH BRIBES'

JOHANNESBURG -- The former head of Interpol went on trial in South Africa on Monday accused of corruption after he received gifts from an alleged gangster that were bought from Harrods and boutiques in London.

Jackie Selebi, who is also South Africa's national police chief, resigned as president of the international police agency after he was charged last year.

A close ally of the former president Thabo Mbeki, he is accused of taking money and gifts from an alleged gangster, Glenn Agliotti, including clothes and shoes from Harrods and Hugo Boss in London, along with Gucci handbags for his wife and girlfriend.

HEZBOLLAH CAUGHT IN FRAUD SCANDAL

BEIRUT -- The militant Islamic group Hezbollah has had its reputation for ideological purity tarnished by a scandal involving an alleged Bernie Madoff-style Ponzi scheme.

A Lebanese businessman with close links to the party has been arrested on suspicion of defrauding investors.

World Report

A Hezbollah MP is among those who have lost money, and victims are thought to include other senior officials, ordinary members and supporters.

The scandal has forced Hezbollah on to the defensive, with its secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, having to deny involvement.

It has been particularly damaging because financial speculation and the accumulation of personal wealth directly contradict the party's religious ideology.

FIVE DIE IN UN OFFICE BOMBING

ISLAMABAD -- A suicide bomber disguised as a soldier killed five staff inside a United Nations building in Islamabad on Monday as British ministers arrived in the Pakistani capital.

The blast happened in the lobby of the office of the World Food Program, an arm of the UN. An Iraqi and four Pakistani workers died and several more were injured.

Alan Johnson, Britain's Home Secretary and Bob Ainsworth, the Defence Secretary, were in the city on a two-day visit to discuss terrorism.

The WFP has been at the forefront of providing relief aid to Pakistanis displaced by anti-Taliban operations. Dominique Frankefort, deputy director of the WFP mission in Pakistan, said: "I was on the first floor. There was a loud blast, smoke and broken glass was everywhere. When I came down, there were people not moving, and a lot of damage."

12 DEAD IN CHOLERA EPIDEMIC

DAR ES SALAAM -- Twelve people have died in a cholera epidemic in Tanzania over the past week, with most cases recorded in the north of the country, a health ministry spokesman said Monday.

Around 600 cases were reported in the east African country during the last seven days, but Handeni district in the northeastern region of Tanga was hardest hit with 511 patients, spokesman Nsachris Mwamaja told journalists.

"The government is doing all it can to check further spread of the water-borne disease and treat patients by ensuring adequate supply of medicines," Mwamaja said.

Handeni District Commissioner Seif Mpembenwe said that schools in the area would remain closed until Nov. 1.

SOMALI PIRATES FREE SHIP AFTER RANSOM

BOSASSO, Somalia -- Somali pirates freed a Turkish ship on Monday after a pirate source said the hijackers received a \$1.5-million ransom.

A regional maritime official confirmed the bulk carrier Horizon-1, which was seized on July 8 with 23 Turkish crew members on board, had been released.

"We accepted \$1.5 million to release the Turkish ship," one of the pirates, who gave his name as Abshir, told Reuters by telephone from the gangs' stronghold of Eyl.

MOTORCYCLE BOMB INJURES 17

YALA, Thailand -- A bomb hidden in a motorcycle exploded in Thailand's restive deep south on Monday, wounding 17 people celebrating a Buddhist festival, police said.

The bomb was detonated remotely as crowds of people gathered to watch the parade in Pattani, one of three mainly Muslim border provinces plagued by brutal separatist violence.

World Report

More than 3,600 people, Muslims and minority Buddhists, have been killed since 2004 in the rubber-rich region, an independent sultanate until annexed by Thailand a century ago.

NEXT POPE MAY BE BLACK: CARDINAL

VATICAN CITY -- "Why not?" responded a prominent African cardinal when asked whether the next pope could be black, after the election of Barack Obama as the first black U.S. president.

"If God would wish to see a black man also as pope, thanks be to God," Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson of Ghana said.

Turkson, the rapporteur of a synod on the future of the Roman Catholic Church in Africa, is among cardinals considered possible candidates to succeed Pope Benedict XVI.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Narinder Nanu, Agence France-Presse, Getty Images; ALL FOR THEIR HUSBANDS: An Indian woman has her hands decorated with mehendi or henna in Amritsar on Monday for the upcoming Hindu festival Karva Chauth I (Husband's Day) which falls on Wednesday. Karva Chauth is a fast undertaken by married Hindu women who offer prayers seeking the welfare, prosperity, well-being, and longevity of their husbands. ;

Load-Date: October 6, 2009

Bereaved mothers: Bring home Schalit 'at any cost'

The Jerusalem Post

November 12, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 383 words

Byline: RUTH EGLASH

Body

Rona Ramon, wife of deceased Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, and Micky Goldwasser, mother of returned kidnapped Israeli soldier Ehud Goldwasser, were among a group of nine bereaved women who sent a letter Wednesday demanding to meet face to face with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and urge him to bring back Gilad Schalit at any cost and as soon as possible.

Goldwasser explained to The Jerusalem Post that even though her son's remains were returned from Lebanon more than a year ago, the fight for justice for all Israeli parents of soldiers missing in action was not yet over.

"We set out on this battle together," Goldwasser told the Post, referring to the joint efforts by her own family, Schalit's parents and those of Eldad Regev, who was taken by Hizbullah gunmen along with Goldwasser during a July 2006 attack on the Northern border.

"We were three families fighting together for our sons to be returned and until there is a conclusion for all of our families, this battle is not over," she said.

Varda Goldblatt, who prepared the request to Netanyahu and urged the other women to sign it in the name of the Forum of Bereaved Women and Mothers, said that the current situation was unacceptable.

"We hope that if Netanyahu meets with us face to face then something will change in this situation," she said.

Schalit, who has been held for some 1,235 days by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, was abducted in a cross-border raid on June 25, 2006. In exchange for his release, Hamas has demanded that hundreds of Palestinian prisoners be freed.

Goldblatt said that releasing Palestinian prisoners should not be an issue because "even when terrorists are held by Israel there is still more terrorists willing to work and the terror does not end."

As well as Goldblatt, Goldwasser and Ramon, American-born Esther Wachsman, whose son Nachshon was kidnapped and tortured by terrorists also joined the group. Together, the bereaved women called on Netanyahu to "find the determination and courage to stop gambling with Gilad's life and sanity and bring him back to his family immediately."

Netanyahu, meanwhile, was set to meet with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris on Wednesday.

Bereaved mothers: Bring home Schalit 'at any cost'

Sarkozy has vowed to make every effort to bring about Schalit's release from Hamas captivity. Schalit has a dual citizenship.

Graphic

2 photos: Rona Ramon. Micky Goldwasser (Credit: Channel 2. Ariel Jerozolinski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Old fashioned censorship

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

April 1, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15; Christopher Hitchens

Length: 960 words

Byline: Christopher Hitchens, For The Calgary Herald

Body

Recent weeks have seen a sort of unofficial race among various governments to see who can most righteously ban whom from whose territory and on what complacent grounds. Recently, the Canadian authorities announced that British MP George Galloway would not be permitted to keep his appointment for a speaking tour he had arranged in four cities, including Toronto and Ottawa. Jason Kenney, Canada's immigration minister, said the ban had more to do with actions than words.

Galloway had indeed, on a recent trip to Gaza, called for the Egyptian armed forces to overthrow the government of President Hosni Mubarak. But it was the announced purpose of Galloway's trip to the Gaza Strip--the delivery of a convoy of material aid to the Hamas leadership--that prompted Kenney to deny him permission to land, on the grounds that he had delivered "aid and resources to . . . a banned illegal terrorist organization."

Galloway has in the past issued his own calls for foreign politicians to be banned from British soil, as in the case of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's extreme-right National Front. And he was not conspicuous in protesting in February, when the British government deported Geert Wilders, a Dutch politician whose party holds nine seats in parliament, after the latter's arrival at Heathrow Airport.

Wilders has made a short film called *Fitna*, freely available on the Internet, which shows scenes of violence and cruelty intercut with some of the more lurid injunctions of the Qur'an. He has referred to the Muslim holy book as comparable to *Mein Kampf* and has, in keeping with the new intolerant spirit of the times, called for it to be banned. When invited to broadcast his film on a small Dutch Muslim station, he declined. Nonetheless, he was invited by a member to come and screen *Fitna* at the House of Lords and, given that he has no record of violence or its incitement, it's hard to see how his presence in London was in any sense a police matter.

The ban on Wilders, which was obviously adopted by Gordon Brown's government as a gesture of appeasement to the very active Muslim fundamentalist wing in British politics, made it almost inevitable that the same government's decision to invite some representatives of *Hezbollah* to London would itself have to be reversed.

The plan had been to get some civilian spokesman of the party's Lebanese wing to meet with officials to discuss possible areas of common interest--this was in line with the British government's recent decision to resume contacts with *Hezbollah* in Beirut, on the assumption that a distinction can be made between its elected parliamentary wing and its military one.

Old fashioned censorship

Even if you think that this is based on a naive assumption, the British are entitled to try it. But now they find that one ban leads to another, so that having refused hospitality to one Dutchman, they are compelled to deny themselves the pleasure of sitting down with one or two Lebanese.

Wilders has already visited the U. S., where he addressed the Conservative Political Action Committee. Hezbollah and Hamas officials will not be visiting Washington at any early date, though Galloway has been allowed to come and go as he pleases. (This might change, given the number of questions raised by two authoritative reports on his participation in the abuse of the United Nations' "oil for food" program.)

There is currently an argument about whether we can risk giving a job or a visa to Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim author whose supposed "moderation" is seen by some (including me) as a cover for some quite extreme apologies for such things as suicide-murder and the stoning of women. There are two separate questions in Ramadan's case: The first concerns whether he should be given tenure on an American campus and the second whether he should be allowed to visit the U. S. at all. The second call seems a fairly easy one.

What is at stake in all these cases is not just the right of the people concerned to travel and to take their opinions with them. It is also the right of potential audiences to make their own determination about whom they wish to hear. As a journalist, I can go visit Hezbollah spokesmen and report back on what it's like and what they say, but why should a reader have to take my word for it?

The British House of Commons has room for a man as appalling as Galloway; why should Canadians not have the chance to make up their own mind about him? If Wilders is persuasive enough to get himself elected to parliament in The Hague, is there any reason to believe the British are so lacking in robustness that they need to be protected from what he has to say?

The underlying premise of the First Amendment is that free expression, when protected for anyone, is thereby protected for everyone. This must apply most especially in tough cases that might raise eyebrows, such as the American Civil Liberties Union's celebrated defence of the right of American Nazis to demonstrate in heavily Jewish Skokie, Ill., in the late 1970s.

One of the effects of the "war on terror," and of one of its concomitants, namely the attrition between the Muslim world and the West, has been an increasing tendency to make exceptions to First Amendment principles, either on the pretext of security or of avoiding the giving of offence. We should have learned by now that, however new the guise, these are the same old stale excuses for censorship. We might also notice that if one excuse is allowed, then all the others are made "legitimate" also. The risk of allowing all opinions by all speakers may seem great, but it is nothing compared with the risk of giving the power of censorship to any official.

Christopher Hitchens Is A Columnist For Vanity Fair And Slate Magazine, Where This Column Originally Appeared.

Load-Date: April 1, 2009

As election nears Lebanon's banner war rages

AlArabiya.net

May 29, 2009 Friday

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Length: 403 words

Body

Although there is peace and calm as Lebanon prepares for its upcoming elections, there is one place where the war continues to rage and that is on election banners where candidates promote themselves and what they stand for.

The competition between rival March 14 and March 8 camps has been manifested in a war of banners as parties try to mobilize as many supporters as possible, Al Arabiya News Channel reported Tuesday. This year there have been less banners with the candidates' pictures, as was the case during previous elections, and more with slogans that promote the ideology of each party.

While for candidates election banners serve their political agendas, they have become a source of entertainment for the Lebanese people as everyday they wait to see the latest ideas invading streets, buildings and bridges.

"Resist with your vote" is the slogan the Shiite resistance group Hezbollah uses as it calls upon voters to resist corruption and sectarianism. But some argue that the slogan has become old and ineffective and criticize Hezbollah for not entering the banner war with the same enthusiasm as its ally the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). For observers, FPM, which is calling for change, is winning the war with its creative banners that use a variety of slogans, creative pictures and speak to all segments of society.

Colorful banners

One of the most innovative FPM adverts was the one that called for a Third Republic and the one that addressed women saying "Be beautiful and vote." Others slogans included "Think right" and "No future without change."

While FPM banners are mainly in orange, the color blue dominates the banners of the Future Movement. In fact, the slogan "We shall not forget so long as the sky is blue" was inspired by the words of Hassan Nasrallah.

This slogan is now repeated by loyalists and opposition alike.

The Lebanese Forces have countered FPM's campaign by using a yellow flag with an orange cedar tree to explain to the Lebanese what will happen if they vote for the other camp.

The Kataeb Party has chosen to attack the banner war itself with the slogan "Don't vote for a slogan. Vote for a platform."

As election day draws nearer, the war of the banners worsens. However, some insiders stress that Lebanese voters will not be affected by all those slogans as they come from a country ruled by political and sectarian divisions.

(Translated from Arabic by Sonia Farid)

As election nears Lebanon 's banner war rages

Load-Date: May 30, 2009

End of Document

We cannot ban the freedom to be objectionable

Sunday Express

April 5, 2009 Sunday

U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: NEWS; 45

Length: 936 words

Body

RECENT weeks have seen a sort of unofficial race among various governments to see who can most righteously ban whom from whose territory and on what complacent grounds. Recently, the Canadian authorities announced that British Member of Parliament George Galloway would not be permitted to keep his appointment for a speaking tour he had arranged in four cities, including Toronto and Ottawa. Canada's immigration minister, Jason Kenney, said that the ban had more to do with actions than with words.

Galloway had indeed, on a recent trip to Gaza, called for the Egyptian armed forces to overthrow the government of President Hosni Mubarak but it was the announced purpose of Galloway's trip to the Gaza Strip, the delivery of a convoy of material aid to the Hamas leadership, that prompted Kenney to deny him permission to land on the grounds that he had delivered "aid and resources to? a banned illegal terrorist organisation".

Galloway has in the past issued calls for foreign politicians to be banned from British soil, as in the case of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's extreme-Right National Front, and he was not conspicuous in protesting in February, when the British Government deported Geert Wilders, a Dutch politician whose party holds nine seats in parliament, after the latter's arrival at Heathrow airport.

Wilders has made a short film called Fitna, freely available on the internet, which shows scenes of violence and cruelty intercut with some of the more lurid injunctions of the Koran. He has referred to the Muslim holy book as comparable to Mein Kampf and has, in keeping with the new intolerant spirit of the times, called for it to be banned.

When invited to broadcast his film on a small Dutch Muslim station, he declined. Nonetheless, he was invited by a member to come and screen Fitna at the House of Lords and, given that he has no record of violence or its incitement, it's hard to see how his presence in London was in any sense a police matter.

The hasty ban on Wilders, which was obviously adopted by Gordon Brown's Government as a gesture of appeasement to the very active Muslim fundamentalist wing in British politics, made it almost inevitable that the same government's decision to invite some representatives of Hezbollah to London would itself have to be reversed.

