

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:33:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498657

Documents (100)

1. [Olmert ally convicted of indecent assault: 'This was not a kiss of affection'; Another blow to Israeli government, already reeling over criticism of war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

2. [Comment & Debate: The refugees' fury will be felt for generations to come: Israel is seeking to cast itself as the victim even as it expels the people of Lebanon and Gaza from their homes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

3. [Last shipload of Aussies reaches Cyprus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

4. [Lebanese funeral draws 800,000](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

5. [Deadly Israeli attack derails peace effort](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

6. [*Israeli crisis a problem for U.N.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

7. [*Lebanese bid farewell to Gemaye!*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

8. [*Understanding the al-Sadr movement*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

9. [*World Digest*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

10. [*Israel gets new army chief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

11. [Know enemies, not slogans](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

12. [Turtles in war zone](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

13. [Obituary: Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri: Leader of Bahrain 's Shia majority, jailed for his civil rights campaigning](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

14. [Good deed meets cross-border challenge](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

15. [Lebanon 's battle scars: Live bombs litter the landscape and israeli incursions continue while villages lie in ruins](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

16. [Bernard-Henri Levy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

17. [Israeli PM faces bank sale probe Military chief blamed for failure of Lebanon war quits](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

18. [GUANTANAMO HEARINGS BEGIN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

19. [RECORDVIEW: KILLINGS ARE ON OUR CONSCIENCE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

20. [Israeli politician convicted of kissing female soldier; Sexual misconduct conviction could earn three-year jail sentence](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

21. [*Sheik up as mufti axed and role is abolished 'Having one person lead the community is problematic'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

22. [*Protesters see Harper as U.S. floozy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

23. [*Another sex scandal rocks Israeli politics*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

24. [*Inside Today*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

25. [*3 funerals for 3 best friends in Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

26. [*Hope falters amid mad Mel and the media war*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

27. [*UC-Davis Middle East panel addresses conflicts, offers solutions*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

28. [*Another taxing issue*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

29. [*News Summary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

30. [*'Fantasy' fails to grasp root of Mideast conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

31. [Inside Today](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

32. [U.S. Muslim advocacy group is object of suspicion](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

33. [We must have a lasting solution](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

34. [For Muslims, Silence Means Acceptance](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

35. [Criticism forces Olmert to shelve border plan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

36. [Ordinary citizens targeted in Lebanon blasts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

37. [Iran 's successful blend: charity, ideology](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

38. [Stop it now](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

39. [Israel vows war to the bitter end](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

40. [UM WING OF PML SUGGEST NEW COMMITTEE ON HUDDOD BILL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

41. ['They found them huddled together': Israel calls off air strikes after raid on Lebanese town kills more than 60 people, including 34 children](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

42. [Bombs Kill 3 in Lebanon on Eve of Slaying Anniversary](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

43. [RISING FROM SLUMBER](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

44. [Overseas tension hits home for some U. Arizona students](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

45. [Royal cautious on human rights issues on 'listening' trip to China](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

46. [NEWSDESK](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

47. [The NHS is still not fixed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

48. [Blair wants urgency on ceasefire](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

49. [HEZB'S VICTORY A LESSON FOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

50. [Briefing - The Friday Column - An eye for an eye, to hell with the truth](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

51. [Arabs' anger at America is hurting moderates Islamists lifted by U.S. support of 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

52. [*My Views Of 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

53. [*America the terrible*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

54. [*Bombings target Shia Muslims on holiest day*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

55. [*A matter of faith? Or just Politics? Tension in the Middle East resonates in interfaith relationships here*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

56. [*Anger at U.S. hurts Arab moderates Its support of Israel is lifting Islamists*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

57. [*NO GENERAL TO BE ACCEPTED AFTER MUSHARRAF'S EXIT*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

58. [*Labour members defect to Lib Dems over Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

59. [*War Clouds Gather Over The Golan OPINION*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

60. [*Rise in radical Islam is final straw for Lebanon 's embattled Christians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

61. [*Former Israeli justice minister convicted of indecent assault*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

62. [*Israel won't lift sea and air blockades yet*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

63. [Ceasefire talks gather pace as Israel resumes air strikes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

64. [Beckett suffers new crisis as 30 activists defect to Lib Dems](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

65. [Vancouver rally supporting Israel draws more than 1,600: Organizers, police tighten security after Seattle shootings](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

66. [Carnage: At a building in Qana, 34 of 56 victims were children.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

67. [Middle East Crisis - No ceasefire as Israel plans to broaden offensive in Lebanon](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

68. [Ceasefire talks gather pace as Israel resumes air strikes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

69. [Hamas is using its media properties to back terrorists and incite violence](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

70. [Taxing the poor will fund cushy jobs for friends](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

71. [Conflict Polarizes the Mideast, Leaving Little Middle Ground](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

72. [International: Israel 's former minister guilty of sexual misconduct as government woes deepen](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

73. [*Mufti told to quit or leave*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

74. [*World of contrast 2006 in pictures*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

75. [*Olmert's popularity sinks to new lows: Just 2% of Israelis trust PM ; new election wanted*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

76. [*Young Christian leader grieved*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

77. [*Assassination inflames tensions in shaken Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

78. [TIME'S UP FOR MUFTI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

79. [Don't be fooled by the fanatics: Islam's liberals are on the march](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

80. [Second sex scandal deals blow to Olmert: Former justice minister guilty of assault on female soldier](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

81. [When the blind lead the blind](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

82. [At War, at Home, Again](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

83. [Aid worker tells of refugees' desperate plight](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

84. [Even in death, mothers hugged children](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

85. [THE CHANGING FACE OF IRAN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

86. [Our star pupil is fighting for Isreal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

87. [Time for Muslim community to move on OUR VIEW The Sun-Herald](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

88. [DOOM & GLOOM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

89. [World datelines](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

90. [Israel's president is subject of sexual harassment case](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

91. [Our star pupil is fighting 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: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

92. [Marching for Jewish solidarity](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

93. [World datelines](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

94. [Briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

95. [Israel suspends air attacks in wake of strike killing 56](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

96. [Our star pupil is fighting for Isreal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

97. [Letters - The west has got Iran all wrong](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

98. [Israeli Police Investigating Sex Case Take Items From President's Home](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

99. [Our star pupil is fighting 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

100. [Dozens die in Iraqi holy day violence as provincial al-Qaida leader captured](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

**Olmert ally convicted of indecent assault: 'This was not a kiss of affection';
Another blow to Israeli government, already reeling over criticism of war**

The Gazette (Montreal)
February 1, 2007 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 505 words

Byline: MATTHEW FISHER, CanWest News Service

Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

Israel was rocked by a sex scandal again yesterday when former justice minister Haim Ramon was found guilty of indecent assault against a 20-year-old **female** soldier.

Three judges unanimously found the 56-year-old lawyer and member of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's ruling Kadima Party, had lied to the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court when he denied "placing his lips on her lips and inserting his tongue in her mouth," repeatedly, and against the complainant's will when the two of them met, for the first time, in his office.

The incident took place moments before the Israeli cabinet voted to go to war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon last summer.

The judges found the testimony of the woman, who was only known in court as H, regarding the kisses was "authentic, coherent, credible, and reliable."

"This was not a kiss of affection," the court said. "This has all the elements of a sexual crime."

The conviction was another staggering blow to Olmert's coalition government, which has been reeling for months over severe public condemnation of its mishandling of the war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon.

As well, the prime minister himself faces at least two criminal investigations into financial misconduct, his finance minister is under investigation for abusing his position for financial gain and another former minister has been charged with fraud, bribery and perjury.

Only last week, Israel's 61-year-old-president, Moshe Katsav, was charged with sex crimes including rape that involved several **women** less than half his age, as well as separate charges relating to fraud and obstruction of justice.

Public outrage over the war in Lebanon, where Olmert failed in his stated objective to win the release of two soldiers kidnapped by **Hezbollah**, and over the rising tide of sexual and financial misbehaviour by the country's

Olmert ally convicted of indecent assault: 'This was not a kiss of affection'; Another blow to Israeli government, already reeling over criticism of war

political leadership, has also had a devastating effect on the prime minister's popularity. Recent polls have found more than two-thirds of Israelis want Olmert to resign.