The plan had been to get some civilian spokesman of the party's Lebanese wing to meet with officials and academics to discuss possible areas of common interest.

In fact this was in line with the British Government's recent decision to resume contacts with Hezbollah in Beirut, on the assumption that a distinction can be made between its elected parliamentary wing and its military one.

We cannot ban the freedom to be objectionable

Even if you think that this is based on a naive assumption, the British are at least entitled to try it.

Now, though, they find that one ban leads to another, for the sake of appearances and "even-handedness", so that having refused hospitality to one Dutchman, they are compelled to deny themselves the pleasure of sitting down with one or two Lebanese.

Geert Wilders has already visited the United States, where he addressed the Conservative Political Action Committee. Hezbollah and Hamas officials will not be visiting Washington at any early date, though George Galloway has been allowed to come and go as he pleases.

There is currently an argument about whether we can risk giving a job or a visa to Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim author whose supposed "moderation" is seen by some (including me) as a cover for some quite extreme apologies for such things as suicide-murder and the stoning of women. There are two questions in Ramadan's case. The first concerns whether he should be given tenure on an American campus and the second whether he should be allowed to visit the United States at all. The second call seems a fairly easy one.

What is at stake in all these cases is not just the right of the people concerned to travel and to take their opinions with them. It is also the right of potential audiences to make their own determination about whom they wish to hear.

As a journalist, I can go visit Hezbollah spokesmen and report back on what it's like and what they say but why should a reader have to take my word for it? The British House of Commons has room for a man as appalling as George Galloway; why should Canadians not have the chance to make up their own mind about him? If Geert Wilders is persuasive enough to get himself elected to parliament in The Hague, is there any reason to believe that the British people are so lacking in robustness that they need to be protected from what he has to say?

The underlying premise of the First Amendment is that free expression, when protected for anyone, is thereby protected for everyone. This must apply in tough cases that might raise eyebrows, such as the American Civil Liberties Union's celebrated defence of the right of American Nazis to demonstrate in heavily Jewish Skokie, Illinois, in the late Seventies.

One of the effects of the "war on terror" and of one of its concomitants, namely the attrition between the Muslim world and the West, has been an increasing tendency to make exceptions to First Amendment principles, either on the pretext of security or of avoiding the giving of offence. We should have learned by now that, however new the guise, these are the same old stale excuses for censorship.

We might also notice that if one excuse is allowed, then all the others are made "legitimate" also.

The risk of allowing all opinions by all speakers may seem great but it is nothing compared with the risk of giving the power of censorship to any official.

Load-Date: April 8, 2009

Berri vows reforms, puts abolition of sectarianism on agenda

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
November 19, 2009 Thursday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1040 words

Byline: Elias Sakr

Body

Speaker Nabih Berri has promised that Parliament will embark on a legislative push that centers on implementing the long-awaited Taif Accord provisions of administrative decentralization and the abolishment of political sectarianism. "We turned a new page with the formation of a new Cabinet," Berri told reporters on Wednesday at Baabda Palace.

BEIRUT: Speaker Nabih Berri has promised that Parliament will embark on a legislative push that centers on implementing the long-awaited Taif Accord provisions of administrative decentralization and the abolishment of political sectarianism. "We turned a new page with the formation of a new Cabinet," Berri told reporters on Wednesday at Baabda Palace, following talks with President Michel Sleiman.

Berri stressed that Parliament was preparing to instigate a legislative "workshop" on all levels after the new Cabinet receives a vote of confidence, based on its policy statement.

Also, following his weekly meeting with lawmakers in Parliament, the speaker added that he would ask the legislature's administrative bureau to submit prospective candidates to take part in a national committee responsible for abolishing political sectarianism.

As for electoral reforms concerning the upcoming municipal elections, set to take place in May 2009, Berri said that Parliament would be ready to take the necessary steps in that regard; however he added that it was up to government to decide upon the issue.

Parliament is expected to ratify a set of amendments to the municipal electoral law, including the election of the municipalities' heads through direct vote, the approval of proportional representation in major municipalities, the establishment of a **female** quota and the adoption of pre-printed ballot papers. In addition, a constitutional amendment would be needed to lower the voting age to 18 for the next polls.

On Tuesday, Interior Minister Ziyad Baroud stressed that it was better to postpone the elections for a fixed period of time, in order to allow for the ratification of electoral reforms, rather than postponing those reforms another six years.

Berri vows reforms, puts abolition of sectarianism on agenda

When asked about Hizbullah's weapons, Berri said the resistance's arms were a true guarantee against the naturalization of Palestinian refugees in the country, as he underscored the important role of the resistance in Lebanon.

Tackling the progress in the formulation of the ministerial statement, Berri said the ongoing dialogue was positive, adding that not all ministers should have the same opinion about all issues.

The ministerial committee tasked with formulating the Cabinet's policy statement met for the third consecutive day on Wednesday, presided over by Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

"We discussed the second draft on the political aspect of the ministerial statement today, and we tackled every topic in detail, making progress on that front," Information Minister Tarek Mitri said following the meeting.

Mitri added that some issues required further deliberation; the committee is scheduled to meet Thursday afternoon to continue debating the statement's political aspect.

When asked about whether the resistance's weapons were discussed, Mitri told reporters that he would not disclose the subject of deliberations, but assured that no serious complications had delayed the discussions.

The information minister added that the committee would set about tackling the government's economic policies as soon as an agreement is reached over the political aspect.

"A third draft about the political part of the statement will be discussed on Thursday and we hope to conclude the statement," Mitri added.

A well informed source told The Daily Star that the committee's members had agreed on 16 articles out of 25 detailing the political aspects of the cabinet's policy.

Earlier on Wednesday and prior to the committee's meeting, Prime Minister Saad Hariri said deliberations over the ministerial statement on Tuesday were very positive, adding that all parties were keen to preserve the prevailing atmosphere of consensus.

Hariri stressed that concluding the formulation of the statement would necessitate some time, since comprehensive discussions regarding all issues were taking place.

The premier said that the cabinet's policy statement would be concise, and that the political aspects would not exceed five pages.

For his part, Minister of State Wael Abu Faour said that the drafting of the document was "almost done and only awaited a political decision."

"Prime Minister Saad Hariri is making the necessary contacts to arrive at that decision," said Abu Faour, an official with the Progressive Socialist Party.

Abu Faour added that the committee was facing two choices: either to adopt the statement of the previous cabinet, or to leave the issue of Hizbullah's weapons to discussions during sessions of National Dialogue.

Prior to Wednesday's policy statement meeting, Mitri had said the document would be based on that of the previous Cabinet. He said that talks in the committee were "going well" and added that there are no disputes over the document.

Separately, the March 14 Secretariat General said Wednesday the new cabinet should commit to international resolutions, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 1701 as well as the provisions of the 1989 Taif Accord, which ended the Civil War.

A statement issued urged the government to implement the recommendations of the 2008 National Dialogue sessions concerning Palestinians arms outside of refugee camps.

Berri vows reforms, puts abolition of sectarianism on agenda

Perspectives on reconciliation

Baabda Palace was the scene of a key reconciliation between Walid Jumblatt and Suleiman Franjeh on Wednesday.

While observers monitor the likelihood of a visit by Premier Saad Hariri to Damascus, reconciliation meetings between other figures have yet to be finalized.

A meeting between Jumblatt and Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun, a PSP official said, is certain to take place, but a date hasn't been set.

Aoun downplayed the need for reconciliation talks with Christian rivals, arguing that the template for such steps already existed in a formal document in Bkirki, with the Maronite Patriarchate.

"We agreed on a set of principles that's in Bkirki. Let them take it and sign it, then there won't be a need for meetings," Aoun said.

Load-Date: November 19, 2009

End of Document

Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity;
Israel

The Times (London)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Edition 1, National Edition

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 41

Length: 984 words

Byline: James Hider

Body

"Hello, this is Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit, brother of Hadas and Yoel who live in Mitzpe Hila. My ID number is 97027." With those words, delivered on a videotape that had been bought with the release of 19 Palestinian **women** prisoners, Corporal Gilad Schalit appeared yesterday for the first time since he was captured by Hamas three-and-a-half years ago.

Looking healthy but tired, his hair still cut in a short military fashion and his face shaved, the Israeli corporal who has spent 1,195 days in captivity at a hidden location in the Gaza Strip held up an Arabic newspaper with the date of September 14, 2009. It was the first concrete proof of life that his family has received since he was snatched in a cross-border raid by militants.

"As you can see I am holding today's Falasteen newspaper published in Gaza," he said, smiling nervously at the camera as he read from a sheet of paper held over the newspaper. "I read the newspaper in order to find information about myself, and in hopes of reading about information of my return home and my imminent release."

In the video, which lasts for about two-and-a-half minutes, Corporal Schalit, 23, wore dark, military-style clothing and sat in a plastic chair with a plain grey wall behind him to give Israeli Intelligence no possible indication where the footage might have been filmed.

"I hope the current Government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu doesn't waste this opportunity to reach an agreement and, as a result, allow me to fulfil my dream and be released," he said in the film, which was released after it had been shown to the Prime Minister, the head of the army and his family.

Since he was captured in June 2006 Israel has fought two wars, one in Lebanon and one in Gaza this year, and ushered in a new Government.

The video was released after German and Egyptian mediators brokered an exchange of the proof-of-life film for the release of 20 **women** Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Nineteen of the **women**, mostly serving shorter

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His captors, a mixed group of militant organisations led by Hamas, have refused any access to their prisoner, even to the Red Cross. They have handed over letters from him and an audiotape in a move brokered by former US President Jimmy Carter.

His father has campaigned for his son's fate not to be forgotten, even camping in the street outside the residence of the Prime Minister and enlisting the aid of Nicolas Sarkozy, the French President. The soldier's parents agreed that the footage could be shown on television after they watched the video of their son in their home in Galilee, in northern Israel.

Corporal Schalit addressed his family. "I wish to send my best wishes to my family and tell them that I love them and miss them greatly, and hope for the day I'll see them again. Dad, Yoel and Hadas, do you remember the day you arrived at my base in the Golan Heights, on December 31, 2005? We toured around the base and you took a picture of me on a Merkava tank and on one of the old tanks at the entrance to the base. Later we went to a restaurant in one of the Druze villages and on the way we took pictures on the side of the road, against the backdrop of the snowy Hermon Mountain."

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The release of Corporal Schalit could end Israel's blockade of Gaza, which has lasted almost four years.

The trade in prisoners

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Hezbollah handed over the bodies of two captured Israeli soldiers last year in exchange for five Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners, whose capture started a month-long war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006

Source: Times database

Graphic

The film of Gilad Schalit was traded for 19 prisoners, including Fatima Yunes al-Zaq, below, who had a baby in jail

HAMAS VIDEO / AP

Load-Date: October 3, 2009

End of Document

**'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the
Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-
Semitism Conference in Jerusalem**

The Jerusalem Post

December 17, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 1041 words

Byline: YULI EDELSTEIN

Highlight: VERBATIM

Body

On Yom Kippur, automatic rifle fire shattered the quiet outside the Great Synagogue of Paris, sending worshipers diving for cover. In Denmark, two Jews were shot in a shopping mall in the town of Odense.

A few weeks later, a Danish school principal declared Jewish students no longer welcome in his school, advising Jewish parents to send their children elsewhere.

In Sweden, a Jewish cultural center was attacked by arsonists, twice, in one week.

In Chicago, an unprecedented chain of anti-Semitic attacks left synagogues and schools with their windows smashed, and saw walls covered in graffiti and charred by the remains of a Molotov cocktail.

In London, attempts were made to burn down synagogues and loot local businesses. Men pulled a Jewish motorist out of his car and beat him.

Similar events took place in Belgium, Australia and Brazil.

These events took place in 2009, not 1939. Many of these attacks were done in the name of justice for Palestinians - in order to create "peace" in the Middle East. In order to defend the underdog. In order to attack Jews.

No longer permissible to openly proclaim hatred of the Jews? So the anti-Semite must seek new forms and forums to release his poison.

No longer politically correct to openly hate Jews? So he has repackaged his hate - and in doing so, has been able to gain endorsement from academics, media outlets and even political parties.É

Do not be fooled. Anti-Semitic malice has not decreased. Rather, anti-Semites have succeeded in repackaging their hate into a politically digestible form.

It is no longer the individual Jew or a Council of Jewish Elders who has led the world into war and economic collapse - it is Israel, the state of the Jews, who have brought war and tragedy to the globe.

'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism Confer....

Where Jews were once depicted as blood thirsty, stingy, morally corrupt baby killers, after the horrors of World War Two these depictions of Jews are hard for many to stomach. So the attack has been reframed and reworted.

There are no more Jews. Instead there are Israelis. Israeli soldiers kill babies. Israeli soldiers attack pregnant mothers. Israelis started wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Israel as a nation was not put through a Holocaust. Israelis have not been expelled, converted, exiled and enslaved. So if you attack Israel, you are not picking on the weak. Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath. This way you can hate Israel, you can hate Israelis, and you are not called anti-Semitic.

Beyond having a license to hate, you may be violent, breach the peace, and oppress human rights - as long you loathe the State of Israel.

The Reverend Martin Luther King commented on this distortion of the truth when it first came into being over 40 years ago: "To be anti-Zionist is inherently anti- Semitic, and forever will be.

"Why is this? Zionism is nothing less than the dream and ideal of the Jewish people returning to live in their own land.

"Anyone who holds dear this inalienable right of all mankind... the right to self-determination, should understand and support the right of the Jewish People to live in their ancient homeland. All men of goodwill should exult in the fulfillment of God's promise, that his People should return in joy to rebuild the Land of Israel."

What does it mean to be anti-Zionist? It is to deny the Jewish people of a "fundamental right that we justly and freely accord all other nations of the globe. It is discrimination against Jews, because they are Jews. In short, it is anti-Semitism."

Whenever I travel abroad, I hear time and again the following two statements:

A state for the Palestinian people must be created. And the state created for the Jewish people? It is inherently racist and should be removed.

I do not know if a more contradictory, irrational, and illogical argument has ever been made in the same sentence: The Palestinians are a people and therefore deserve a state; the Jews are a people, and therefore should not be allowed to have a state.

We must repeat again and again these basic facts - to be "anti-Israel" is to be anti-Semitic. To boycott Israel, Israeli professors and Israeli businesses, these are not political acts, these are acts of hate, acts of anti- Semitism!

Anti-Israel hysteria is anti-Semitic hysteria. They are one and the same.

Look at the reality Israelis face when traveling to international athletic, business and academic events. More and more, when they arrive in Sweden, Turkey, England and even the United States, they must lecture and perform before hostile or even violent crowds, requiring police protection.

We must not hesitate to expose this hatred for what it is. It is a strong and vile form of xenophobia. It expresses itself through violence, mockery and exclusion. It is directed towards the outsider, towards that which is different, in appearance, speech or prayer.

As written in the book of Ezekiel, "If the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people, and the sword comes and takes a life, I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood."

We cannot wait for the sword to begin its downward stroke. Anti-Semites in Europe, America and across the Middle East have declared their intentions for the Jews of Israel.