A survey published two days ago by the popular Ynetnews website painted an even more damning picture.

It revealed only three per cent of the electorate wanted Olmert returned as prime minister in the next election.

"These are the lowest figures for an Israeli prime minister in the 30 years that I have been doing this," said pollster Rafi Smith, who conducted the Ynet poll.

Hours before his conviction, friends of Ramon's had confidently predicted in the media that the divorced politician would be found not guilty for what was described as "a misunderstanding" over a "French kiss" and that he intended to resume the position as Olmert's justice minister, from which he resigned when charges were brought against him six months ago.

Instead Ramon faces up to three years in jail when the court pronounces a sentence on Feb. 21.

When Ramon's conviction was announced in court his girlfriend, who appeared to be several decades younger than him, hugged him supportively.

Through his lawyers Ramon indicated he intended to appeal his conviction.

Graphic

Colour Photo: GIL COHEN MAGEN, REUTERS; Former justice minister Haim Ramon will be sentenced Feb. 21 after having lied about an unwanted French kiss with a female soldier. ;

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

**Comment & Debate: The refugees' fury will be felt for generations to come:
Israel is seeking to cast itself as the victim even as it expels the people of
Lebanon and Gaza from their homes**

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 28

Length: 888 words

Byline: Karma Nabulsi

Body

People walk the dusty, broken roads in scorching summer heat, taking shelter in the basements of empty buildings. In Gaza and Lebanon, in the refugee camps of Khan Younis, Rafah and Jabaliya, in Tyre and Beirut, in Nabatiyeh and Sidon, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children seek refuge. As they flee, they risk the indiscriminate wrath of an enemy driven by an existential mania that can not be assuaged, only stopped. Ambulances are struck, humanitarian relief convoys are struck, UN observers are struck. Warning leaflets are dropped from the sky urging people to abandon their homes, just as they were in 1996, 1982, 1978, 1967 and 1948. The ultimately impossible decision in Gaza and Lebanon today is: where does a refugee go?

In Beirut in July 1982, after surviving a bomb that destroyed a seven-floor apartment block next door to me, burying alive more than 40 people taking refuge in its cellar, some of us began to sleep on the roof; there is no refuge from this terror, there is only resistance. Fifteen of the 37 children killed in Qana on Sunday were disabled; their families could take them no further north, according to the Lebanese MP Bahia Hariri.

From June to August 1982, Israeli aircraft flying over Lebanon dropped "smart bombs" on children's hospitals in Shatila camp, Gaza hospital, Acre hospital and 11 of the country's orphanages, killing dozens of disabled children. They had nowhere else to shelter. The roofs had been painted with huge white crosses visible from the sky.

That war did not give Israel the security it claims to seek, and nor will this one. In 1948 Palestinians fled after hearing news of the massacres in villages by Haganah forces and receiving leaflets dropped from the sky telling them to run for their lives. This week their grandchildren and great-grandchildren are being killed with impunity in the refugee camps of Gaza, where they are trapped. Last Friday alone more than 30 Palestinians were killed, with no international condemnation and barely a mention in the press. In Qana they were also trapped. "We couldn't get out of our neighbourhood because there are only two roads leading out and the Israelis bombed them both several days ago," said Mohammad Shalhoub, a disabled 41-year-old survivor.

The US and Britain are claiming that no ceasefire is possible until there is an international force that will implement United Nations resolution 1559. Yet the Lebanese prime minister issued a seven-point plan in Rome last week, consistent with international law and agreed by all elected parties in Lebanon (including Hizbullah), that had as its first requirement an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. It is implementation of the dozens of UN resolutions that Israel has flouted for more than 50 years with protection from the US - and now from Britain - that will stop this conflict.

Comment & Debate: The refugees' fury will be felt for generations to come: Israel is seeking to cast itself as the victim even as it expels the people of Lebano....

The capture of a soldier from an occupying army in Gaza, and of two soldiers on the Lebanese border by local resistance, in an attempt to force the release of thousands of illegally detained Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners, should have been dealt with by Israel in the framework of the laws of war and with a proportional response. Instead, by launching this massive attack, Israel has destroyed the social and economic infrastructure of a sovereign nation, Lebanon, just as it is destroying the infrastructure of a democratically elected administration in occupied Palestine.

It is producing generations of refugees who will also resist. Power stations, bridges, key manufacturing and food factories in Lebanon are ruined, the entire industrial estate of Gaza pulverised. The ancient city centre of Nablus has been demolished. Whole villages in south Lebanon and sections of refugee camps in Gaza have been obliterated. These too are war crimes. If Britain will not stop Israel, nor condemn it, then under the Geneva conventions it is complicit in those crimes.

Before seeking the implementation of UN resolution 1559, which calls for the disarmament of Hizbullah, Britain must seek with more sincerity the implementation of UN security council resolutions 242 and 338, which demand the immediate withdrawal of Israel from lands illegally occupied in the 1967 war, including the Golan Heights, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. There is hardly a statesman or citizen in the world today who cannot see that it will take outside intervention to stop Israel inflicting this terror. Calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, and working towards the implementation of all UN resolutions addressing this conflict, will restore to the international community - and Britain in particular - the legitimacy it has squandered by allowing months of war crimes to go by, witnessed but uncondemned and unconstrained.

Israel has failed to understand that it cannot expel a people and call itself the victim; that it cannot conquer its neighbours and treat any and all resistance to that conquest as terrorism; that it cannot arm itself as a regional superpower and annihilate the institutional fabric of two peoples without incurring the fury of their children in the years that follow.

Karma Nabulsi teaches politics and international relations at Oxford University. She is the author of Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance and the Law karmanabulsi@hotmail.com

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

Last shipload of Aussies reaches Cyprus

Weekend Australian

August 5, 2006 Saturday

All-round Metro Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 4

Length: 550 words

Byline: Peter Wilson, Europe correspondent

Body

MATP

A FINAL shipload of Australian evacuees from Lebanon has arrived in Cyprus, taking to 5200 the total rescued from Beirut.

Diplomats said the ferry, carrying 303 Australians, was almost certain to be the last chartered by Canberra to help people leave Lebanon, whose roads and air links have been destroyed by Israeli bombing.

The ferry load was split between Australians who were holidaying in Lebanon when the conflict began and Australian passport-holders living in the country.

Charbel El Kadi, who left Australia in 1997 after a decade in Sydney, said he was going back "for a few months or forever", depending on what happened in Lebanon.

"Things might settle down but it might be better for my children to build a future in Australia," he said aboard the ferry. His children, Marianne, 5, and Christian, 4, "are all that matters to me and my wife Rita so we will stay in Australia if things look bad in Lebanon".

"We know Australia is a wonderful country, so we have a choice."

Mr Kadi, a hospital maintenance manager who was a member of a Maronite Christian political party, said he believed Israel had no choice but to attack Hezbollah. "They have to do something about Hezbollah constantly threatening them, and the sooner it is finished the better."

Julie Hadchiti, a 27-year-old civil engineer from Greenacre in western Sydney, agreed, echoing a description of the radical Islamic group that is common among Lebanese Christians.

"Hezbollah and its guns are a cancer on Lebanon," she said. "When people with cancer get treated, some good cells get killed too, but that is what happens."

Ms Hadchiti was holidaying in Beirut with relatives when the fighting began. Her two younger sisters left on an evacuation vessel two weeks ago but she decided to stay to support her 100-year-old grandfather and her grandmother, who is in her 90s.

Last shipload of Aussies reaches Cyprus

"It has been very scary for them and I couldn't leave them," she said. "I just hope other countries help Lebanon when it is over and the whole country is ruined. America and a lot of other countries have consented to what Israel is doing, so they should help Lebanon to recover."

Ms Hadchiti said she was delighted with the support she had received from the Australian Government.

In Cyprus, the Australian military contingent assisting the Department of Foreign Affairs is ready to wind down its mission.

Its commander, Colonel Andrew Condon, said 94 defence personnel had provided logistics and health support for the evacuation.

"It's been really encouraging to see the great response we get from Australians when they see the ADF uniforms and know we are here to help them," he said.