It is not enough to merely react in the wake of anti- Semitic acts. We must take a more proactive approach.

'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism Confer....

Four decades removed from the Six Day War, Israel's enemies prefer to shy away from open battle with the Jewish State. Iran hides behind her proxy armies, Hamas and **Hizbullah**, who hide behind woman and children, knowing Israel will hesitate to return fire on militants using innocents as human shields.

Foreign supporters of Islamic extremism work to undermine Israel at a grassroots level. I pray these activists do not know what they are supporting when they take to the streets on behalf of Hamas and **Hizbullah**. They are supporting terrorists, supporting the implementation of Islamic law, denying rights to minorities and **women**. And time and again these rallies do not end peacefully. They end with a synagogue's windows smashed, a store looted, a Jew beaten.

I call upon each and everyone of us to sit with our children and talk with them about anti-Semitism, explaining why it is wrong to hate a person, and why it is wrong to hate a state.

Graphic

Photo

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity;
Israel

The Times (London)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Edition 1, Ireland

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 976 words

Byline: James Hider

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Source: Times database

Graphic

The film of Gilad Schalit was traded for 19 prisoners

HAMAS VIDEO / AP

Load-Date: October 3, 2009

End of Document

Campus Elections in Lebanon Mirror, and May Shape, Society's Volatile Politics

The New York Times

November 14, 2009 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 1076 words

Byline: By ROBERT F. WORTH

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

For a brief moment, it looked as if civil war would break out on campus. Two clusters of excited young people faced off as the student election results came in: Hezbollah allies on one side, and right-wing Christian zealots on the other.

"Abu Hadi!" shouted one group in unison, the students pumping their fists furiously in the air as they swore loyalty to Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah.

"Hakim!" chanted the other side, using a name for the Christian leader and former warlord Samir Geagea.

The voices grew louder and angrier, and then it began: bottles flying, men throwing punches, women screaming. Once again, St. Joseph University -- one of Lebanon's best and oldest schools -- had become a reflection in miniature of the country's fiercely divided political scene.

Student council elections in Lebanon have long been almost as tense as the real elections in Parliament. The results are seen as crucial indexes of a party's overall popularity and routinely make the front pages of national newspapers. University administrators have struggled to ban the parties and put the focus on academic issues, with little success.

"It means a lot; it's my cause," said Jenny Tohme, 21, a law student at St. Joseph who supports Michel Aoun, the Christian leader allied with Hezbollah. "If you live here, you have to be committed to a party, because unfortunately there is no place for independent people in Lebanon."

Some hopeful commentators have suggested in recent years that a silent majority of young people across the Arab world are fed up with the cults of personality and sectarian agendas that have long dominated politics here. But there is little sign of that on Lebanese campuses.

In part, this is because the parties put tremendous energy into recruiting the young, paying for workshops and social events, and nurturing youths as future leaders. But Lebanon's campuses are not merely passive reflections of the adult political scene. Like their counterparts in Europe, they have sometimes served as political laboratories, where ideas and trends circulate before spreading to the wider world.

Campus Elections in Lebanon Mirror, and May Shape, Society's Volatile Politics

This was true in the 1960s and '70s at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon's largest and best-known campus, where support flourished for the Palestinians and various leftist causes and parties.

It was also true during the 1990s, when universities provided a sanctuary for anti-Syrian activism that was impossible elsewhere. The broader popular movement to free Lebanon from Syrian control -- which reached its peak in the vast Beirut demonstrations of early spring 2005, and effectively forced the Syrians to withdraw -- originated in part among students.

"At times student movements have shaped, even led, the direction of elite politics," said Elinor Bray-Collins, who wrote a Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Toronto on Lebanese student movements. "But the autonomy student politics sometimes acquires is short-lived; the adults take over, and it gets swept back into the same sectarian logic."

Lebanon's divisions are no longer as linear as they once were. The Shiites of Hezbollah now have Christian allies, as do the Sunnis on the other side. But the loyalties often seem as unthinkingly partisan as ever, both in Parliament and on campus.

"The students are all brainwashed," said Fuad Obeid, 19, a law student at St. Joseph, as he stood discontentedly watching fellow students vote on delegates last week. "There isn't even any political or economic substance, no plan for the country. The only thing they can bring us to is blood."

Last year was a low point, with tensions so high that one major university canceled its student elections altogether. At St. Joseph, fights broke out after the party of Mr. Aoun won by one vote, and several students were expelled. Afterward, Aounist students ran riot in the streets of East Beirut's Christian areas, chanting slogans, honking their car horns and carrying the giant orange flags of their party.

This year, it was the administrators who offered new ideas. St. Joseph changed to a system of proportional representation in the student elections, in an effort to calm things down and better represent a diversity of opinion. Civic-minded reformers have been urging the same idea for Parliament for years, for the same reason. Some newspapers praised the move, noting sadly that the university had achieved what the country could not.

"We faced two choices: to suppress the elections, or try to guide the tensions, to create a path that favors dialogue," said Henri Awit, the vice dean of student affairs at St. Joseph. "What matters most is that both sides recognize the importance of independent voices."

The change served its purpose in part. Both sides claimed victory after the Nov. 3 vote because the new system made it harder to tally vote totals. But many say the intense partisan atmosphere has not really changed.

"Politics is the bread of the people in this country," said Samir Ashi, the director of the youth outreach sector of the Future Movement, the party of the new prime minister, Saad Hariri. "Even elementary school children get into fights over politics."

Like every major Lebanese political party, the Future Movement runs an elaborate effort to engage young people, Mr. Ashi said, with a 30-member youth steering committee, five fully staffed offices and 500 members of campus youth committees.

By the time first-year students arrive on campus, the parties already have lists identifying them and their religious backgrounds, said Layaal Yacoub, a 19-year-old law student at St. Joseph. "They surround you, help you, give you advice," she said. "Sometimes they help with scholarships."

Officially, the parties are not allowed any presence on campus, and the elections are supposed to be run on academic issues like whether students' grades should be publicly posted, Ms. Yacoub said. But that is just a fig leaf. Everyone knows who stands with which party. And the independent students who run with known party figures are called "kamikazes," because they cannot win.

Campus Elections in Lebanon Mirror, and May Shape, Society's Volatile Politics

"I am voting for someone because I think he's competent," Ms. Yacoub said, adjusting her glasses. "There are people here who have political views, but who think the university should be a place for academic issues only."

But she added resignedly: "It always turns into a political fight. You just can't get rid of it."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Political passions erupted into a brawl this month at St. Joseph's University in Beirut as student council votes were tallied.(PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN DENTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: November 14, 2009

End of Document

News in brief

The Jerusalem Post
August 28, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 442 words

Byline: Yaakov Lappin, Jerusalem Post staff, E.B. Solomont

Body

Routine check averts car bombing

Police in Haifa averted a major criminal bombing on Thursday afternoon after pulling over a car for a routine check and discovering that it was packed with explosives.

The blue Pontiac vehicle was stopped in Haifa's Hadar neighborhood.

"Upon searching the vehicle, which look extremely suspicious, suspicious objects were found. A police bomb squad was brought in to examine them," Israel Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said.

Police neutralized a number of explosives found in the car.

The male and ***female*** occupants of the vehicle were questioned and arrested, Rosenfeld added.

"An examination of the scene leads us to believe this is criminally-motivated," Rosenfeld said.

Roads surrounding the scene were cordoned off, leading to large traffic jams in the area.

Police have obtained a court-imposed media gag on details of the investigation. * Yaakov Lappin

Gaza mortar misses Nahal Oz

A loud explosion was heard in Kibbutz Nahal Oz on Thursday morning, apparently from a Palestinian mortar shell which fell just short of the Israeli side of the Gaza border. No casualties or damage were reported. * Jerusalem Post staff

Palestinian killed by Navy off Gaza

A Palestinian man was killed and another wounded by Israeli naval fire off the coast of the northern Gaza Strip, according to a Palestinian health official.

Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said the Palestinian men were on land when they were fired upon.

He had no further details on the incident Thursday near the town of Beit Lahia.

The IDF had no record of the incident and was investigating. * AP and Jerusalem Post staff

Pipe bomb dismantled in Nablus

IDF troops discovered a pipe bomb in the Nablus area on Thursday morning. Sappers safely detonated the device.

* Jerusalem Post staff

UNIFIL mandate extended

NEW YORK - The UN Security Council voted unanimously on Thursday to renew the mandate of UN peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon.

The resolution, which was largely technical, extended UNIFIL's authority for another year. But it also mentioned an August 6 letter by Secretary General Ban ki-Moon, which described a series of explosions on July 14 that revealed an active weapons cache, a violation of Security Council Resolution 1701 that ended the 2006 hostilities. Ambassador Gabriela Shalev, Israel's permanent representative to the UN, said in a speech Thursday that the situation in southern Lebanon remains "complex," though the July explosions "shed light upon a dangerous phenomenon that Israel has been warning about: a terrorist organization, Hizbullah, continues to deploy its assets and operates actively both north and south of the Litani River." * E.B. Solomont

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

The trouble with censorship; Like eating potato chips, censorship is hard to stop once you get the taste

The Gazette (Montreal)

April 1, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A17; CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Length: 978 words

Byline: CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, Freelance

Body

Recent weeks have seen a sort of unofficial race among various governments to see who can most righteously ban whom from whose territory and on what complacent grounds. Recently, Canadian authorities announced that British MP George Galloway would not be permitted to keep his appointment for a speaking tour he had arranged in four cities, including Toronto and Ottawa. Canada's immigration minister, Jason Kenney, said that the ban had more to do with actions than with words.

Galloway had indeed, on a recent trip to Gaza, called for the Egyptian armed forces to overthrow the government of President Hosni Mubarak. But it was the announced purpose of Galloway's trip to the Gaza Strip - the delivery of a convoy of material aid to the Hamas leadership - that prompted Kenney to deny him permission to land, on the grounds that he had delivered "aid and resources to ... a banned illegal terrorist organization."

Galloway has in the past issued his own calls for foreign politicians to be banned from British soil, as in the case of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's extreme-right National Front. And he was not conspicuous in protesting in February, when the British government deported Geert Wilders, a Dutch politician whose party holds nine seats in parliament, after the latter's arrival at Heathrow airport.

Wilders has made a short film called Fitna, freely available on the Internet, which shows scenes of violence and cruelty intercut with some of the more lurid injunctions of the Quran. He has referred to the Muslim holy book as comparable to Mein Kampf and has, in keeping with the new intolerant spirit of the times, called for it to be banned.

When invited to broadcast his film on a small Dutch Muslim station, he declined. Nonetheless, he was invited by a member to come and screen Fitna at the House of Lords and, given that he has no record of violence or its incitement, it's hard to see how his presence in London was in any sense a police matter.

The hasty ban on Wilders, which was obviously adopted by Gordon Brown's government as a gesture of appeasement to the very active Muslim fundamentalist wing in British politics, made it almost inevitable that the same government's decision to invite some representatives of Hezbollah to London would itself have to be reversed.

The plan had been to get some civilian spokesman of the party's Lebanese wing to meet with officials and academics to discuss possible areas of common interest - this was in line with the British government's recent

The trouble with censorship; Like eating potato chips, censorship is hard to stop once you get the taste

decision to resume contacts with Hezbollah in Beirut, on the assumption that a distinction can be made between its elected parliamentary wing and its military one.

Even if you think that this is based on a naïve assumption, the British are at least entitled to try it. But now they find that one ban leads to another, for the sake of appearances and "even-handedness," so that having refused hospitality to one Dutchman, they are compelled to deny themselves the pleasure of sitting down with one or two Lebanese.

Geert Wilders has already visited the United States, where he addressed the Conservative Political Action Committee. Hezbollah and Hamas officials will not be visiting Washington at any early date, though George Galloway has been allowed to come and go as he pleases. (This might change, given the number of questions raised by two authoritative reports on his participation in the abuse of the United Nations' "oil for food" program.)

There is currently an argument about whether the U.S. can risk giving a job or a visa to Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim author whose supposed "moderation" is seen by some (including me) as a cover for some quite extreme apologies for such things as suicide-murder and the stoning of women. There are two separate questions in Ramadan's case: The first concerns whether he should be given tenure on a U.S. campus and the second whether he should be allowed to visit the United States at all. The second call seems a fairly easy one.

What is at stake in all these cases is not just the right of the people concerned to travel and to take their opinions with them. It is also the right of potential audiences to make their own determination about whom they wish to hear. As a journalist, I can go visit Hezbollah spokesmen and report back on what it's like and what they say, but why should a reader have to take my word for it? The British House of Commons has room for a man as appalling as George Galloway; why should Canadians not have the chance to make up their own mind about him? If Geert Wilders is persuasive enough to get himself elected to parliament in The Hague, is there any reason to believe that the British people are so lacking in robustness that they need to be protected from what he has to say?

The underlying premise of the U.S. First Amendment is that free expression, when protected for anyone, is thereby protected for everyone. This must apply especially in tough cases that might raise eyebrows, such as the ACLU's celebrated defence of the right of U.S. Nazis to demonstrate in heavily Jewish Skokie, Ill., in the late 1970s.

One of the effects of the "war on terror," and of one of its concomitants, namely the attrition between the Muslim world and the West, has been an increasing tendency to make exceptions to free-speech principles, either on the pretext of security or of avoiding the giving of offence. We should have learned by now that however new the guise, these are the same old stale excuses for censorship. We might also notice that if one excuse is allowed, then all the others are made "legitimate" also. The risk of allowing all opinions by all speakers might seem great, but it is nothing compared with the risk of giving the power of censorship to any official.

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Vanity Fair and Slate Magazine, where this column originally appeared.

Graphic

Photo: AARON LYNETT, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE; People pack a Toronto church to listen to George Galloway, who was barred from Canada. ;

Load-Date: April 3, 2009

Where is Arab intellectual resistance?

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

August 19, 2009 Wednesday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1162 words

Byline: Bouthaina Shaaban

Body

A review of the news coming out of our region shows something akin to organized anarchy enveloping the sources of the news related to our fundamental causes and an absolute absence of a value system regulating such news. This engulfs the Arab reader in a swirl where s/he finds it difficult to identify a starting point or a desired goal.

First person by Bouthaina Shaaban

A review of the news coming out of our region shows something akin to organized anarchy enveloping the sources of the news related to our fundamental causes and an absolute absence of a value system regulating such news. This engulfs the Arab reader in a swirl where s/he finds it difficult to identify a starting point or a desired goal. What adds to this confusion is the lack of Arab strategic research centers to chart the issues of the present in preparation and anticipation of the desired future.

I can feel the confusion felt by the non-specialized readers, who do not have the time to examine the background of the news stories they watch on television or read in Arabic media that are not guided by the unity of thought, vision or destiny. We read on the front pages of Arabic magazines news stories intended to sow the seeds of sedition between members of the same nation, while stories which promote the rights of Arabs and the justice of their causes are completely neglected.

The confusion is also exacerbated by the aggressive Israeli statements which aim at bolstering the morale of the Israelis after the many losses and defeats they have incurred since 2006. They also aim at spreading frustration among Arabs and mobilizing the world public opinion against them. The Israeli war minister Ehud Barak said that Israel will not allow the existence of weapons which could break the balance in Lebanon. Israel also leaked news that it is developing a Merkava tank with a new defense system. Meanwhile, the racist Israeli foreign minister toured the countries of Latin America to spread his poisonous claims of Hizbullah sleeper cells there and warn of possible operations in Venezuela and other countries.