In Australia, a coalition of aid and church groups has called on John Howard to push for a ceasefire in the Middle East conflict.

In an open letter published in The Weekend Australian today, the coalition, which includes World Vision, Save the Children and Plan International, says: "We are deeply concerned at the level of human suffering as a result of the current and deepening crisis in Lebanon, Israel and Gaza.

"The Australian Government should add its voice to the international community's call for a permanent and enduring ceasefire to allow millions of men, women and children access to humanitarian relief."

World -- Pages 12-15

Inquirer -- Pages 24-25

Load-Date: August 5, 2006

Lebanese funeral draws 800,000

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

November 24, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 14

Length: 575 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT (AP) -- Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese bid farewell to an assassinated Christian politician Pierre Gemayel on Thursday, turning his funeral into a powerful show of anger against Hezbollah and other Syrian allies in Lebanon.

The sprawling funeral reinvigorated supporters of the U.S.-backed government in a showdown that threatened to split the small Mideast country along sectarian lines.

"The second Independence Uprising was launched today for change and it will not stop," Gemayel's father, former president Amin Gemayel, told the crowd in Beirut's downtown, speaking from behind a panel of bulletproof glass. "I pledge to you that we will soon take steps so that your efforts will not go in vain."

The throng applauded as the coffin of Pierre Gemayel, wrapped in the flag of his Phalange party -- white with a green cedar emblem -- was carried past the square to nearby St. George's Cathedral, where the packed congregation sang hymns. The 34-year-old Gemayel's wife wept in the church, leaning on his mother's shoulder.

The head of the Maronite Church, Nasrallah Cardinal Sfeir, urged unity to save the country, addressing the congregation of family and dignitaries, including France's foreign minister and the Arab League secretary general.

The country's top Shiite politician, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a top Hezbollah ally, also attended in an attempt to show national unity.

But in the wake of Gemayel's slaying, Lebanon is polarized to a degree not seen since the 1975-1990 civil war -- sharply divided between anti-Syrian Christians and Sunni Muslims and pro-Syrian Shiites. Many fear Thursday's funeral could be the first round of demonstrations that could bring the political crisis into the streets.

In Martyrs' Square, the crowd of men, women and children waved red-white-and-green Lebanese flags and posters of Gemayel with the slogans "We want to live" and "Awaiting justice." Police estimated some 800,000 people participated in the rally and funeral.

The square was the scene of mass anti-Syrian rallies in last year's "Cedar Revolution," which helped end Damascus' domination of Lebanon. But in contrast to those protests, which were often festive, Thursday's funeral rally was charged with anger -- at Damascus and its allies in Lebanon.

Lebanese funeral draws 800,000

"They will not take away our determination to live ... and to be free," Walid Jumblatt, the Druse political leader and senior anti-Syrian figure who has accused Damascus of the assassination, told the crowd.

Many in the crowd burned pictures of Syria's president and Lebanon's pro-Syrian leaders. One man carried a large banner with the pictures of Lebanon's assassinated leaders and the words: "Syria's killing regime. Enough!"

Several of the politicians speaking in the square vowed the next step would be the removal of President Emile Lahoud, a staunch Syria supporter. Lahoud was at the Baabda presidential palace, where heavy security measures were taken amid fears that protesters would later march there to attempt to force the president to resign.

Anger also was pointed at **Hezbollah**, which had been calling for mass protests of its own in an effort to topple government of Prime Minister Fuad Saniora's government, which is dominated by opponents of Syria. After Gemayel's killing, the guerrilla group said it would not hold demonstrations for the time being -- but it will likely feel the need to respond with its own show of strength after Thursday's funeral. 11:10ET 23-11-06

Load-Date: November 24, 2006

End of Document

Deadly Israeli attack derails peace effort

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. B7

Length: 530 words

Byline: AP

Body

Israel agreed Sunday to halt air attacks on south Lebanon for 48 hours in the face of widespread outrage over an air strike that killed at least 56 Lebanese, mostly women and children, when it levelled a building where they had taken shelter.

The announcement of the pause in overflights - made by State Department spokesman Adam Ereli - appeared to reflect American pressure on Israel. Ereli, who was in Israel with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, said Israel reserved the right to hit targets if it learns that attacks are being prepared against them.

An Israeli government official confirmed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed to a 48-hour halt in air strikes on Lebanon. The official was speaking on condition of anonymity since he was not authorized to talk to reporters.

The stunning bloodshed in Lebanon earlier on Sunday prompted Rice to cut short her Mideast mission and intensified world demands on Washington to back an immediate end to the fighting.

The attack in the village of Qana brought Lebanon's death toll to more than 510 and pushed American peace efforts to a crucial juncture, as fury at the United States flared in Lebanon. The Beirut government said it would no longer negotiate over a U.S. peace package without an unconditional ceasefire. UN chief Kofi Annan sharply criticized world leaders - implicitly Washington - for ignoring his previous calls for a stop.

In Qana, workers pulled dirt-covered bodies of young boys and girls - dressed in the shorts and T-shirts they had been sleeping in - out of the mangled wreckage of the three-storey building. Bodies were carried in blankets.

Israel apologized for the deaths but blamed Hezbollah guerrillas, saying they had fired rockets into northern Israel from near the building. Before Ereli's announcement, Olmert said the campaign to crush Hezbollah would continue, telling Rice it could last up to two weeks more.

"We will not stop this battle, despite the difficult incidents this morning," he told his cabinet after the strike, according to a participant. "If necessary, it will be broadened without hesitation."

The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting to debate a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire - a step Washington has stood nearly alone at the council in refusing until the disarmament of Hezbollah is assured.

In a jab at the United States, Annan told the council in unusually frank terms that he was "deeply dismayed" his previous calls for a halt were ignored. "Action is needed now before many more children, women and men become casualties of a conflict over which they have no control," he said.

Deadly Israeli attack derails peace effort

After news of the deaths emerged, Rice telephoned Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora and said she would stay in Jerusalem to continue work on a peace package, rather than make a planned Sunday visit to Beirut.

Saniora said he told her not to come.

Rice decided to cut her Mideast trip short and return to Washington on Monday morning.

In Beirut, some 5,000 protesters gathered in downtown Beirut, at one point attacking a UN building and burning American flags. Another protest by about 50 people on a road leading to the U.S. Embassy forced security forces to close the road there.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

End of Document

Israeli crisis a problem for U.N.

University Wire

September 6, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: COLUMN

Length: 499 words

Byline: By Jen Steer, Daily Kent Stater; **SOURCE:** Kent State U.

Dateline: KENT, Ohio

Body

Funny things seem to happen when world leaders get together. Like the time President Bush called the situation in the Middle East "bullshit" while he was speaking candidly with Tony Blair. Or even the time Bush tried to playfully rub the shoulders of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the only **female** leader of a G-8 nation. Those crazy heads of state. What are they going to do next?

Well, it sure was not fun and games when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan met to discuss the current situation along the Israel-Lebanon border. With the serious threat of a full-blown war between Israel and the **Hezbollah**, the only semi-funny thing was hearing Olmert describe a U.N. resolution as "not a smorgasbord." I have no idea what he meant by that.

The news conference with Annan and Olmert was more than just an opportunity for the two to disagree; it also pointed out the flaws in the United Nations as a whole.

Annan was in Israel last week, touring parts of both countries that had been devastated by fighting. While meeting with the Israeli prime minister, he requested Israel lift its blockade on Lebanon and withdraw troops from the southern parts of Lebanon, according to Aug. 30 edition of The New York Times.

Olmert, of course, completely shut the Secretary General down. No one can truly expect him to just allow the **Hezbollah** to continue to receive supplies that will just prolong its attacks on Israel. The only thing Annan and Olmert were able to agree on is that they both called for the release of the two Israeli soldiers whose kidnapping triggered the 34-day war, explained CNN.com on Aug. 30.

It appears Annan should work on his persuasive speaking skills because nothing he says seems to be helping. By rejecting Annan's numerous pleas, Olmert was just proving, once again, that the United Nations needs a serious revamping.

It has been a while since Annan was really in control of a situation. As long as the United States wants to play the role of global police, the United Nations will have no role in the international community. Since our country invaded Iraq without the United Nation's approval, the United Nations has yet to be effective.

And now, given the situation in the Middle East, the United Nations will continue to lose credibility. No longer does the world look to the United Nations for guidance in times of crisis; instead, its primary representative is snubbed.

Israeli crisis a problem for U.N.

While the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah is on the other side of the globe, its effects will still be felt here. Changes must be made to the current setup of the United Nations, not just so these current issues can be dealt with, but so future problems don't develop.

For the United Nations to have any true power, the United States might need to back up and allow room for the United Nations to have a say in international matters. After all, isn't that what the United Nations is supposed to do in the first place?

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Load-Date: September 6, 2006

End of Document

Lebanese bid farewell to Gemayel

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)

November 24, 2006 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. B8

Length: 326 words

Byline: AP

Body

Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese bid farewell to an assassinated Christian politician Pierre Gemayel on Thursday, turning his funeral into a powerful show of anger against Hezbollah and other Syrian allies in Lebanon.

The sprawling funeral reinvigorated supporters of the U.S.-backed government in a showdown that threatened to split the small Mideast country along sectarian lines.

"The second Independence Uprising was launched today for change and it will not stop," Gemayel's father, former president Amin Gemayel, told the crowd in Beirut's downtown, speaking from behind a panel of bulletproof glass. "I pledge to you that we will soon take steps so that your efforts will not go in vain."

The throng applauded as the coffin of Pierre Gemayel, wrapped in the flag of his Phalange party - white with a green cedar emblem - was carried past the square to nearby St. George's Cathedral, where the packed congregation sang hymns. The 34-year-old Gemayel's wife wept in the church, leaning on his mother's shoulder.

The head of the Maronite Church, Nasrallah Cardinal Sfeir, urged unity to save the country, addressing the congregation of family and dignitaries, including France's foreign minister and the Arab League secretary general.

The country's top Shiite politician, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a top Hezbollah ally, also attended in an attempt to show national unity.

But in the wake of Gemayel's slaying, Lebanon is polarized to a degree not seen since the 1975-1990 civil war - sharply divided between anti-Syrian Christians and Sunni Muslims and pro-Syrian Shiites. Many fear Thursday's funeral could be the first round of demonstrations that could bring the political crisis into the streets.

In Martyrs' Square, the crowd of men, women and children waved red- white-and-green Lebanese flags and posters of Gemayel with the slogans "We want to live" and "Awaiting justice." Police estimated some 800,000 people participated in the rally and funeral.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006

Understanding the al-Sadr movement

Ottawa Citizen

August 26, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: SATURDAY OBSERVER; Pg. B3

Length: 485 words

Byline: Ellen Knickmeyer, The Washington Post

Body

The movement that Muqtada al-Sadr now leads took shape in the seminaries of Najaf, a theological centre of the Shiite world, as clerics in the second half of the 20th century sought to counter what were then growing secular and nationalist movements in the Arab world. Mr. Al-Sadr's own work since the U.S.-led invasion builds upon the social and health programs for Shiite poor begun by his father, Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr, in the 1990s. Mr. Al-Sadr's father died with two of his sons in 1999, in an assassination believed to have been ordered by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The al-Sadr movement's ultimate goal is a "united Islamic state," Bahaa al-Araji, a senior lawmaker in the al-Sadr political bloc, said in an interview. In Baghdad's Sadr City and other areas under al-Sadr's control, women uniformly cover their hair with scarves in the style of conservative Muslims. Islamic scholars operating with al-Sadr's office help arbitrate divorces, inheritances and other social matters in accordance with religious law. And fighters claiming to be part of Mr. al-Sadr's Mahdi Army -- named for a figure some Muslims believe will usher in an era of justice and true belief just before the end of time -- enforce a stringent Islamic code that includes the prohibition of alcohol and help enforce the orders of extrajudicial Islamic courts.

The movement is highly structured, largely along the lines of the Lebanese Hezbollah organization, building for its followers a state within a state while also acquiring a share of power in Iraq's formal government. Mr. al-Sadr, like Hezbollah, built popularity in part by providing social services such as health care. Because he controls the health ministry, and with it the hospitals and clinics of Iraq, his followers bear their children in public hospitals decorated with posters of the young cleric. They go to their graves washed by workers of an al-Sadr charity at a sprawling Shiite cemetery in Najaf, at a cost of 5,000 dinars, about \$3.75, one-fifteenth of what grieving families outside Mr. al-Sadr's network pay. Mr. al-Sadr also sponsors the God's Martyr Foundation, which supports veterans and the families of fighters who are killed.

Under a tithing system followed by Mr. al-Sadr's movement and many other mainstream Shiite groups, those who are financially capable give one-fifth of their income, capital investments or both to their religious leaders.

At Mr. al-Sadr's busy headquarters in Najaf last month, a steady stream of men poured in to sign up for an al-Sadr recruitment drive in the name of rebuilding the Samarra shrine. Younger men offered their labour. Other followers offered cash, including a proud grandfather who prodded forward a toddling grandson clutching two crisp U.S. \$5 bills.

Understanding the al-Sadr movement

Describing the method of building Mr. al-Sadr's organization, Mr. Araj said, "We now see resistance should be political, and not military."

Graphic

Photo: Karim Kadim, The Associated Press; An Iraqi woman carries a poster with images of Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and **Hezbollah**'s spiritual leader Hassan Nasrallah during a protest march in Sadr City last month, denouncing Israel's attacks in Lebanon.

Load-Date: August 26, 2006

End of Document

World Digest

The Toronto Star

February 8, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 342 words

Body

Britain

Series of letter bombs in recent days could be road rage gone postal

A parcel bomb exploded and injured three women at Britain's driver and vehicle licensing agency in Swansea, Wales, yesterday, the strongest indication yet that a spate of letter bombs may be motivated by an extreme case of road rage.

It was the third attack in as many days on offices that have some link to motorists. Six people were injured in those incidents, and police disclosed there had been four additional attacks that injured two people over the past three weeks.

Police said it appeared the bombs were not designed to kill.

United States

Investigator dismisses

Gitmo abuse claims

A U.S. Army officer who investigated possible abuse at Guantanamo Bay after some guards purportedly bragged of beating detainees found no evidence that they mistreated the prisoners - although he did not interview any of the alleged victims, the military said yesterday.

Col. Richard Bassett, the chief investigator, recommended no disciplinary action against the navy guards named by Marine Sgt. Heather Cerveney, who had said that during a conversation in a bar on the base in September they described beating detainees as common practice.

Lebanon

First clash with Israel since Hezbollah war

Lebanese and Israeli troops exchanged fire across the border late yesterday, for the first time since the summer war between Hezbollah and Israel.

The clash erupted after an Israeli army bulldozer that had crossed about 20 metres into the country. There were no reports of injury on either side.

Nepal

South gains more clout following fatal clashes

The government will allocate more seats in parliament and guarantee places in its administration to representatives of southern Nepal, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala said yesterday as he agreed to protestors' demands following clashes that killed 21 people.

Koirala said the constitution would be immediately amended for the changes.

Southerners have said the region has been sidelined in favour of the more populated north.

from THE STAR'S WIRE SERVICES

world

Load-Date: February 8, 2007

End of Document

Israel gets new army chief

Irish Independent

January 23, 2007 Tuesday

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Independent.ie 

Section: WORLD NEWS; World News

Length: 335 words

Body

A FORMER Israeli general with years of experience fighting Lebanon's **Hezbollah** guerrillas has been chosen as the chief of armed forces, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office said yesterday.

Gaby Ashkenazy (52), an infantry commander and currently director of the Defence Ministry, is set to replace Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz who quit last week over failing to crush **Hezbollah** in the July-August war.

Stone up for top Razzie award

AT LEAST someone was happy US actress Sharon Stone reprised her notorious femme-fatale role with Basic Instinct 2.

The box-office bomb received seven nominations yesterday for the Razzie Awards that mock the bottom of Hollywood's barrel. Winners will be announced on February 24, before the Academy Awards.