Another aspect of Israeli tension manifests itself through accusing respected international figures such as the former Irish president, Mary Robinson, of anti-Semitism when US president Barak Obama awarded her the presidential medal of freedom. It should be noted that when Robinson was the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, she submitted a report to the organization about Israeli violations of human rights in the occupied

Where is Arab intellectual resistance?

Palestinian territories and called for putting an end to such violations. She played an important role in the UN World Conference against Racism in Durban 2009 as conference chair. As a result Robinson's term as UN Human Rights Commissioner was not renewed.

The strange thing is not the ferocious campaign Zionists waged against her and against all international figures who support the Palestinian cause, but the absence of such figures from the Arab book of honor and the fact that attacks against them in Western and Israeli media do not make headlines in the Arab media.

All of this shows that the Zionist strategy today is based on two main pillars: exaggerating Israeli power and terrorizing the Arabs with it and waging international campaigns to mobilize world public opinion against the Arabs. Israel's characterization of resistance as "Islamic" or Shiite" is but an attempt to present the Arab-Israeli conflict as a religious conflict, while it is in reality a political conflict over crystal clear rights.

In the same context, Human Rights Watch published a report supported with photographs, "White Flag Deaths," about young people, women and children killed by Israeli soldiers in Gaza while trying to leave their homes unarmed. Despite the fact that the report condemned Zionist soldiers for their acts, and the chairman of the committee held a press conference in which he gave an accurate and detailed account of the investigations, Arabic media failed to turn the report into headlines on their front pages.

This leads me to two important studies published recently and with special relevance to the issue at hand. One is Ephraim Kam's 2009 Annual Strategic Report of the Israeli National Security Center which points out that the Arab position toward Israel today is mainly based on negotiation not on the option of war and elimination. However, he fails to state that Israel's option has always been based on war, genocide and settlement. The study tries deceptively to focus attention on the 'radical' threat coming from "Iran, Hizbullah and Syria."

The study makes clear that Israel banks mainly on a change in the Arab mental attitude toward Israel, transforming it from an enemy into a state which can be lived with. Moreover, they rely on an Arab party which claims that good relations with Israel will bring the Arabs better rewards than those gained by war. The report expands on the Iran threat against the Arabs, the importance of neutralizing Egypt, and then Iraq, in the Arab-Israeli conflict which weakens and reduces Arabs' resistance, and international stand.

The question is: why don't wealthy Arabs fund research centers and scholarships focused on Arab rights, archives and causes? Until when shall Western think tanks remain the only source of news and information about our causes and the future of our countries?

Dr Mahmoud Muhareb of the Department of Political Science, Jerusalem University, published a study on Zionist articles published in Lebanese papers during the Palestinian revolution 1936-1939, and the money Zionists paid to promote the Zionist project. We should not be surprised today to see the Israeli media octopus trying to manipulate the media in order to divide Arabs, weaken them and distort the Arab identity by presenting it in the form of sects and factions and stigmatizing resistance as terrorist.

The more important question is: what are we doing? And what is our role in intellectual and cultural resistance? Those who wrongly believe that the Zionist lobby is an invincible power because it pays billions of dollars in the United States should read part one of Anthony DiMaggio's article, "Obama and the Israel Lobby: Origins of Power" in Counterpunch to realize that the secret of the Israel lobby is not the money but organized ideological action and having teams working for the same end. There are no names of individuals in this action, but one single cause they all serve.

Shall we learn from our enemies, who stand shoulder to shoulder in defense of injustice, occupation, oppression and displacement, to unify our ranks and defend historical, human and cultural rights? The cause of Palestine is no longer an Arab cause, it is a cause of international justice.

Prof. Bouthaina Shaaban is political and media adviser of the Syrian Presidency, and former minister of expatriates. She has been a professor at Damascus University since 1985 and was nominated for Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

Where is Arab intellectual resistance?

Load-Date: August 18, 2009

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AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN; "Russian-speaking" minister of foreign affairs counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia

What the Papers Say (Russia)

June 4, 2009 Thursday

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Section: PRESS EXTRACTS;; No. 100

Length: 803 words

Byline: Arthur Blinov, Nikolai Surkov

Highlight: AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN SAID TEL-AVIV WAS READY TO ATTEND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW; An update on the visit of Israeli minister of foreign affairs.

Body

Avigdor Lieberman, Israeli Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, proclaimed Tel-Aviv ready to attend the Middle East conference in Moscow but only if HAMAS and **Hezbollah** were absent from it. Leader of the political party of immigrants from the former USSR, Lieberman is convinced that relations between Israel and Russia should be elevated to a new level.

Born in Moldova, Lieberman is leader of Israel Is Our Home, a political party comprising immigrants from the countries that had been Soviet republics once. Visiting Moscow, Lieberman was received by President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and met with his Russian opposite number Sergei Lavrov.

Middle East situation and prospects of its settlement were in the focus of the talks.

It was during these talks and afterwards that Lieberman dispelled the rumors in the global media on the allegedly forthcoming Israeli preemptive strike at Iranian sites. As a matter of fact, the Israeli diplomat readdressed the problem to world powers. Recalling the menace constituted by the Iranian nuclear program, Lieberman said, "We are not going to bomb Iran. We do now want to be the ones solving this problem for the world."

Lieberman's statements concerning Middle East affairs were somewhat paradoxical. "Principal confrontation in the Middle East is within the Islamic world itself and not between Israel and the Palestinians or Israel and Arab countries," he said. He called HAMAS a threat to the recently formed Palestinian Administration of Salem Fayyad and **Hezbollah** to Fouad Siniora's Cabinet in Lebanon.

Israel threatens no Arab country, Lieberman said. As for the Arab peace initiative, the Israeli diplomat acknowledged it as acceptable in everything but the clause on refugees. "Israel is prepared accept the initiative without this clause."

Lieberman announced as well that his country did not plan to return the Golan Heights, occupied since 1967, to the Syrians - much less to do so as a condition for the talks. He added that development of Jewish settlements on the territories where the Palestinian state would be established was "no barrier to the peace process."

AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN " Russian -speaking" minister of foreign affairs
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The visiting diplomat supported the idea of an international Middle East conference in Moscow this summer or autumn and said that Israel would participate as long as HAMAS and Hezbollah were absent. (Israel regards them as terrorists.) Lieberman said, however, that he wanted more information on the future conference. "If it is to be a real conference, then it is necessary to determine its parameters and list of participants, to decide what its objectives are supposed to be and what results should be expected," Lieberman said. "I suspect that all of that will be tackled after Obama's visit to Moscow, i.e. after mid-July."

Special attention in the course of the visit was paid to the Israeli-Russian relations which Lieberman appraised as being "at the highest point ever" but whose improvement was still possible. "We've never forgotten that the USSR was the first state to recognize Israel in 1948. We attach considerable importance to our combined efforts against with Nazism in the Second World War," Lieberman told Medvedev. Russia and Israel agreed to pool efforts against "falsification of history" and "to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Victory in 2010 together."

Speaking about his priorities, Lieberman said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was trying to change the international community's attitude toward Israel and improve the image of the country damaged by the media, first and foremost Israeli media. He suggested that Europe was more or less anti-Israeli due to the negative media coverage of the events in the Middle East.

Lieberman added that Israel was counting on Russia's understanding in the matter of relations with HAMAS. He reminded his Russian hosts that Israel had already made several goodwill gestures. Israel refused to recognize Kosovo as a sovereign state, its Knesset backed Russia's actions in Chechnya. Also importantly, Israel was selling no new weapons to Georgia and was but servicing the previously delivered merchandise.

The Israeli diplomat condemned the United States for the use of double standards in connection with Israel and said that behavior of lots of countries (he mentioned Pakistan and North Korea) was even worse. Lieberman emphasized that bringing up the matter of democracy in Israel was wrong when women in other countries of the region were still denied banal equality.

Lieberman said that US President Barack Obama and State Secretary Hillary Clinton insisted on establishment of the Palestinian state without knowing the true state of affairs in the region and in Israel and without even listening to Tel-Aviv's arguments.

Source: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, No 110, June 4, 2009, p. 1

Translated by Aleksei Ignatkin

Load-Date: June 4, 2009

Obama's link to the Muslim world: Turkey

Christian Science Monitor

June 12, 2009, Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 803 words

Byline: Helena Cobban

Dateline: Adana, Turkey

Body

As President Obama looks for partners in the Muslim world, he should consider listening to the government of Turkey as much as he listens to Egypt's president. He could learn a lot from Turkey about how a smart Islamist party can be a valued participant in a democracy.

Turkey, a NATO ally, has been ruled since 2002 by a moderate Islamist party - the Justice and Development Party (AKP) - that has proved its commitment to democracy and pluralism at home and to an active, nearly always nonviolent, engagement in diplomacy abroad. And that's why the record of the AKP in Turkey is so compelling.

At home, after the party first won power, grass-roots supporters tried to leverage that victory to ban alcohol sales in some Turkish cities. The judiciary struck down those regulations - and the national government complied with the ruling.

Later, the national government tried to lift the country's longstanding ban on admitting scarf-wearing women to universities or to jobs in government. Once again, the courts struck down the proposal. And once again, the government complied without a protest. (That, though the wives of both the prime minister and the president always wear head scarves in public.)

In 10 days of travel, in three Turkish cities and vast swaths of countryside, I saw Turkish women wearing clothes that ranged from skimpy Western dress topped by tumbling - sometimes bleached-blond - hairdos, to a stylish version of Muslim hijab that involves an elegantly tied head scarf over a mid-thigh tunic and jeans, to the baggy black coverup of the ultrapious.

Most Turkish women are near the middle of that spectrum, and in many places young women with and without head scarves mingle easily, chatting and laughing together.

Regarding domestic affairs, one professor in Istanbul told me, "If you're a politically liberal Turk who cares about women's rights, the rights of the Kurdish minority, and religious minorities here, you couldn't find a better party than the AKP." I heard versions of that voiced by several other strongly secular Turks.

Back in early April, Mr. Obama came to Turkey and delivered a first important address to the Muslim world. Turks seemed delighted that he had included their country on his first trip abroad as president, and nearly all appreciated the respectful way he addressed the concerns of Turks and other Muslims.

Obama's link to the Muslim world: Turkey

On June 4, he gave another major address to the Muslim world in Cairo. Egypt, like Turkey, is a historic center of Muslim life. But the Turkish government follows policies that are much more in line with Obama's inclusive, diplomacy-focused approach to international affairs.

Turkey's two AKP governments have maintained good ties with Europe and with all Turkey's neighbors - including Greece, Iran, Georgia, Iraq, and Syria. In 2007-08, Ankara also undertook an important mediation effort between Israel and Syria.

But Ankara fell afoul of the Bush administration in Washington for a number of reasons. Most significantly, in 2003, Ankara - like many other NATO allies - strongly opposed the US invasion of Iraq, and it refused to allow Washington to launch part of the invasion from Turkey.

The Bush administration also objected to the good ties the AKP maintained with Syria and - after the hard-line faction won the Palestinian elections in 2006 - with Hamas.

While George W. Bush was president, he seemed to ascribe little value to the inclusive and generally de-escalatory policies the AKP government has pursued at home and in the broader Middle East. He preferred instead an approach to the Middle East that sharpened divisions between the two groups he defined as "moderates" and "extremists."

In the former group were the notoriously anti-democratic governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. In the latter, any government or party that seemed to support Iran, regardless of whether - like Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah - they might have proved their popular support in democratic elections.

Indeed, in the Bush years, Washington worked actively to overthrow both Hamas and Hezbollah, and maintained what one Bush White House official has described as "a state of quasi-war" with Syria.

Several Bush-era officials openly questioned whether the electoral victories of Hamas and Hezbollah actually "proved" that a party could be both dedicated to Islamist principles and democratic rule over the longer term. Turkey's experience provides intriguing evidence that it can.

Obama should value Turkey's views on regional affairs. He may not be ready yet to go along with all the advice he receives from the AKP government in Ankara. But Ankara has much valuable experience that it can share with its NATO ally.

Helena Cobban is a former Monitor correspondent. Her latest book is "Re-engage! America and the World after Bush."

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Load-Date: June 12, 2009

AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN PROMISES NOT TO BOMB IRAN; "Russian-speaking" minister of foreign affairs counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia

DEFENSE and SECURITY (Russia)

June 5, 2009 Friday

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Section: SECURITY;; No. 58

Length: 797 words

Byline: Arthur Blinov, Nikolai Surkov

Highlight: AVIGDOR LIEBERMAN SAID TEL-AVIV WAS READY TO ATTEND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE IN MOSCOW; An update on the visit of Israeli minister of foreign affairs.

Body

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counts on advancement of contacts between Israel and Russia

The visiting diplomat supported the idea of an international Middle East conference in Moscow this summer or autumn and said that Israel would participate as long as HAMAS and Hezbollah were absent. (Israel regards them as terrorists.) Lieberman said, however, that he wanted more information on the future conference. "If it is to be a real conference, then it is necessary to determine its parameters and list of participants, to decide what its objectives are supposed to be and what results should be expected," Lieberman said. "I suspect that all of that will be tackled after Obama's visit to Moscow, i.e. after mid-July."

Special attention in the course of the visit was paid to the Israeli-Russian relations which Lieberman appraised as being "at the highest point ever" but whose improvement was still possible. "We've never forgotten that the USSR was the first state to recognize Israel in 1948. We attach considerable importance to our combined efforts against with Nazism in the Second World War," Lieberman told Medvedev. Russia and Israel agreed to pool efforts against "falsification of history" and "to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Victory in 2010 together."

Speaking about his priorities, Lieberman said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was trying to change the international community's attitude toward Israel and improve the image of the country damaged by the media, first and foremost Israeli media. He suggested that Europe was more or less anti-Israeli due to the negative media coverage of the events in the Middle East.

Lieberman added that Israel was counting on Russia's understanding in the matter of relations with HAMAS. He reminded his Russian hosts that Israel had already made several goodwill gestures. Israel refused to recognize Kosovo as a sovereign state, its Knesset backed Russia's actions in Chechnya. Also importantly, Israel was selling no new weapons to Georgia and was but servicing the previously delivered merchandise.

The Israeli diplomat condemned the United States for the use of double standards in connection with Israel and said that behavior of lots of countries (he mentioned Pakistan and North Korea) was even worse. Lieberman emphasized that bringing up the matter of democracy in Israel was wrong when women in other countries of the region were still denied banal equality.

Lieberman said that US President Barack Obama and State Secretary Hillary Clinton insisted on establishment of the Palestinian state without knowing the true state of affairs in the region and in Israel and without even listening to Tel-Aviv's arguments.

Source: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, June 4, 2009, p. 1

Load-Date: June 5, 2009

Muslim said he felt deaths of us soldiers were a 'gift'

Derby Evening Telegraph

November 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 4

Length: 491 words

Byline: Kelly Elliott

Body

A Derby Muslim arrested for terrorism offences told people he met online that "when American soldiers die it is like the whole world has given me a gift".