Baby trafficking trial begins

DOZENS of people went on trial yesterday for suspected roles in a network that recruited desperate pregnant **women** from Bulgaria, brought them to France and sold their new-borns to childless couples.

The trial in Bobigny, north of Paris, centres on 22 babies who were sold between 2003 and 2005, mostly to couples within France's Roma, or Gypsy, communities, for between £2,000 (3,000) and £3,500, prosecutors say.

Hilton sentenced on drive offence

CELEBRITY heiress Paris Hilton was sentenced to three years probation yesterday after pleading no contest to alcohol-related reckless driving, prosecutors said.

Hilton (25), who was not in court and entered the plea through her attorneys, was also fined \$390 (301) and ordered to attend an alcohol-education program in the case, which stemmed from her arrest in Hollywood last September.

'Legend' priest Pierre dies

Israel gets new army chief

ABBE Pierre, a French priest praised as a living legend for devoting his life to helping the homeless, using prayer and provocation to tackle misery, died yesterday, his foundation said. He was 94.

One of France's most beloved public figures, Abbe Pierre died at Val de Grace military hospital in Paris. He had been admitted with a lung infection on January 14.

Load-Date: January 23, 2007

End of Document

Know enemies, not slogans

University Wire

September 20, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 The Pitt News via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 813 words

Byline: By Elham Khatami, The Pitt News; **SOURCE:** U. Pittsburgh

Dateline: PITTSBURGH

Body

Our military and domestic efforts to combat terrorism have been described in many ways - war with Islamic radicalism, war on terror, war against jihadism. The list goes on and on and shows just how ill-defined our enemies really are. And, recently, our many foes acquired newer, more frightening terminology - terminology that can further oversimplify the entire Middle Eastern malevolence in two apocalyptic words.

"Islamic Fascism" is the phrase President Bush, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and our very own Republican Sen. Rick Santorum have been using to refer to terrorism these days. The phrase seemed to appear out of nowhere, as if the numerous enemies we're fighting suddenly transformed into one all-inclusive entity with radical Mussolini-esque goals overnight.

But this phrase serves as more than just added spice to the rhetoric of all our favorite politicians. "Islamic Fascism" distorts the many conflicts in which we are engaged when it comes to the Middle East. It demonstrates if anything, how little we know about our enemies, and it's impossible to successfully fight opponents we do not understand.

The label is a blatant display of the nation's growing us-vs.-them mentality, which stems from our ever-escalating apprehension and ignorance surrounding our enemies. We bunch up all the conflicts in the Middle East and cry "Islamic Fascism!"

Take the latest violent clashes between Israel and Lebanon, for example. This is a conflict that has been so warped underneath the umbrella of "Islamic Fascism" that many of us seem to have forgotten how and when it originally began. It is misleading to assume, as Boston Globe columnist Jeff Jacoby does, that Hezbollah's recent actions are a "part and parcel of the radical Islamist jihad against the free world."

The Israeli-Hezbollah dispute is not merely a component of the overall global war on terror. It is also not, as President Bush claims, a US-Iran proxy war, spurred to distract the Western world from Iran's nuclear ambitions. This conflict has deep historical and political roots in the 1982 Lebanon War when Hezbollah was first formed to combat the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. Oversimplifying terms like "Islamic Fascism" prevent all of this from being taken into consideration.

Not only that, the phrase suggests we are fighting people of one like-minded ideology who are working together to achieve a common goal. This prevents us from seeing the stark differences between them. And, trust me, the differences are plenty:

Know enemies, not slogans

Saddam Hussein ran a secular dictatorship that was not based upon traditional Islamic law.

The Iraqi insurgency is made up of many independent guerilla groups each with separate goals.

Al-Qaeda forces and their infamous leader, Osama bin Laden, hold self-proclaimed fundamentalist motives to remove foreign influence in Islamic countries.

Hezbollah is a Shiite organization while Hamas is Sunni.

The human rights situation in Iran, a country that follows Islamic law, is more moderate than those of some other Middle Eastern countries, as **women** have the right to vote and hold public office.

The Taliban of Afghanistan was using an extreme interpretation of Islamic law to justify their poor standards of freedom.

Also, some are independent non-state terrorists, and some are nations with undemocratic governments and laws. Moreover, so many of these people we collectively label as "Islamic Fascists" are enemies with one another. It's obvious "Islamic Fascism" is much too simplistic to serve as an accurate description for all of them.

Apart from all that, "Islamic Fascism" is an inaccurate historical analogy. For one thing, Italian Fascism and German Nazism of the early 1900s were prominently autocratic and secular movements with the main objective of creating large, dominant fascist states through the use of military conquest. Often, these fascists even collaborated with one another, whether to further their own individual aims or to gain more influence on an international level.

Furthermore, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were enemies we could pinpoint, with regimes and militaries that could be defined and targeted - we cannot say this about terrorists today, as they are unidentifiable, hazy individuals with goals that are often difficult to distinguish.

But what's in a name? Maybe the phrase "Islamic Fascism" is just that - a phrase, and nothing more. Well, as unimportant as terminology may seem during the trying times of war, it nonetheless illustrates how much we know about our enemies and how we perceive them. In this case, it also propagates excessive fear and ignorance.

This is why "Islamic Fascism," as a phrase, is almost as dangerous as the enemies it struggles to describe. And the only way we can protect ourselves is by taking a look behind its veiling curtain to see what truly lurks beneath our words.

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Load-Date: September 20, 2006

Turtles in war zone

Manawatu Standard (New Zealand)

October 17, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 796 words

Body

Two women continue their fight to protect the delicate environment of the Lebanese coastline from dangers domestic and international.

The foxes left their prints in the sand by the despoiled nest, strewn with the white shells the hatchlings had clambered from to start their doomed trek to the sea a few metres away.

"This is a massacre," laments Mona Khalil, 57, who has run a turtle conservation project on the Mediterranean beach since 2000 with her 48-year-old associate, Habiba Syed.

Israel's 34-day war with Shi'ite Muslim Hezbollah guerrillas erupted on July 12 in the middle of the four-month turtle breeding season, eventually forcing the two women to flee.

"This is a green turtle nest and it came during our absence, so the location of the eggs was not really clear," Ms Khalil says.

Normally, she and Ms Syed insert a wire mesh over the nests that female turtles dig in the sand. The mesh protects the eggs from dogs or foxes, but allows hatchlings to crawl through.

The 1.4 km long beach near the Shi'ite village of Mansouri might seem an unlikely refuge for endangered sea turtles, but Ms Khalil and Ms Syed have monitored 70 loggerhead turtle nests this season and nine nests of the rarer green turtles.

"In spite of the war around 5000 [hatchlings] went out successfully," Ms Khalil says, but added that only five of these might survive to maturity and return to the beach to breed.

During the conflict, survival became the goal not just for the turtles but for those trying to conserve them, as Israeli bombs crashed down across the south and Hezbollah fired rockets across the border.

"We stayed for 16 days, we didn't want to leave," says Ms Khalil. "But when the Israelis bombarded the neighbour's house and there was heavy fighting, we realised we had to go."

The women abandoned their goats, two dogs and a cat, taking only an African grey parrot with them to Beirut. When they returned after the August 14 truce, the goats had gone, but the dogs and cat had survived on the food and water they had left.

Ms Khalil's Orange House, set in banana and citrus groves about 200 metres from the beach, did not escape unscathed.

Turtles in war zone

Israeli rockets damaged two of four rooms the women rent to guests for simple bed and breakfast accommodation.

Ms Khalil says they had seen Hezbollah fighters on the beach in the first two days of the war, but the guerrillas had left when asked. However, they fired rockets at Israel from a nearby property, which led to the bombing of the neighbour's house.

The nesting turtles were oblivious to the strife.

"They will come anyway. When they have to lay eggs, they have to lay eggs. There is no stopping them," Ms Syed grins.

The conservation project won backing from the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles, after Ms Khalil and Ms Syed told the group that green turtles were nesting at Mansouri.

Loggerhead turtles, with their rusty coloured shells and large heads, and green turtles are threatened by the destruction of breeding grounds and the fishing fleets that catch or drown them by mistake. The beach near Mansouri is a relative haven of tranquillity in a troubled region, where 15,000 Lebanese army troops backed by an expanded United Nations peacekeeping force, or Unifil, have deployed since the war.

To the south rise the white cliffs of Naqoura, where Unifil troops have their main base on the Israeli border. The port city of Tyre juts into the sea 10km to the north, and foreign warships lurk off the coast to ensure Hezbollah gets no weapons by sea.

The ships that brought new Unifil contingents and those patrolling offshore have also brought more rubbish that washes up on the beach, especially plastic bottles of Italian and Spanish mineral water, which Ms Khalil and Ms Syed collect every day.

"We get 30 to 40 bottles a day water, shampoo, conditioner, orange juice," says Ms Syed. The new detritus adds to the more familiar trash with Lebanese or Israeli brand names.

Unifil's political adviser Milos Strugarsays he would investigate the complaint to ensure that the force's strict rules on waste disposal were being observed.

Ms Khalil and Ms Syed admit it is hard to instil environmental awareness in the local community, but hope the government will one day declare the beach a nature reserve to save it from the hotels and beach clubs that clog much of Lebanon's seaside.

What keeps them going in such tough surroundings?

"The love for animals and life, continuity," Ms Khalil replies.

CAPTION:

Mona Khalil, 57, who has run a turtle conservation project on the Mediterranean beach since 2000, checks on turtle hatchlings at the Mansouri beach near the port city of Tyre (Soure) in south Lebanon. Pictures: Reuters

Green turtles move on the Mansouri beach near the port city of Tyre (Soure) in south Lebanon.

Load-Date: October 17, 2006

**Obituary: Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri: Leader of Bahrain's Shia majority,
jailed for his civil rights campaigning**

The Guardian - Final Edition

December 20, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN OBITUARIES PAGES; Pg. 35

Length: 841 words

Byline: Phil Davison

Body

As the spiritual leader of Bahrain's majority, but long-marginalised, Shia Muslim population, Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri, who has died aged 69, was the focus of opposition to the dynasty that has ruled the Gulf island state since the 18th century. He spent several years in jail or under house arrest after calling for democracy and demanding equal rights with the minority Sunni Muslim population.

In recent years, though in failing health, Jamri was seen as the mentor of the growing opposition al-Wefaq party, which won 17 of the 40 parliamentary seats in last month's elections, despite claims of ballot rigging to ensure Sunni control. Jamri himself served as a member of Bahrain's first parliament in 1973, an assembly seen as a token gesture towards democracy by the all-powerful emir, before the ruler suspended the constitution and dissolved the legislature in 1975.

For more than 25 years thereafter, the then emir, Sheikh Issa bin Salman al-Khalifa, ruled by decree, with Shia Muslims treated largely as second-class citizen, and dissenters detained without trial and routinely tortured. Then, in 1994, Jamri, with the moral backing of both Iraqi Shias and the Islamic government of Iran, led a dramatic "uprising of dignity" against the ruling family, demanding democratic elections. In the unprecedented rebellion, his supporters set fire to public buildings, supermarkets and fashion stores owned by wealthy Sunnis or Indian immigrants, before being suppressed by the country's British-trained - and effectively British-led - security forces. Bahrain, a group of 35 small islands with a population of around 750,000, was a British protectorate until independence in 1971.

The security forces claimed that Jamri and the protesters were influenced by, and possibly linked with, Iran, the Lebanese **Hizbullah** and the Shia mullahs of the Iraqi holy city of Najaf, where the young Jamri had studied theology.

Around 40 Shias were killed over the next few years in a series of clashes with the Bahrain defence force, led by former British policemen or military officers described by Jamri as "British mercenaries". Young men, citing Jamri speeches and the Palestinian intifada, regularly attacked the security forces with stones and petrol bombs. In one incident, stones were thrown at European **women** running a marathon because they were "inappropriately" dressed in shorts.

Jamri was first put under house arrest in April 1995 after clashes between the security forces and Shia students demanding reform and the removal of British "mercenaries". He denied government claims that he had links with

Obituary: Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri: Leader of Bahrain 's Shia majority, jailed for his civil rights campaigning

foreign countries, notably Iran, or that he sought to establish an Islamic republic in Bahrain. His house arrest was lifted that September.

Then, on January 22 1996, Jamri was accused of fomenting a violent uprising against the government and jailed without trial. The authorities claimed he led an Iranian-backed "Hizbullah", but he and his supporters said no such group existed and that the claim was a smokescreen to blame outsiders for homegrown discontent. During his three-year imprisonment, much of it in solitary confinement, the Respect MP George Galloway became an outspoken campaigner for his release.

Jamri was finally released in March 1999, after the death of the emir, and pardoned by the ruler's son, Sheikh Hamad (who, in 2002, declared Bahrain a constitutional monarchy and himself king, rather than emir). In exchange for his freedom, the Shia leader renounced the use of violence and, in what was seen as a new spirit of reconciliation, the Bahraini ruler visited him when he first fell ill in 2002.

In no small part due to Jamri's continuing opposition, Sheikh Hamad held elections in 2002, the first in nearly 30 years. However, despite Shia gains in the most recent poll last month, parliament remains relatively powerless in the shadow of a 40-member Shura, or consultative council appointed by the king, whose family retain key government posts. The king's uncle has been prime minister for the last 35 years.

Jamri was born in the village of Bani Jamra to a devout Shia family. He was educated mostly at home by his father, a teacher of the Qur'an. From 1962 to 1973, he studied Islamic theology and law at the Najaf Religious Institute, during which he wrote several books, including Women in Islam.

After being elected to parliament in 1973, he vociferously opposed a new state security law that allowed detention without trial for up to three years, and was renewable. When the emir dissolved parliament two years later, Jamri was appointed a judge of a religious court, with the specific role of dealing with civic issues within the Shia community. He was suspended in 1988 after increasingly outspoken criticism of the regime from his mosque, which was often surrounded by the security forces.

Jamri, who died of heart and kidney failure, had 10 children, including Mansour al-Jamri, now a leading opposition columnist and editor.

Sheikh Abdul Amir al-Jamri, Shia spiritual leader, born 1937; died December 18 2006

Load-Date: December 20, 2006

Good deed meets cross-border challenge

Christian Science Monitor

August 30, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 4

Length: 774 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Highlight: Organizers of a benefit concert for the Lebanon war's victims found themselves in the middle of controversy.

Body

One supported the war, one vehemently opposed it, and a third never made up her mind. But what the three Jewish-American seminary students living here agreed on was that something should be done to help the war's victims - on both sides of the border.

It sounded like a simple and noble enough idea: Hold a small concert to raise relief funds for the residents of northern Israel as well as Lebanese civilians who have suffered from the harrowing war that came to a tenuous halt earlier this month. Musicians would include up-and-coming Jewish and Arab artists.

But the concept, it seems, was not as widely and well-received as the three - Dan Sieradski, Stuart Siegel, and Amy Kaplan - had hoped. Mr. Sieradski, the chief organizer and the founder of a slew of cutting-edge Jewish websites, was flooded with hate mail on his main site. Of 200 posters he hung up around the city, he says, only three didn't get torn down, "and I think that's because we glued them up real good."

When he stood on corners handing out cards advertising the event, called Aharai HaMelchama/Baid Il Harb, or "After the War" in Hebrew and in Arabic, most of the reactions to the idea of aiding people in Lebanon were indifferent to negative.

"Some people would crumble them up and throw them back," says Sieradski. "It was, 'How can you help them? You're supporting terrorism against Israel.' " As a student of religion, he turned to religious bases for compassion. "It defiles the name of God if we turn a blind eye to the suffering of innocent people. We're all created in the image of God."

Convincing people here to support the effort was just the start of their challenges. They were keen to find an apolitical group, says Mr. Siegel, so the fundraisers could be sure not to benefit Hizbullah.

Next, they had to find an organization in Lebanon, be it local or international, willing to accept half of the funds raised from the event. Several major nongovernmental organizations, such as CARE and Oxfam, have been unresponsive or said they were "unequipped" for such a donation, they said. Mercy Corps appears to be considering the offer.