Preston Crown Court heard that Krenar Lusha spoke on the internet of his hatred of Jews and referred to himself as Arabi - the Arabic word for terrorist.

The conversations took place over several months with women Lusha had met on websites such as Muslims For Marriage.

The 30-year-old was arrested in his Normanton home in August last year and charged with 10 counts of possessing articles that give rise to reasonable suspicion they are for a terror-related purpose. He denies the charges.

Yesterday, during his trial, extracts from his web chats, retrieved from computers seized at his home, were read to the jury.

In one, Lusha wrote "jihad will get the best of me, jihad will win me".

In another, he said, "we Muslims are classed as Arabi", while in another conversation he stated, "I love to kill Jews or American soldiers".

The court heard that when Lusha was asked about the conversations during interviews with counter terrorism police he either declined to comment, said he could not remember writing such statements or said someone else must have written them.

In relation to his reference to jihad, he said the word meant "efforts, struggle and hard work".

During the interview, Lusha was asked about videos and documents found on his computer relating to the war in Iraq.

One shown to the jury yesterday was entitled, in Arabic, The Killing of 10 American soldiers in Fallujah and showed a group of soldiers caught in an explosion.

When asked why he had such material, Albanian-born Lusha said he was curious about the war and that some of the videos reminded him of the bad days in his home country.

Muslim said he felt deaths of us soldiers were a 'gift'

He told police he had been learning Arabic since 2002 so he could read the Koran, although he did not have a copy of the holy book at home.

As well as the videos, police searching Lusha's Moore Street home found many documents downloaded from the internet, including a **Hezbollah** military instruction manual, Middle Eastern terrorist bomb design, improvised radio detonation techniques and a Mujahideen explosives handbook.

During the search on August 26 last year, 71.8 litres of petrol and more than 2kg of potassium nitrate - a constituent of gunpowder - were discovered, along with 14 mobile phones.

When asked about the **Hezbollah** manual, which was downloaded the night before his arrest and included videos on how to make a suicide bomb, Lusha said he had not looked at the document.

The court heard that, during a police interview, Detective Sergeant Graham Holland, of Greater Manchester Police, asked Lusha: "What were you intending to do with the link when it completed the download?"

Lusha replied: "Shut it and if I had time, watch it.

"What I mostly wanted was to see the effect of combat, the effect mentally and spiritually of the price of war."

The trial continues.

Load-Date: November 26, 2009

End of Document

Why silence on Iran when terror reigns?

Chicago Daily Herald

June 22, 2009 Monday

L2 Edition

Copyright 2009 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 540 words

Body

Millions of Iranians take to the streets to defy a theocratic dictatorship that, among its other finer qualities, is a self-declared enemy of America and the tolerance and liberties it represents. The demonstrators are fighting on their own, but they await just a word that America is on their side.

And what do they hear from the president of the United States? Silence. Then, worse. Three days in, the president makes clear his policy: continued "dialogue" with their clerical masters.

Dialogue with a regime that is breaking heads, shooting demonstrators, expelling journalists, arresting activists. Engagement with — which inevitably confers legitimacy upon — leaders elected in a process that begins as a sham (only four hand-picked candidates permitted out of 476) and ends in overt rigging.

Then, after treating this popular revolution as an inconvenience to the real business of Obama-Khamanei negotiations, the president speaks favorably of "some initial reaction from the Supreme Leader that indicates he understands the Iranian people have deep concerns about the election."

This incipient revolution is no longer about the election. Obama totally misses the point. The election allowed the political space and provided the spark for the eruption of anti-regime fervor that has been simmering for years and awaiting its moment. But people aren't dying in the street because they want a recount of hanging chads in suburban Isfahan. They want to bring down the tyrannical, misogynist, corrupt theocracy that has imposed itself with the very baton-wielding goons that today attack the demonstrators.

This started out about election fraud. But like all revolutions, it has far outgrown its origins. What's at stake now is the very legitimacy of this regime — and the future of the entire Middle East.

With Hezbollah having lost elections in Lebanon and with Iraq establishing the institutions of a young democracy, the fall of the Islamist dictatorship in Iran would have an electric and contagious effect. The exception — Iraq and Lebanon — becomes the rule. Democracy becomes the wave. Syria becomes isolated; Hezbollah and Hamas, patronless. The entire trajectory of the region is reversed.

All hangs in the balance. And what side is the Obama administration taking? None. Except for the desire that this "vigorous debate" (press secretary Robert Gibbs' disgraceful euphemism) over election "irregularities" not stand in the way of U.S.-Iranian engagement on nuclear weapons.

Why silence on Iran when terror reigns?

Even from the narrow perspective of the nuclear issue, the administration's geopolitical calculus is absurd. There is zero chance talks will denuclearize Iran. The only hope for a resolution of the nuclear question is regime change, which might either stop the program, or make it manageable and nonthreatening.

That's our fundamental interest. And our fundamental values demand that America stand with demonstrators opposing a regime that is the antithesis of all we believe.

And where is our president? Afraid of "meddling." Afraid to take sides between the head-breaking, women-shackling exporters of terror — and the people in the street yearning to breathe free. This from a president who fancies himself the restorer of America's moral standing in the world.

Load-Date: June 22, 2009

End of Document

Questionable victory; The size of Ahmadinejad's support casts doubt on the Iranian election

therecord.com

June 17, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. A9

Length: 850 words

Byline: Barry Kay

Body

If in fact the Iranian presidential election was subject to widespread fraud, only an allegation at the moment, the perpetrators overdid the deceptive vote counting to the point of being counterproductive.

By providing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad an almost 30 per cent victory margin in what had appeared to be a very close contest, Iranian authorities have created much more doubt and skepticism toward the process than would have resulted from a narrower outcome.

Some of the reasons for suspicion relate to a surprisingly fast count of 40 million votes in a few hours, and the fact that Ahmadinejad had won by a dramatically larger margin than four years ago, despite the intervention of decline in Iran's oil-dependant economy leading to widespread dissatisfaction.

Moreover, in most countries, a huge increase in participation is usually associated with an anti-incumbent vote, whereas in Iran it would seem just the opposite occurred. The primary challenger, Mir Hossein Moussavi, had engendered significant momentum at the end of the campaign, particularly among the urban young and women, because of the unprecedented role of his wife, but these factors seemed to be unaccounted for in the vote tallies, which showed him being soundly trounced in all areas, even his home region.

Those who hoped for a Moussavi victory were probably motivated by the expectation of reform and a significant softening of hardline Iranian policies, however he is an unlikely symbol of such change and it isn't clear he is the best instrument for it. While Moussavi would have a less confrontational style than Ahmadinejad, there is little reason to believe that the former Iranian prime minister would either be inclined or even permitted to reverse any of the basic policies that have kept Iran on the fringe of international legitimacy. Apart from concerns about a rigged vote count, the Guardian Council of the Islamic Republic under the oversight of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei actively restricted any candidacies who did not reflect their interpretation of the principles of the state. Many thought that former president Mohammed Khatami elected back in 1997 was a reformer, but he proved totally incapable of altering the status quo.

All of this has occurred after U.S. President Barack Obama has committed himself to a new opening with the Muslim world in general, and to Iran's Islamic Republic in particular. While there are numerous potential issues to be addressed, undoubtedly the most contentious one is the future of Iran's nuclear program and on this there is little

Questionable victory; The size of Ahmadinejad's support casts doubt on the Iranian election

discernible difference between Ahmadinejad and Moussavi, or any of the other leading political figures in the country.

What if any leverage the United States has on this matter is unclear, especially after North Korea has thumbed its nose at international concerns about its nuclear program. Given Ahmadinejad's threats to wipe Israel off the map, the lack of resolution to this issue could lead to their intervention, something that would only complicate the matter.

Israel has previously attacked nuclear facilities in Iraq (1981) and Syria (2007) with minimal international repercussions. The real uncertainty is whether an Israeli attack would be as successful in destroying, or even delaying the Iranian nuclear program, and that is highly questionable.

In dealing with the implications of the election, Iran is operating in uncharted territory. There is growing evidence that many Iranians (especially the young) are increasingly disenchanted with a restrictive political system, more obsessed with self-preservation than the concerns of the public.

The public demonstrations now occurring are more a challenge to that political system than a specific endorsement of Moussavi. The unfolding aftermath of the election reflects that elements in Iraq's extremely opaque political leadership are becoming aware that continued repression of pent-up demand, is not necessarily in the long-term interest of maintaining power.

In time, public frustration may well cause the pressure cooker to blow. Of course the spectre of Tiananmen Square in 1989 is also a possibility. Only time will tell whether the electoral review process just established is simply window dressing, or whether Ahmadinejad's tenure is seriously in question. However, there is perhaps no other Islamic nation where public opinion in the street is more open to the United States, despite the oratory of its political leadership.

In a related matter, some will take heart from the previous election result in Lebanon, where the Christian ally of Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah suffered a setback. It is certainly true that from a western perspective, a government headed by Saad Hariri's anti-Syrian movement offers more hope than a government where Hezbollah has increased influence.

That said, the election result does not provide a political configuration substantially different from the recent past, and Hezbollah with its private militia should continue to possess an effective veto in parliament.

Barry Kay is a professor of political science at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Graphic

Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS , In this image issued by the government-run Iranian Students News Agency, thousands of people, one holding a poster of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (left) attend a state-organized rally in a square in central Tehran on Tuesday.

Load-Date: June 17, 2009

Iran's president fires new tirade against Israel

AlArabiya.net

May 4, 2009 Monday

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Length: 573 words

Body

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad slammed Zionism as "occupation" and "aggression" Tuesday as he delivered his latest diatribe against the Jewish state on a visit to key Middle East ally Syria.

"The Zionist occupiers are destructive microbes, because Zionism itself is occupation, aggression, the use of assassination and annihilation," he told a joint news conference with President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian capital.

"Zionism was created to threaten us. To support the Palestinian resistance is a humanitarian and popular obligation," Ahmadinejad said in remarks in Farsi that were translated into Arabic. The Iranian president's comments came barely two weeks after he sparked a European walkout from a U.N. anti-racism conference in Geneva by equating Zionism with racism.

Ahmadinejad asked why it was the Islamist Hamas movement which controls Gaza that is blacklisted by the European Union and the United States, and not Israel after its devastating offensive against the territory at the turn of the year.

"They've attacked Gaza, killing people in their own land and massacring women and children... and yet it's the Palestinians they accuse of terrorism," he complained.

Ahmadinejad, whose visit to Damascus came as Defense Secretary Robert Gates toured U.S. allies in the region to reassure them about overtures to the Tehran regime by President Barack Obama, hit out at the continuing U.S. military presence on Iran's borders.

"They weren't invited in. They're unwelcome visitors who should leave Afghanistan and the borders of Pakistan," the Iranian president said.

"We don't want honey from bees that sting us. Efforts must be made to rid the region of the presence of foreigners... and to reform the unjust global political and economic system."

Standing together

Ahmadinejad said Iran and Syria were standing together to "resist foreign intervention and the major powers trying to impose their hegemony over the region."

The United States "has put pressure on Syria and Iran, but it needs us and wants to develop relations," he said.

"Circumstances are changing rapidly in our favor. We are on the road to victory."

Iran 's president fires new tirade against Israel

Syria's President Assad in turn defended his country's long-standing alliance with Iran on Tuesday and said a "strategic" relationship between the two countries contributed to Middle East stability.

Syria has re-enforced its alliance with Iran in recent years after they came under pressure from the United States for suspected nuclear programs and providing backing for armed groups in the Middle East.

"We have strategic ties ... which don't constitute an axis as some suggest, but serve the stability and strength of this region," Assad said.

"Our duty is to strengthen these kinds of ties."

The two countries, which are under different levels of U.S. sanctions, support the Lebanese movement **Hezbollah** and the Palestinian movement Hamas, whose exiled leaders live in Syria.

Hezbollah, the lynchpin of the relationship between Tehran and Damascus, is also the main opposition party contesting Lebanon's parliamentary elections next month. The two countries want to see the Shi'ite group fare well in the poll.

The sustainability of their alliance, however, is under some doubt as Syria pushes for a resumption of peace negotiations with Israel and the United States talks to Damascus after boycotting Syria for several years.

Ahmadinejad was also due to meet exiled Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal during his Damascus visit.

Load-Date: May 18, 2009

End of Document

Pro-Israel, pro-Arab and pro-peace; Canada's friendship with Israel doesn't mean we can't support a viable state for Palestinians

The Toronto Star

March 29, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A21

Length: 901 words

Byline: Bob Rae, Toronto Star

Body

There is a story about two Israelis meeting in the street. "How are things?"

"In a word, 'good.' In two words, 'not good.'"

I have just spent 10 days travelling in the Middle East, meeting with leaders in Cairo, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Amman, Damascus and Beirut.

It is a time of intense discussion and debate: between Hamas and Fatah over a unity government; among Arab leaders about putting life into their peace initiative; among Israeli political leaders about a new government; among everyone about Iran.

Surrounding it all is public opinion in the region, which wants peace and security but in which deep resentments and anger rise up: Israeli opinion remains incensed with the vitriolic rhetoric, the constant threats, and what they see as a lack of real understanding of their situation. Arab opinion is incensed with Israel's attack on Gaza, a possible right-wing government in Israel, and a peace process that in their eyes has gone nowhere.

Seven years ago, Arab leaders launched an initiative that said the Arab world would establish normal relations with Israel if Israel would accept the borders of 1967 and thus allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. There is some hope this approach will be revived at next week's Arab summit.

However, Iran espouses a radically different view. When its leaders talk of Israel's "occupation," they are not talking about what happened in 1967 and after, but of Israel's very existence and presence in the region. When they talk of "resisting the Zionist entity" and of their support for Hamas and Hezbollah, they are referring to a long-term vision of never-ending struggle.

Iran's refusal to comply with UN resolutions on the development of its nuclear program, its military buildup and role in supplying arms to Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which are publicly committed to the destruction of Israel, is destabilizing the entire region.

Not surprisingly, Israeli opinion has hardened as a result: both the Lebanon invasion of 2006 and the Gaza invasion of 2008-09 had widespread public support. Israelis point to the improved security on the Lebanese border and the dramatic drop in suicide bombs, which they attribute to the security wall, as evidence that regardless of how it plays elsewhere, their approach is working.

Pro- Israel , pro-Arab and pro-peace Canada's friendship with Israel doesn't mean we can't support a viable state for Palestinians

Israeli conservatives take this logic further, asserting that the conflict cannot be resolved, only managed - with Israel holding the upper hand.

What is troubling about the "managing the conflict" scenario is that it ignores how difficult living conditions are for most Palestinians. There are more than 500 roadblocks in the West Bank, making normal civilian and economic life extremely difficult. Israelis say "settlements are not an issue," meaning they will be resolved at the bargaining table, but continued building on deeply contested land is unquestionably seen as both a provocation and a barrier to peace by even the most moderate of Palestinians.

Israel's challenge is that Hamas and Hezbollah do not feel bound by the same rules of war and engagement as Israel. Rocket launchers are placed on the rooftops of schools and apartment buildings; military headquarters are buried beneath hospitals. These tactics are frequently used by guerrillas with popular support. But fighting these wars is painfully difficult. Rockets and bombs go astray, innocent men, women and children are killed, and the world is watching.