Good deed meets cross-border challenge

Despite that less-than-encouraging reception, they decided, the show must go on. Late Monday night, at a popular venue called Yellow Submarine, musicians took the stage and mainly steered away from politics.

"Our preference," Siegel tells the crowd, "would be that we find someone who will make sure the money goes to people whose lives have been shattered in this recent conflict." Siegel, a 30-something student who wears a grizzly blond beard, earrings in both ears, and is studying to be a rabbi, clashed with his friend Sieradski over the war. Siegel thought it unavoidable; Sieradski, unconscionable.

"The only thing we can agree on," says Sieradski, is the need to have compassion for victims on both sides of the border."

Over the evening, the music runs a cross-continental gamut, from Middle Eastern to hip-hop. The lilting-voiced lead singer of the popular local band Eden Mi Qedem - translated as East of Eden, or Paradise from Long Ago - which combines Jewish and Arabic instruments, says on a break from playing that he was driven to join the event as a small step toward change.

"I think it's important to show we care for civilians and we're sad for what happened to their homes," says Shmuel Nelson, whose dark beard and flat-topped head covering makes him seem a cross between biblical prophet and Muslim madrassah student.

"I think people were reacting to what they see as naivete," he says of criticism of the show. "But Israel isn't Israel unless it's connected to its traditions, which means caring about right and wrong, and ultimately, people."

In the end, the three netted about \$1,000 for the cause. While they were disappointed with the result, their message that Lebanon's and Israel's innocent victims deserved to be helped equally was heard - and heard loudly.

One of the last and most powerful acts of the evening was Palestinian-Israeli hip-hop artist Saz. His real name is Sameh Zakout and he comes from Ramle, an Arab city inside Israel. "Every morning," he cries in a fast-moving rap song in Hebrew with Arabic mixed in, "we wake up to the same messed up reality."

Off stage, Saz says music - and a nonviolent message - is ultimately what makes it possible for him to be here. "I didn't like that the Israel army was killing people, but I also didn't like seeing Hizbullah sending missiles to hurt women and children here," he says. "I support fighting occupation, but not with violence. For me, after what's happened to my people, I can't react with hate."

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Load-Date: August 29, 2006

Lebanon's battle scars: Live bombs litter the landscape and israeli incursions continue while villages lie in ruins

The Gazette (Montreal)

October 15, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. A17

Length: 1261 words

Byline: CHRISTOPHER ALLBRITTON, Newhouse News Service

Dateline: MAROUAHINE, Lebanon

Body

For 34 days this summer, Israeli and **Hezbollah** rockets and mortars whistled through little villages like this one all across southern Lebanon. More than 1,000 people, including many Lebanese **women** and children, were killed. Farther north, concrete cities were flattened. And then the war ended Aug. 14.

Or did it?

More than two months after a fragile ceasefire was announced and two weeks after Israel claimed it had withdrawn the last of its troops from Lebanon, citizens in these southern villages are skeptical. And angry.

They complain about continued Israeli incursions, unexploded cluster bombs, the slow pace of reconstruction and an uncertain future. Some are raising doubts about what **Hezbollah** calls its "Divine Victory" in the war, which left about 1,200 Lebanese dead and 4,400 wounded, according to Beirut's Higher Relief Council, the government body in charge of relief work.

"People are still shocked and trying to adapt," said Afif Hijzai, a tobacco farmer in Haddata, a village a few miles northwest of Bint Jbail, which saw some of the heaviest fighting in the war. "They are trying to get back to normal life."

For Majdia Ghanem, however, there is no returning to normalcy.

Her village, Marouahine, which is only a few hundred metres from the Israeli border, saw heavy fighting and extensive shelling. She lost six members of her family when Israeli jets bombed an evacuation convoy organized by the United Nations in the first week of the war, killing 23 people.

Now she and the surviving family members hope to salvage what is left of the tobacco crop.

She and her daughters returned to the village two days after the ceasefire to find their house one of few still standing. "But we paid a very heavy price because we lost so many members of the family," she said, as she pressed tobacco leaves together for sale in the market, where she'll get about \$1.50 a pound.

Lebanon 's battle scars: Live bombs litter the landscape and israeli incursions continue while villages lie in ruins

She said the Israelis didn't leave her village until last Sunday. According to the spokesperson for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a small contingent of engineers remains in the village of Ghajar, which straddles the UN-demarcated "blue line" between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Lebanon. Israeli engineering troops continue to occupy the Lebanese side of the village, citing security reasons, and have erected a large berm to deny access from Lebanon to the town.

Israel also continues to violate Lebanese air space with daily overflights, said Alexander Ivanko, the UNIFIL spokesperson.

"There are more than a dozen a week," he said, adding that violations have increased since Israel's official Oct. 1 withdrawal.

More serious are the munitions - unexploded bombs, rockets and the dreaded cluster bomblets - the Israeli forces left behind.

The UN Mine Action Coordination Centre in southern Lebanon says there might be up to one million unexploded cluster bomblets in the area, many U.S.-made.

Ali Herz, 26, is a typical, if lucky, victim of the weapon.

He went to check his neighbour's house in the southern town of Majd es-Slim two days after the ceasefire. As he pushed open the heavy iron gate to enter the garden, an explosion threw him backward and shrapnel peppered his legs, face and chest.

"I thought that my legs might have been cut off, and I felt something had been knocked out of my mouth," he said recently, recuperating in his parents' home. He suffered a head wound and couldn't open his eyes "because of the blood." Herz now walks with a permanent limp and can't work as a mechanic.

This month, the Mine Action Coordination Centre said cluster bombs had killed 21 and wounded another 102.

"I've never seen so much like this," said Magnus Bengtsson, supervisor of an emergency ordnance disposal team clearing cluster bomblets in the town of Hanaouay, nine kilometres southeast of Tyre and 13 kilometres from the Israeli border.

"It's more than I expected."

Bengtsson and his team are with the Swedish Rescue Services Agency. The group was contracted by the UN.

Walking through a field, Bengtsson pointed to a D-battery-sized object on the ground. It's a U.S.-made m77, he said, which is designed to take out people and armoured vehicles, including tanks. The shaped charge can penetrate up to 12 centimetres of armor, and the casing is scored so it sends out deadly shrapnel to a radius of more than six metres.

A spokesperson for the Israeli Defence Forces said, "All the weapons and munitions used by the IDF are legal under international law, and their use conforms with international standards."

The cluster bomblets are preventing up to 200,000 people from returning to their homes, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, although it is unclear how many of those people still have homes. The Higher Relief Council estimates 30,000 homes were destroyed in the war. Villages south of the Litani River still show extensive damage.

The economy remains bruised, and there is little progress while the country focuses on the basics. Many of the water systems are back up, and electricity is more reliable now. In Tyre, the power is staying on 18 hours a day, its pre-war levels. Hospitals are open - some fully functioning, others struggling.

Many schools have tried to reopen. In Aynata, students took entrance

Lebanon 's battle scars: Live bombs litter the landscape and Israeli incursions continue while villages lie in ruins

exams under tents on the playground because their school building was damaged.

Bint Jbail's roads are clear of debris, but entire neighbourhoods are still little more than piles of concrete. Out of 2,200 houses in Bint Jbail, 700 to 800 were destroyed, said Kazim Shrara, 48, a mukhtar, or town official, coordinating with relief agencies. Almost every house in town had at least some damage, he added. Out of 450 stores, 360 were destroyed.

Shrara said assessment teams from the Lebanese government and Hezbollah's construction arm, Jihad al-Bina, have visited, but reconstruction has yet to begin. Hezbollah has paid up to \$12,000 for a year's rent and given new furniture to families who lost their homes, but the government, which promised each family up to \$30,000, has yet to agree on a disbursement mechanism.

"The government has taken no practical steps," said Abdul Amir Nassir, 60, the mukhtar for Haddata, near Bint Jbail. "There has been nothing from the government."

As he spoke, a French lieutenant, part of a patrol checking on the locals, waited for Amir Nassir to show him where an unexploded bomb lay near a palatial home. Lt. Edouard de Catalogne, 30, of Paris, is part of the Regiment de marche du Chad, similar to U.S. Marines, he said. He listened as Amir Nassir criticized UNIFIL for doing nothing to stop the Israeli overflights.