Being justified in a response does not mean the response will have a successful result. Life is not fair. Hitting back, and hitting back hard, will not necessarily produce the desired result.

Canada's friendship with Israel is deep and permanent. But that friendship does not mean we can be indifferent to the Palestinian claim to a viable state. The logic of the UN decision in 1947 to accept partition clearly implied there would be not just one but two states in the old Ottoman and British Mandate. We should be supporting the creation of a Palestinian state and showing more leadership in expressing what it will take to get there.

The Annapolis process set in motion an important effort to help the Palestinian Authority take greater responsibility for security matters, including assisting the Authority to train 6,000 members of the national security force and the 2,000-strong presidential guard. There are nine Canadians involved in this process. Canadians on the ground say the Authority is ready to take on more, that there is room to dismantle checkpoints and roadblocks. A wizened Fatah commander now in charge of the national security force goes even further. "Give us the tools to do the job and we shall do it." An old fedayeen fighter, he is ready to embrace the two-state solution. But he sees no deep willingness in Israel to walk down this path, which as he sees it only helps Hamas.

For the longest time Canadian foreign policy in the Middle East has been bedevilled by the notion that we must be either "pro-Israel" or "pro-Arab." We should be both. Our ties of emotion and friendship are deep with many countries, and we must be proud of our own history, our diplomatic achievements and commitments to human rights and international law.

Canada diminishes itself when it is less than it could be, when it chooses to see the world through a narrow lens, and when it turns every foreign issue into a partisan stance instead of an opportunity for statesmanship.

Graphic

STAR FILE PHOTO Israeli police stand on a lookout as Muslims gather for prayer around the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem during Ramadan. Canada needn't play a partisan role in the Mideast, Bob Rae says.

Load-Date: March 29, 2009

Letters

The Jerusalem Post
April 19, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1152 words

Byline: Steve Lieblich, Larry Finson, Joy Wolfe, J.M. King, Toby Willig, Colin L. Leci, M.L. Rostowsky, Karl Huttenbauer

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Democracy...

Sir, - Bashing critics of the Left, David Newman purports to defend free speech. But in his April 14 op-ed "Bashing the academic Left," he simply tries to silence those who disagree with him.

He writes: "Campus Watch... uses students and faculty to spy on those teaching courses on Israel and the Middle East. Anyone who so faintly utters a word of criticism is immediately labeled as such (sic)."

Is Campus Watch a disgrace for anyone who believes in the concept of freedom of speech? Why does Newman call observation spying? What have his learned colleagues got to be so secretive about?

Finally, if someone is "critical," why should he not be labeled as such?

STEVE LIEBLICH, Editor

Jewish Issues Watchdog

Western Australia

...in danger

Sir, - The whole university system in Israel is a monopoly controlled by the elite Left that set it up. Yet David Newman expects us to cry for the loss of academic and democratic freedom.

The real truth is that the lack of a strong, honest political Left which truly believes in democracy for all (and not just for those who agree with it) is the most serious danger to Israeli democracy.

We saw this clearly in the early Oslo years when the Left ruled with a most undemocratic iron hand.

Newman is correct, Israeli democracy is seriously endangered. But the corruption of the Left is the cause.

LARRY FINSON

Jerusalem

Letters

Sir, - Maybe the reason for all the criticism of the Israeli academic Left is that hardly a day goes by without some anti-Israel professor rushing into print or sitting on a platform to express the most virulent anti-Israel sentiments.

I would point out to Prof. Newman that criticizing this behavior is not an issue of freedom of speech, more an expression of outrage at these sometimes almost treasonous views.

As for his blanket condemnation of those organizations seeking to monitor attitudes to Israel and highlight unfounded criticism, isn't this a case of the pot calling the kettle black?

As someone who is very active in speaking up for Israel, I have never had the view of "Israel, right or wrong." But I do find it indefensible when Israeli professors call for Israel to be tried for war crimes, and criticize Israel with no thought for context or history.

JOY WOLFE

Manchester UK

Freedom of speech

Sir, - How sad that while Columbia University can invite the monstrous president of Iran without too much protest, Notre Dame is having problems inviting the US president.

I may or may not agree with Barack Obama, or the university, on abortion policy. But if academic freedom and freedom of speech can allow a president who threatens the existence of a UN member state to speak, where is the difficulty in grant-ing those privileges to a president who differs with Notre Dame on abortion?

Isn't free speech an issue between government and citizen, rather than between a university, or any private platform, and the citizen? If I do not allow you to speak in my house, is that an issue of free speech? ("Degrees of acceptance at Notre Dame," Richard V. Allen, April 16.)

J.M. KING

Jerusalem

Deviant UN

Sir, - Durban II is a sad comment on what could have been a major and important conference. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, whose appearance at the UN produced nothing but hatred, will be attending, and all that will emerge from the conference will be more vitriol.

The fact that the UN permits a member state to call for the annihilation of another member state is a reflection of its own immorality. It is time the UN was held responsible under law for its terrible deviation from its own charter. The US should take the initiative in holding the organization responsible for increasing hatred and racism around the world ("Israel: Durban II text is getting worse," April 16).

TOBY WILLIG

Jerusalem

See no evil

Sir, - Caroline Glick's "Iran's Western enablers" (April 14) provided an explanation for why Britain's Home Office and Metropolitan Police failed to recognize the terrorist Hizbullah flags openly flown by anti-Israel and anti-Jewish rioters outside the Israeli embassy in Palace Green London during Operation Cast Lead - even though Hizbullah is classified as a terrorist organization according to UK Terrorism legislation.

Letters

To all intent and purposes, these flags were apparently invisible to the British police, who failed to take appropriate measures; and yet they were openly visible on the many TV news channels around the world, as well as on YouTube!

The same could be said to explain why the UK government has failed to condemn the visit to Hamas in Damascus last month by UK legislators. More British hypocrisy!

COLIN L LECI

Jerusalem

A pity, this refusal

Sir, - I was disappointed to read that "Israel won't work with UN's Gaza 'war crimes' probe" (April 16).

As a retired South African lawyer, I am well- acquainted with Judge Richard Goldstone and know that he is a jurist of impeccable honesty and trustworthiness. The commission he chairs cannot be expected to come to a fair conclusion if it does not have the relevant facts.

Israel should be represented at the commission to give evidence so that the Israeli viewpoint is known. Furthermore, Israel should engage experienced trial lawyers to cross-examine the witnesses who will give anti-Israel evidence.

The **female** member of the commission has apparently signed an anti-Israel letter to the Guardian and she should thus, at the first hearing, be asked to recuse herself because of bias. If the probe is properly conducted, the Israeli viewpoint would get favorable international recognition.

M.L. ROSTOWSKY

Tel Aviv

Jew-free entities

Sir, - The threat delivered via Aden ("Two-state solution," Letters, April 16) must not be allowed the last word.

The British Palestine Mandate (1920) included the territories on both banks of the River Jordan: and is so defined in Article 2 of the PLO Covenant issued in 1964 - during Jordanian rule in Judea-Samaria (the West Bank).

Accordingly Transjordan, through the PLO constitution, constitutes the first of the Jew-free entities of the previous Mandate. Removal of Jews from the former Egyptian- Administered Gaza (a potential city state of the Dubai type) constitutes the second of the Jew-free entities, which for the past four years has been "governed" by Hamas fascists.

A third Jew-free entity is in the making in areas and major towns of the West Bank administered by Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority.

The fourth entity of the former Mandate is constituted as the Jewish State of Israel, which includes amongst its citizenry 1.3 million non-Jews who enjoy a standard of living that is the envy of Arab kinsmen throughout the region.

Summary: The territory of the British Mandate supports four entities for two peoples - three of which maintain a Judenrein status, whilst the fourth - Israel - sustains a very large Arab-Muslim minority harboring irredentist elements.

Conclusion: The two-states-for-two-peoples mantra is a chimera.

KARL HUTTENBAUER

Letters

Berlin

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

**Assad adviser slams 'crazy' Israeli campaign against Mary Robinson.
Bouthaina Shaaban blasts Zionist policies, Arab media's inability to counter
propaganda**

The Jerusalem Post

August 18, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 549 words

Byline: ALEX SORIN

Body

Israel has carried out an "crazy campaign" against former Irish president Mary Robinson and all others who have "brought fairness" to the Palestinian issue, an adviser to Syrian President Bashar Assad declared in an editorial published Monday in Saudi Arabia's Asharq Al- Awsat newspaper.

In the editorial, Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban blasted Israeli policy and "Zionist influence over the world media," and lamented the Arab media's "inability to address these issues properly."

She criticized Defense Minister Ehud Barak for stating that Israel would not allow weapons to break the balance in Lebanon, and also slammed Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's recent South American tour and his claims that **Hizbullah** was active in Venezuela.

Shaaban stated that Israel singled out and accused "notable world figures who criticized its actions, such as Robinson. Israel fears people such as Robinson because they are holding up torches to the truth of the Israeli-Palestinian issue and saying that the conflict must become an international matter."

Israel continued to Judaicize Jerusalem, she added, and claimed that Israel's actions were part of a "Zionist strategy aimed at intimidating moderates and instilling fear in Arabs of Israel's power." She accused Israel of carrying out an "international campaign to incite world opinion against the Arabs."

In the editorial, she denounced Israel for allocating Hebrew names to locations throughout Israel and wrote that Israel purposely characterized the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as religious instead of political.

Near the end, Shaaban addressed the recent Human Rights Watch report, which she claimed revealed that Israeli soldiers had killed and expelled **women** and children from their homes, in addition to using white phosphorus, during Operation Cast Lead.

In response, a spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry told The Jerusalem Post, "We have no intention of commenting on an editorial that we have no intention of reading."

A former professor of English literature at Damascus University, Shaaban is an outspoken critic of the United States and Israel, and has published a number of pieces sharply critical of Israeli and American actions. Her Web site has published a number of her editorial pieces and lectures.

Assad adviser slams 'crazy' Israeli campaign against Mary Robinson. Bouthaina Shaaban blasts Zionist policies, Arab media's inability to counter propaganda

In one piece written in April, she denounced The Economist magazine for discussing the genocide in Rwanda that took place 15 years ago, but not mentioning the "no less terrible genocide in Palestine."

In a lecture at Sapienza University in Rome in 2007, she accused the US of conducting an illegal war in Iraq and Israel an illegal occupation of Palestine. She also claimed that it had not been proven that Arab terrorists committed the September 11 attacks.

"Nobody truly investigated 9/11. We don't have results about what happened, what truly happened in 9/11. But whoever masterminded it, whoever did it, the results of 9/11 are the creation of the feeling in the Western world against Muslims and Arabs, the distortion of Arab civilization, of Arab culture, of Arab life, of Arab humanity even, in the minds of the West," said Shaaban. "If you ask my opinion there's a big attack on Arab identity, on Arab civilization, on Arab culture. The objective is not only the Iraqis, the Palestinians or the Lebanese, it is the Arab culture."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Israel ends search, says no soldier abducted

AlArabiya.net

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 222 words

Body

After setting up roadblocks in central Israel and freezing traffic for hours, the police and Israeli military on Friday ruled out reports that one of its soldiers had been abducted.

The dragnet-starting early on Thursday afternoon and continuing into the evening-- topped traffic around Ben-Gurion Airport, on the highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israeli media reported the search was mounted after a female soldier told security officials she saw a handcuffed soldier being forced into a car.

"Following security assessments by the Israel Defense Forces, Israel Security Agency and the Israeli Police, earlier reports of the possible kidnapping of a soldier have been ruled out," the military said in a statement.

On Thursday, the Palestinian Maan news agency had said it received a statement from a from al-Quds Army group saying it was holding a soldier seized near the airport, Israel's main international gateway. Al-Quds is the Arabic name for Jerusalem.

Palestinian resistance groups have in the past abducted soldiers at hitch-hiking stations.

A Palestinian security official said the al-Quds army, while fairly obscure, was believed to have links to the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, a foe of the Jewish state.

The Palestinian security official could not immediately confirm that such a claim of responsibility had been made.

Load-Date: August 14, 2009

Quds rally expresses solidarity with Palestinians

Daily Times

September 19, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 203 words

Dateline: KARACHI

Body

KARACHI, Sept. 19 -- The World Quds Day rally was held on Friday as a referendum against the Zionist regime of Israel.

A large number of people including women and children participated in the rally that was staged from Numaish to Regal Chowk to express solidarity and support with the oppressed Palestinians.

President of the Imamia Students Organisation Hassan Zaidi, Allama Aftab Haider Jafari, Allama Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui, Maulana Baqar Zaidi, and Maulana Mirza Yousuf Hussain spoke at the rally.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan leader Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui paid tributes to Imam Khomeini for declaring the last Friday of Ramazan as the World Quds Day. All the speakers condemned the siege of Gaza and occupation of the Palestine by Israel. They vowed that Palestine including its holy sites, and in particular Quds Sharif (old Jerusalem), will be liberated and freed soon.

The rally unanimously adopted a resolution in favour of the Hezbollah and Hamas. Jafaria Students Organisation also staged a Quds Day rally from Regal Chowk to Empress Market. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Times. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 19, 2009

Israel says no soldier abducted, calls off search

AlArabiya.net

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 221 words

Body

After setting up roadblocks in central Israel and freezing traffic for hours, the police and Israeli military on Friday ruled out reports that one of its soldiers had been abducted.

The dragnet -- starting early on Thursday afternoon and continuing into the evening -- stopped traffic around Ben-Gurion Airport, on the highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israeli media reported the search was mounted after a female soldier told security officials she saw a handcuffed soldier being forced into a car.

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Load-Date: August 14, 2009

Briefly World

Indian Express

October 29, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 643 words

Byline: Express news service

Body

'Accidental' shots fired on US ship

Warsaw: A US official said an American sailor fired three accidental shots from a machine gun aboard a Navy ship moored in a Polish port. No one was injured. US Embassy spokesman Andrew Paul says a sailor from the USS Ramage accidentally discharged three shots during routine maintenance on a M240 machine gun while the ship was in the port of Gdynia on Wednesday.

Zimbabwe deports UN investigator to SA

JOHANNESBURG: Zimbabwean immigration officials barred the UN's torture investigator from entering their country and returned him to South Africa on Thursday, an act he termed a "serious diplomatic incident" that reflects a split in the coalition government. "There are certainly some parts of the government who do not want me to assess the current conditions of torture," Manfred Nowak said in Johannesburg.

NRI 'Hezbollah' aide' pleads not guilty

New York: An NRI charged with attempting to provide material support to Lebanon's Hezbollah, a US designated foreign terrorist group, and illegally possessing fire arms and ammunition has pleaded not guilty. Patrick Nayyar, who was indicted on Wednesday by a Manhattan court, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Iraq makes arrests in Baghdad blast

BAGHDAD: Iraq announced the arrests of dozens of military and security personnel on Thursday over Baghdad suicide bombings that killed 155 people, trying to calm public outrage at the government's apparent inability to protect its people. Maj Gen Qassim al-Moussawi, a military spokesman, said that 11 army officers and 50 security officials have been taken into custody over Sunday's bombings - the worst attacks in Iraq in over two years.

Quake hits Pak, Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: A meteorology official said on Thursday night a strong earthquake had shaken large areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the earthquake. The quake was centered in Afghanistan's Hindukush mountains about 160 miles. The US Geological Survey said its preliminary magnitude was 6.0, but Pakistani officials said it was 6.1.

Singer Jessica Simpson embraces Indian fashion

Briefly World

London: Singer Jessica Simpson, who is currently filming her globe-trotting reality show The Price of Beauty in India, has embraced the country's fashion while taking a special liking to sarees. The 29-year-old star wore a turquoise saree, a bindi and mehndi on her hands at a party thrown in her honour by Bollywood actress Neha Dhupia in Mumbai this weekend, **Female** First reported. "Her bindi was shaped like a goddess's spear, and painted in holy vermilion, which is really fashionable with young Indian **women**," a source said. "She looked stunning in a turquoise sari."

Russian road roulette, a new gambling game

SOFIA: Bulgarian prosecutors are investigating a new gambling game in which drivers defy death by speeding through red lights for bets of up to 5,000 euros (\$7,400), the chief prosecutor's office said on Thursday. Known as 'Russian road roulette', the driver must jump red lights at busy intersections at high speed and not crash into any other cars or pedestrians, according to local media reports. Onlookers also gamble on the result. Prosecutors launched their investigation after media reported the new game had been held at night at busy crossroads in Sofia since the summer.

Cambridge University's 'Page 3' girls spark row

London: A row has erupted at Cambridge University after its first tabloid showed off its 'Page 3' girls, fuelling demands that girls on The Tab be covered up. The online "redtop" launched this year has received 80,000 hits in its first week, but it has sparked a row with complaints being filed that "semi-naked **women** in provocative positions are being shoved in freshers' faces". Natalie Szarek, the university's student union **women**'s officer, demanded that the "Page 3" girls be removed.

Load-Date: July 22, 2010

PM resists as world changes

The Toronto Star

March 12, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A25

Length: 581 words

Body

George W. Bush held the view, and so also Stephen Harper, that admitting defeat was a sign of weakness and talking to one's adversaries was for sissies - and traitors.

Would you talk to the Taliban? No. Iran? No. Syria? No. Hezbollah and Hamas? Absolutely not.

But with Barack Obama saying that NATO is losing in Afghanistan, Harper agrees with him. In fact, the Prime Minister says NATO cannot win, period.

So what are we doing there?

Helping NATO help Kabul stabilize Afghanistan just enough to let the foreign troops get out. This is the same formula as in Iraq: arranging a face-saving departure.

Thus the grand declarations of the last seven years - eliminating Al Qaeda and the Taliban; killing Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar; remaking the Middle East; modernizing retrograde Arabs and Afghans; "reforming" Islam; and liberating women - will just have to wait for another day, another invasion.

Harper has set a secondary goal: "NATO must succeed or its future is in considerable doubt." Translation: NATO has failed and cannot win but must stay on until it's seen not to have failed. (See Iraq, above.)

On Iran and other issues, though, Harper won't budge. He said recently that the Iranian regime is "obviously evil" and it wants a nuclear bomb to "act on that ideology."

Obama, however, is getting ready to talk to the evil Iranians. And the Syrians. And the Taliban.

Meanwhile, some European and Arab states are exploring ways to engage even Hezbollah and Hamas.

The times they are a-changin'.

Hillary Clinton has invited Iran to a summit on Afghanistan, along with Pakistan and other regional players.

Iran, which borders both Afghanistan and Pakistan, has legitimate concerns. For example, she said, "it's deeply concerned about the importation of (Afghan) narcotics." She noted that Iran cooperated with the U.S. after 9/11 and during the invasion of Afghanistan.

She could've added that Iran was among the first to warn about the Taliban in the 1990s - a time when America was flirting with them.

PM resists as world changes

As for Iranian nuclear plans, Obama is hinting he might axe the U.S. missile defence shield in Eastern Europe if Russia dropped its nuclear and missile deals with Iran.

He is talking to Syria. The two officials he sent to Damascus "found a lot of common ground."

He needs Syrian co-operation in Lebanon. But his priority is to get Syria and Israel back negotiating, as they were under Turkish auspices until the Israeli offensive on Gaza. An Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a peace deal would help isolate Iran.

Bashar al-Assad may insist that Israel settle with the Palestinians and Iranians at the same time. We'll only find out at the negotiating table.

Clinton visited Turkey, thanked it for brokering the talks and said Obama himself would visit soon. The U.S. needs Turkey as an exit point for U.S. troops and equipment out of Iraq, and as an air supply route into Afghanistan.

This is smart politics, all around.

In Jakarta, Clinton said that Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, shows that "Islam, democracy and modernity not only can coexist but thrive."

No revelation that. But it does represent a sharp departure from Dick Cheney's and Jason Kenney's apocalyptic formulations in dealing with Muslims.

Obama said in December: "We've got a unique opportunity to reboot America's image around the world, the Muslim world in particular."

He's moving ahead both symbolically and substantially. But Ottawa is still stuck in its neo-con muck.

hsiddiq @ thestar.ca

Load-Date: March 12, 2009

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah; Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

The Times (London)

November 24, 2009 Tuesday

Edition 1, Ireland

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 972 words

Byline: James Hider; Frenkel Cairo

Body

Israel and the Palestinians are close to reaching agreement on a prisoner swap that could mean freedom for an Israeli soldier held for more than three years in exchange for the release of nearly a thousand Palestinian militants.

Gilad Schalit, the young Israeli corporal captured by Hamas in a cross-border raid in June 2006, could be freed as early as Friday, when Palestinians observe Eid al-Adha - a traditional period for amnesties. Among those expected to be released by Israel is Marwan Barghouti, a leading candidate to succeed the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, who has threatened to step down over a lack of progress in the peace process. Barghouti, the leader of the Fatah young guard, is serving multiple life sentences for murder and attacks on Israelis during the last intifada.

Seen as a more militant leader, Barghouti is one of the few figures who may be able to bridge the bitter divide between Hamas and Fatah. He has been in an Israeli jail since 2002. Despite his popular backing among the Palestinians, he is a pragmatic figure who is viewed by many Israelis as a potential successor to President Abbas who could forge a peace deal.

Hamas's official newspaper said the swap could go ahead in the middle of next week. A Hamas delegation was due to leave Gaza today for Egypt to finalise details of the prisoner swap.

The exchange, facilitated by Egypt with aid from German negotiators, would probably be in two stages. In the first, Gilad Schalit, 23, and promoted to sergeant during his detention, would be handed over to the Egyptians in return for the first tranche of prisoner releases. In the second, he would be transferred to Israel, resulting in further releases of Palestinians.

His parents, Noam and Aviva, were being briefed by government officials as press speculation grew that a deal was close, but his father said yesterday that the family had received no official notice of an impending release.

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

Ayman Taha, a Hamas official in the Cairo delegation, said that "details" were still being negotiated, but that serious progress had been made. An Egyptian official said that the main question was where to place the released Palestinian prisoners.

Israel wants to ensure they will be exiled outside the Palestinian territories, where they can be kept under supervision by local authorities. "There will be some public outcry over the identity of some of these prisoners. To pre-empt this, Israel wants to make sure that they are not allowed to return to their violent activities," said an Israeli official. Israel would probably make an exception in Barghouti's case. If he plays a leading role in the Palestinian Government, he would be expected to live on the West Bank.

This is not the first time that both sides have geared up for an exchange, only to see hopes shattered at the last minute. However, reports were given credence yesterday by Hamas's confirmation of a unilateral moratorium on rocket-firing into Israel. One Israeli newspaper said that some Palestinian prisoners had written to their families saying they would soon see them again.

A prisoner exchange would provide a huge boost for Hamas, isolated and under blockade in the Gaza Strip for more than two years. Unlike Fatah, which has negotiated with Israel, yet won no serious benefits, Hamas has continued to urge armed resistance. Liberty for hundreds of militants would bolster its domestic prestige, damaged by its economic isolation and the imposition of Islamist curbs on the population it controls.

Sergeant Schalit's release would come as an enormous relief to the Israeli authorities. His captivity has tortured a military that prides itself on never leaving a man behind, dead or alive, and struck at the heart of every family in a nation where military service is compulsory. There are some who fear that the price being paid is too high-especially some of the families of victims of violence perpetrated by those now slated to go free.

The tentative ceasefire between Hamas and Israel may have other motives, too. With Western attempts to defuse Iran's nuclear programme having stalled, it is believed that Tehran has told its proxies on Israel's northern and southern border, Hezbollah and Hamas, to keep their powder dry for now, to threaten the Jewish state with three-way retaliation if it strikes Iran's nuclear facilities.

Egyptian sources said explosives bound for Gaza had been intercepted - another sign that Hamas is rearming after its war with Israel a year ago.

Online

Breaking news on the prisoner swap timesonline.co.uk/mideast

Prisoner exchanges

Oct 2009 20 Palestinian women freed in return for a "proof-of-life" video of Gilad Schalit

June 2008 Lebanon hands over the bodies of two Israeli soldiers. Israel frees five Lebanese prisoners and Palestinian prisoners and the bodies of Lebanese Hezbollah militants

Jan 2004 Israel delivers to Hezbollah 436 Arab prisoners and the bodies of 59 Lebanese fighters for a civilian, Elchanan Tenenbaum, and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers

July 1996 Israel frees 65 prisoners for the return of the bodies of two soldiers from Lebanon

Sept 1991 Israel swaps 51 prisoners for proof that one of its soldiers in Lebanon is dead

May 1985 Israel exchanges 1,150 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners for three Israeli soldiers

Nov 1983 Israel swaps 4,600 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners for six Israeli soldiers

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released
Middle East

Negotiated solutions are not always possible. The whereabouts of Guy Hever, an Israeli soldier missing in the Golan Heights in 1997, are unknown. Ron Arad, kidnapped in 1986, is still missing, as are the soldiers Zachary Baumel, Tzvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz

Estimates of Palestinians in Israeli custody vary. Rights groups say that 335 are held without trial

Sources: Associated Press, Reuters, Times database

The release of militants would bolster Hamas's domestic prestige

Graphic

Marwan Barghouti: has been in jail since 2002

Noam Schalit has waited more than three years for his son's return, but some Israelis feel that the price for his freedom is too high

ILAN MIZRAHI FOR THE TIMES

Load-Date: November 26, 2009

End of Document

What happened in Iran was not an election

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

June 16, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A15; Christopher Hitchens

Length: 995 words

Byline: Christopher Hitchens, For The Calgary Herald

Body

For a flavour of the political atmosphere in Tehran, Iran, last week, I quote from a young Iranian comrade who furnishes me with regular updates:

"I went to the last major (President Mahmoud) Ahmadinejad rally and got the whiff of what I imagine fascism to have been all about. Lots of splotchy boys who can't get a date are given guns and told they're special."

It's hard to better this, either as an evocation of the sexual repression that lies at the nasty core of the "Islamic republic" or as a description of the reserve strength that the Iranian para-state, or state within a state, can bring to bear if it ever feels itself even slightly challenged. There is a theoretical reason why the events of the last month in Iran (I am sorry, but I resolutely decline to refer to them as elections) were a crudely stage-managed insult to those who took part in them and those who observed them. And then there is a practical reason. The theoretical reason, though less immediately dramatic and exciting, is the much more interesting and important one.

Iran and its citizens are considered by the Shiite theocracy to be the private property of the anointed mullahs. This totalitarian idea was originally based on a piece of religious quackery promulgated by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and known as velayate faqui. Under the terms of this edict--which originally placed the clerics in charge of the lives and property of orphans, the indigent, and the insane--the entire population is now declared to be a childlike ward of the black-robed state. Thus any voting exercise is, by definition, over before it has begun, because the all-powerful Islamic Guardian Council determines well in advance who may or may not "run." Any newspaper referring to the subsequent proceedings as an election, sometimes complete with rallies, polls, counts, and all the rest of it, is the cause of helpless laughter among the ayatollahs. ("They fell for it? But it's too easy!") Shame on all those media outlets that have been complicit in this dirty lie all last week. And shame also on our pathetic secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, who said she hoped that "the genuine will and desire" of the people of Iran would be reflected in the outcome. Surely she knows that any such contingency was deliberately forestalled to begin with.

In theory, the first choice of the ayatollahs might not actually "win," and there could even be divisions among the Islamic Guardian Council as to who constitutes the best nominee. Secondary as that is, it can still lead to rancor. After all, corrupt systems are still subject to fraud. This, like hypocrisy, is the compliment that vice pays to virtue. With near-incredible brutishness and cruelty, then, the guardians moved to cut off cellphone and text-message networks that might give even an impression of fairness and announced though their storm-troop "revolutionary guards" that only one form of voting had divine sanction. ("The miraculous hand of God," announced Supreme

What happened in Iran was not an election

Leader Ali Khamenei, had been present in the polling places and had announced a result before many people had even finished voting.)

The obvious evidence of fixing, fraud, and force to one side, there is another reason to doubt that an illiterate fundamentalist like Ahmadinejad could have increased even a state-sponsored plebiscite-type majority. Everywhere else in the Muslim world, in every election in the last two years, the tendency has been the other way. In Morocco in 2007, the much-ballyhooed Justice and Development Party wound up with 14 per cent of the vote. In Malaysia and Indonesia, the predictions of increased market share for the pro-Sharia parties were likewise falsified. In Iraq this last January, the local elections penalized the clerical parties that had been making life a misery in cities like Basra. In neighbouring Kuwait last month, the Islamist forces did poorly, and four women--including the striking figure of Rola Dashti, who refuses to wear any headgear--were elected to the 50-member parliament. Most important of all, perhaps, Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah was convincingly and unexpectedly defeated last week in Lebanon after an open and vigorous election, the results of which were not challenged by any party. And, from all I hear, if the Palestinians were to vote again this year--as they were at one point supposed to do--it would be highly improbable that Hamas would emerge the victor.

Yet somehow a senile and fanatical religious clique that has failed even to condition the vote in a country like Lebanon, where it has proxy and surrogate parties under arms, is able to reward itself by increasing its "majority" in a festeringly bankrupt state where it controls the media and enjoys a monopoly of violence. I think we should deny it any official recognition of this consolation.

Mention of the Lebanese elections impels me to pass on what I saw with my own eyes at a recent Hezbollah rally in south Beirut, Lebanon. In a large hall that featured the official attendance of a delegation from the Iranian Embassy, the most luridly displayed poster of the pro-Iranian party was a nuclear mushroom cloud! Underneath this telling symbol was a caption warning the "Zionists" of what lay in store. We sometimes forget that Iran still officially denies any intention of acquiring nuclear weapons. Yet Ahmadinejad recently hailed an Iranian missile launch as a counterpart to Iran's success with nuclear centrifuges, and Hezbollah has certainly been allowed to form the idea that the Iranian reactors may have non-peaceful applications. This means, among other things, that the vicious manipulation by which the mullahs control Iran can no longer be considered their "internal affair." Fascism at home sooner or later means fascism abroad. Face it now or fight it later. Meanwhile, give it its right name.

Christopher Hitchens Is A Columnist For Vanity Fair And The Roger S. Mertz Media Fellow At The Hoover Institution In Stanford, Calif.

Graphic

Photo: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ;

Load-Date: June 16, 2009

In fractured Lebanon, starting reconciliation at a young age; An organization helping teachers to promote conflict resolution in classrooms hopes the effort could blossom into a more peaceful national culture.

The Christian Science Monitor

August 28, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1115 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent

Body

Some Lebanese, especially those with a sense of irony, like to share an American traveler's impressions of their homeland on the eastern Mediterranean: William Thomson noted that Lebanon's religions and sects - there are 18 recognized ones in a country smaller than Connecticut - share a country but little fraternal feeling. Of the Muslim sects, he wrote, the Sunnis "excommunicate" the Shiites, "both hate" the Druze, and all three "detest" the Alawites. As for the Christians, "the Maronites have no particular love for anybody and, in turn, are disliked by all." The Greek Orthodox "cannot endure" the Greek Catholics, and "all despise the Jews."

"They can never form one united people ... and will therefore remain weak, incapable of self-government, and exposed to the ... oppressions of foreigners," Mr. Thomson concluded. Thomson's comments could be those of a contemporary observation. But he wrote them in 1870 in "The Land and the Book," an account of his travels as a missionary in the Levant. Breaking such deeply embedded and historical suspicions is no easy task, but one nongovernmental organization (NGO) is turning to Lebanese schools in a grass-roots approach to promote a culture of problem solving and tolerance in the classroom. Search for Common Ground (SFCG), an international NGO specializing in conflict resolution, has launched a nationwide initiative to train schoolteachers in techniques to mediate and resolve classroom disputes among Lebanese youths. "The idea is to institutionalize listening and problem solving among 8- and 14-year-olds in the schools," says Sarah Shouman, SFCG's country director for Lebanon. Lebanese youths argue and fight over childish issues much the same as other young people all over the world. Additionally, however, the political and religious prejudices of their parents can seep onto the playground, particularly at times of heightened internal tension, perpetuating the legacy of communal mistrust. Even Hezbollah participates SFCG's pilot project focuses on seven schools, three private and four public, in cities as well as rural regions. One of them, in Akkar Province in north Lebanon, is a private Greek Orthodox establishment with priests as teachers. Another is a mainly Shiite school in Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley run by the militant Hezbollah organization. Hezbollah, which runs a vast social-welfare network in Lebanon but is better known for its military exploits against Israel, initially was wary of submitting its teachers for training by a foreign NGO with offices in Washington and Brussels. "They took a month to think about it," says Ms. Shouman. "But afterward, they were so happy with the experience that they want us to train teachers at all their schools - and they are willing to pay for it, too." The trainers, from Lebanese civil society groups and from groups linked to the SFCG project, are from as religiously and politically diverse backgrounds as the schools to which they are sent. Training was carried out in Cyprus by Valerie Dovey, a South African peace educator who worked in postapartheid South Africa. "The way we all communicated with each other was very nice," says Noha Chahine, a trainer who is a teacher at a Beirut school. "It was challenging, but it showed that we all have a common goal despite our different backgrounds." On a recent morning, Ms. Chahine and her fellow trainer, Tarek Abu Zein--ab, held a session for eight women teachers at the

In fractured Lebanon , starting reconciliation at a young age An organization helping teachers to promote conflict resolution in classrooms hopes the effort cou....

public school in Joun, a village with a mixed Shiite and Christian population. It's surrounded by olive groves on rolling chalky hills near the port of Sidon. The school has some 200 5-to-13-year-olds. The women - Shiites and Chris-tians, reflecting the village - sat attentively at their pupils' desks. "One form of expression is art or drawing, which children can use to express peace or conflict," says Chahine. "Art helps break the ice between students. A way of reducing anger is to let them draw." Much of the instruction is rooted in common sense and good manners, such as listening to others and accepting differences. When the teachers break into chatter, the burly, goateed Mr. Abu Zeinab stands at the head of the class with his arm raised, his fist clenched. Slowly, the women stop talking and look up. "You see? A way of getting children to stop talking is to stand and raise your hand," Abu Zeinab says. "If you scream at children, you achieve nothing but create a climate of conflict." The women are asked to break into two groups and draw something that makes them happy. All sketch themselves with their husbands and children. One woman in a full-length black chador depicts her family as stars that she gazes at from the beach. Another draws her family eating lunch together. Another has her family walking through trees, expressing her love for a clean environment. Abu Zeinab asks them to explain their pictures, reminding them to speak clearly and maintain eye contact. Such skills would be taken for granted in the West, but educational training remains underfunded here. "We have a lot of conflicts because we suffer from social and economic problems here," says Hanna Haidar, a trainee who teaches English at the school. "But I am learning many things ... which will be helpful to us." Hopes to expand the program If the pilot program proves successful, SFCG hopes to expand it to another 100 schools in the next three years. The NGO also produces a children's TV program called "Kilna Bil Hayy" ("All of Us in the Neighborhood") in which six children - an Armenian, Christian, Druze, Palestinian, Shiite, and Sunni - live in the same apartment building. Broadcast by Lebanon's LBC International channel, the show teaches children to embrace their unity and accept their differences. While Lebanon has been fairly calm since 1990, when the 16-year civil war ended, a durable peace remains susceptible to sectarian divisions, disparities between rich and poor, external meddling, and factionalism. In May last year, Lebanon teetered on the edge of civil conflict once more during street fighting that pitted Shiite factions against Sunnis and Druze. While peaceful parliamentary elections were held in June, forming a coalition government has been stymied by political squabbles. "Politics here tends to be divided between anti-West and pro-West, and unfortunately, politicians have -cemented those divisions in Lebanon," says Abu Zeinab, who has several years of experience in Lebanese civil society groups. "That's why this type of project is very important," he concludes. "It brings people from all over Lebanon together. What we teach to the schools is that you are all Lebanese and that you are all one."

Graphic

Teachers at a school in Joun, Lebanon, participate in a tolerance-training exercise. Nicholas Blanford

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah; Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

The Times (London)

November 24, 2009 Tuesday

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THE TIMES

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Length: 994 words

Byline: James Hider; Sheera Frenkel

Body

Israel and the Palestinians are close to reaching agreement on a prisoner swap that could mean freedom for an Israeli soldier held for more than three years in exchange for the release of nearly a thousand Palestinian militants.

Gilad Schalit, the young Israeli corporal captured by Hamas in a cross-border raid in June 2006, could be freed as early as Friday, when Palestinians observe Eid al-Adha - a traditional period for amnesties.

Among those expected to be released by Israel is Marwan Barghouti, a leading candidate to succeed the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, who has threatened to step down over a lack of progress in the peace process. Barghouti, the leader of the Fatah young guard, is serving multiple life sentences for murder and attacks on Israelis during the last intifada.

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Hamas's official newspaper said the swap could go ahead in the middle of next week. A Hamas delegation was due to leave Gaza today for Egypt to finalise details of the prisoner swap.

The exchange, facilitated by Egypt with aid from German negotiators, would probably be in two stages.

In the first, Galid Schalit, now 23 and promoted during his detention to the rank of sergeant, would be handed over to the Egyptians in return for the first tranche of prisoner releases. In the second stage, he would be transferred to Israel, resulting in further releases of Palestinian prisoners.

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This is not the first time that both sides have geared up for an exchange, only to see hopes shattered at the last minute. However, reports were given credence yesterday by Hamas's confirmation of a unilateral moratorium on rocket-firing into Israel. One Israeli newspaper said that some Palestinian prisoners had written to their families saying they would soon see them again.

A prisoner exchange would provide a huge boost for Hamas, isolated and under blockade in the Gaza Strip for more than two years. Unlike Fatah, which has negotiated with Israel, yet won no serious benefits, Hamas has continued to urge armed resistance.

Securing the liberty of hundreds of militants would bolster its domestic prestige, damaged by its economic isolation and the increasing imposition of Islamist restrictions on the population it controls.

Sergeant Schalit's release would come as an enormous relief to the Israeli authorities. His captivity has tortured a military that prides itself on never leaving a man behind, dead or alive, and struck at the heart of every family in a nation where military service is compulsory.

There are, though, some who fear that the price being paid is too high - especially some of the families of victims of violence perpetrated by those now slated to go free.

The tentative ceasefire between Hamas and Israel may have other motives, too. With Western attempts to defuse Iran's nuclear programme having stalled, it is believed that Tehran has told its proxies on Israel's northern and southern border, Hezbollah and Hamas, to keep their powder dry for now, to threaten the Jewish state with three-way retaliation if it strikes Iran's nuclear facilities.

Egyptian sources said that a ton of explosives bound for Gaza had been intercepted - another indication that Hamas is rearming after its war with Israel almost a year ago.

Online

Breaking news on the prisoner swap timesonline.co.uk/mideast

Prisoner exchanges

Oct 2009 20 Palestinian women freed in return for a "proof-of-life" video of Gilad Schalit

June 2008 Lebanon hands over the bodies of two Israeli soldiers. Israel frees five Lebanese prisoners - including one convicted of killing a child - and Palestinian prisoners and the bodies of Lebanese Hezbollah militants

Jan 2004 Israel delivers to Hezbollah 436 Arab prisoners and the bodies of 59 Lebanese fighters for a civilian, Elchanan Tenenbaum, and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers

July 1996 Israel frees 65 prisoners for the return of the bodies of two soldiers from Lebanon

Sept 1991 Israel exchanges 51 prisoners for proof that one of its soldiers held in Lebanon is dead

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released
Middle East

May 1985 Israel exchanges 1,150 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners for three Israeli soldiers

Nov 1983 Israel swaps 4,600 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners for six Israeli soldiers

Negotiated solutions are not always possible. The whereabouts of Guy Hever, an Israeli soldier who went missing in the Golan Heights in 1997, are unknown. Ron Arad, kidnapped in 1986, is still missing, as are the soldiers Zachary Baumel, Tzvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz

Estimates of Palestinians in Israeli custody vary.

Rights groups say that 335 are held without trial

Sources: Associated Press, Reuters, Times database

Graphic

Marwan Barghouti: has been in jail since 2002

Noam Schalit has waited more than three years for his son's return - but some Israelis feel that the price being paid for his freedom might be too high

ILAN MIZRAHI FOR THE TIMES

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End of Document

Free elections in Iran⁴ Don't make me laugh; LEADER

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Byline: Christopher Hitchens

Body

; OR A flavour of the political atmosphere in Tehran last week, I quote from a young Iranian comrade who furnishes me with regular updates:

"I went to the last major [President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad rally and got the whiff of what I imagine fascism to have been all about. Lots of splotchy boys who can't get a date are given guns and told they're special."

It's hard to better this, either as an evocation of the rancid sexual repression that lies at the nasty core of the "Islamic republic" or as a description of the reserve strength that the Iranian parastate, or state within a state, can bring to bear if it ever feels itself even slightly challenged.

There is a theoretical reason why the events of the past month in Iran (I am sorry but I resolutely decline to refer to them as "elections") were a crudely stage-managed insult to those who took part in them and those who observed them, and then there is a practical reason. The theoretical reason, though less immediately dramatic and exciting, is the much more interesting and important one.

Iran and its citizens are considered by the Shiite theocracy to be the private property of the anointed mullahs. This totalitarian idea was based on a piece of religious quackery promulgated by the late Ayatollah Khomeini and known as "velayat-e faqui". Under this edict, which originally put the clerics in charge of the lives and property of orphans, the indigent and the insane, the entire population is now declared to be a childlike ward of the black-robed state.

Thus any voting exercise is, by definition, over before it has begun because the all-powerful Islamic Guardian Council determines well in advance who may or may not "run". Any newspaper referring to the subsequent proceedings as an "election" (sometimes complete with "rallies", "polls", "counts" and all the rest of it) is the cause of helpless laughter among the ayatollahs ("They fell for it? It's too easy!").

Shame on all those media outlets that have been complicit in this dirty lie. Shame also on the pathetic US Secretary of State who said before the result that she hoped that "the genuine will and desire" of the people of Iran would be reflected in the outcome. Surely she knows that any such contingency was deliberately forestalled to begin with.

In theory, the first-choice candidate of the ayatollahs might not actually "win" and there could even be divisions among the Islamic Guardian Council as to who constitutes the best nominee. Secondary as that is, it can still lead to rancour.

Free elections in Iran 4 Don't make me laugh LEADER

After all, corrupt systems are still subject to fraud. This like hypocrisy is the compliment that vice pays to virtue. Perhaps that explains the claims of vote rigging to keep the current president in office.

With near-incredible brutishness and cruelty, then, before the election the guardians moved to cut off mobile phone and text message networks and announced through their storm-troop "revolutionary guards" that only one form of voting had divine sanction. ("The miraculous hand of God, " announced Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, had been present in the polling places and had announced a result before many people had even finished voting. He says that sort of thing all the time.) Aside from the obvious evidence of fixing, fraud and force, there is another reason to doubt that an erate fundamentalist like Ahmadinejad could have increased even a state-sponsored plebiscitetype majority. Everywhere else in the Muslim world, in every election in the past two years, the tendency has been the other way. In Morocco in 2007, the much-ballyhooed Justice and Development Party wound up with 14 per cent of the vote. In Malaysia and Indonesia, the predictions of increased market share for the pro-Sharia parties were likewise proved wrong.

In Iraq this last January, the local elections penalised the clerical parties that had been making life a misery in cities like Basra. In neighbouring Kuwait last month, the Islamist forces did poorly and four women, including the striking figure of Rola Dashti, who refuses to wear any headgear, were elected to the 50-member parliament.

Most important of all, perhaps, Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah was convincingly and unexpectedly defeated last week in Lebanon after an open and vigorous election, the results of which were not challenged by any party. From all I hear, if the Palestinians were to vote again this year, as they were supposed to do, it would be highly improbable that Hamas would win.

Yet somehow a senile and fanatical religious clique that has failed to condition the vote even in a country like Lebanon, where it has proxy and surrogate parties under arms, is able to reward itself by increasing its "majority" in a festering, bankrupt state where it controls the media and enjoys a monopoly of violence. I think we should deny it any official recognition of this consolation. (new film by Cyrus Nowrasteh, The Stoning Of Soraya M, will soon show how those who dare to dissent in other ways are dealt with by Ahmadinejad's "grassroots" fanatics.) Mention of the Lebanese elections impels me to pass on what I saw at a recent Hezbollah rally in south Beirut, Lebanon. In a large hall that featured the official attendance of a delegation from the Iranian Embassy, the most luridly displayed poster of the pro-Iranian party was a nuclear mushroom cloud! Underneath this telling symbol was a caption warning the "Zionists" of what lay in store.

We sometimes forget that Iran still officially denies any intention of acquiring nuclear weapons. Yet Ahmadinejad recently hailed an Iranian missile launch as a counterpart to Iran's success with nuclear centrifuges and Hezbollah has certainly formed the idea that Iranian reactors may have nonpeaceful applications. This means that the vicious manipulation by which the mullahs control Iran can no longer be considered their "internal affair". Fascism at home sooner or later means fascism abroad. Face it now or fight it later.

Meanwhile, give it its right name.

Graphic

OUTRAGE: Iran's disputed election result has lead to bloody protests in Tehran

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