"They don't trust us yet," he said later. "They are trying to see which side we are on."

Throughout the south, there is a wait-and-see attitude toward the international troops and the Lebanese army, which has been deployed along the southern border as part of the UN ceasefire. Some villages, such as Haddata and Rmeiche, a Christian area, see nearly constant patrols, but towns with many Hezbollah supporters, such as Bint Jbail, have no peacekeepers or Lebanese troops in them.

Back in Marouahine, the Ghanem family continues to eke out a living from what is left of the tobacco crop.

The leftover cluster bombs make harvesting the leaves dangerous, and the olive harvest will probably be lost for the same reason. The Israelis have finally left, and the UNIFIL troops are just up the road. With so much devastation around her, Majdia Ghanem can't see Hezbollah's victory.

"We are a small town, but we suffered a lot," she said. "We didn't achieve anything. We lost and our houses were destroyed."

Graphic

Colour Photo: PETER DEJONG, AP; A Lebanese woman turns away as others watch bush fires near the southern village of Jouaiya on Wednesday. Several residents claimed to have heard explosions set off by the heat of the fire, probably from Israeli ordnance that still litters the fields of southern Lebanon.

Load-Date: October 15, 2006

Bernard-Henri Levy

The New York Times

August 11, 2006 Friday

The New York Times on the Web

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Section: Section ; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. ; Questions For . . .

Length: 2513 words

Body

Bernard-Henri Levy, a French philosopher and writer, is the author, most recently, of *American Vertigo: Traveling America in the Footsteps of Tocqueville* and an essay in *The Times Magazine* about Israel and Lebanon. He recently answered readers' questions about the current state of the Mideast conflict.

Q. 1. Why do you only paint your story from the point of view of Israelis? Why do you assume that **Hezbollah** is an organization that is not wanted by the people of Lebanon, if they provide services, have elected representatives, and are the only ones able to defend their country? Cornelius Diamond, La Jolla, Calif.

A. Three questions in one, dear Cornelius. First, why the Israeli viewpoint? Because only the other viewpoint is seen and I do not like conformism, much less injustice. In other words, it's okay to criticize Israel and debate the strategy adopted by the military command, which is not necessarily the right one. But-a little equity, please let one begin by listening to what Israelis say and looking at what they are enduring: that's what I did in this reporting. Next: Isn't **Hezbollah** "wanted by the people of Lebanon"? Don't they "provide services" and "have elected representatives"? Yes, of course, there is no dispute about this, but since when would that be contradictory with the fact of being totalitarians and even perfect fascists? Wasn't Hitler even though it's not comparable democratically elected? Didn't Mussolini provide the Italian people every possible service? Indeed, isn't that in a general way the precise definition of fascist populism? Things get complicated with your third question and the idea that the people of **Hezbollah** are "the only ones able to defend their country." I hope you are joking! For in truth **Hezbollah** has been bleeding Lebanon and has literally taken it hostage and taken its own people hostage, turning them into human shields with mind-boggling cynicism a bizarre way to "defend" a country.

Q. 2. Why do you say "Inevitable War"? It is inevitable and endless because of your attitude. How do you feel about committing Israel to endless war? Mark Ravitz, Santa Barbara, Calif.

A. I do not say "endless." I say "inevitable," which does not at all mean the same thing as "endless." And I say "inevitable" for the simple reason that **Hezbollah**, and thus Iran, have decided on it. The arsenal on the Israeli border, the bunkers, tunnels and missile launchers, this entire offensive apparatus predicated on, as clearly proclaimed by Iran, the will to "wipe Israel off the map" means precisely that: one day or another, war - a war that Israel did no more than anticipate, for it knew that in a year or two such a war would be yet more difficult, yet more costly in lives, and yet more uncertain for an Israel threatened in its very existence. Forgive me for insisting on "threatened in its very existence," but that is what is at issue. And herein lies the difference between this war and a war linked to the Palestinian question. The latter would have the practical goals of war, and were Israel to come to some kind of agreement with its adversaries on the settlement of the Palestinian question, war would be avoided.

Hezbollah's war, on the other hand, is a war of a new kind, which no longer has any real tie to the Palestinian question or any concrete question whatsoever, and on that account is a war that I wish to say is non-negotiable.

Q. 3. Very simply, I have always wanted to know why the moderate Muslim voices have not been screaming full throttle against the fanatical stranglehold of these Islamic fascists? Is it really fear for their own safety, do they agree with there radical brethren, do they have any power to reign in the terrorists who threaten the entire planet? Many thanks for a clear and brilliantly written article. Anita Bensabat, Montreal, Quebec

A. There certainly is fear. There is the fact that a moderate Muslim or, worse, a secular Muslim is someone who is genuinely in mortal danger in some countries. Look at the number of Arab intellectuals and intellectuals in the Asian Islamic world who at the time of the Rushdie affair felt immediate solidarity with their English colleague but could not or did not dare say it! That's the reason, moreover, that it's so important for us Westerners to proclaim our solidarity with moderate Islam loud and clear, with this Enlightened Islam that does not dare declare itself in the face of the ambient terror. For those Muslims who are faithful to this kind of Islam and do battle on the front lines, so to speak, against criminal fundamentalism, our support is vital. It is one of the last reasons they have for not falling into despair.

There's something else as well. It's the eternal rivalry between what in France we call the Girodins and the Montagnards, the moderates and the hardliners, the partisans of compromise and the apostles of violence or simply of radicality. We have known since 1789 that it is the latter who most often defeat the former. We know that there is a frightful prestige associated with the radical spirit. More precisely: we know that there is a terrible seductiveness, an ideological and symbolic advantage, that goes with the Montagnard spirit. That, I think, is what is happening in the Muslim world today.

Q. 4. It's clear that you believe Israel is at a crossroads, as it begins to see a new threat to its very existence unveil itself. I think that the Iranians should be credited for their incredible honesty. If your enemies wish to annihilate you, it's good to know that for a fact. My question to you is whether you believe Europe will at some point in the near future realize that it isn't only Israel that now finds itself at a crossroads, but the entire world? When I read that Mr Zapatero was overheard saying he understands why the Nazis did what they did to the Jews, I despair. But setting leaders with no backbone like Mr. Zapatero aside, what will the brighter minds of Europe do? James Basman, San Francisco, Calif.

A. You are absolutely right. This war is not Israel against Hezbollah, but the democracies against neototalitarianism and, in particular, an Iran which is trying to take ideological and political leadership over it. That's what makes the war so important and makes it so crucial, for everyone, that Israel win or at least not come out of it weakened. This is what I meant at the beginning of my article when I evoked the Spanish Civil War. A war as a general rehearsal. A war where all must be done so that it not be for our generation what the Spanish Civil War was for our elders.

Q. 5. I am struck by a common thread now emerging in reporting, that Hezbollah and similar movements feed upon shared feelings of anger and humiliation. There are thousands of references online and in print, many pointing out that such Muslim feelings are key to the rise of Islamic Fascism and Iranian President Ahmadinejad's call for Israel to be wiped off the map. Do you think this is correct? Janet Haigh, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

A. I am rather dubious when it comes to this longstanding, recurrent explanation in terms of Arab humiliation. Or, let's accept it on the condition of adding that Germans in the 1930s also felt humiliated (by the Treaty of Versailles). And on the condition of adding that that did not excuse, so far as I know, Nazism! For indeed there lies the problem, namely, the ulterior motives of people who tell us about humiliation and put it at the source of the fascism of Muslim inspiration. Someone who is humiliated has an excuse for what he does. Someone who is humiliated is only half guilty of his crimes. He is pitied not condemned. Now, Arab or Muslim fascism deserves, in my view, to be condemned just like any other fascism. It is, moreover, what Arabs themselves are expecting from us. It's what the antifascists of the Arab and Muslim world-and they are numerous-are hoping for. They, of all people, know that this discourse of humiliation is a red herring and an evasion of the real problems. See Paul Berman's theses. It's all there.

Q. 6. Do you, as an intellectual in France, feel that you are afforded more credibility in speaking out and writing in support and understanding of Israel than other Jews who seem rather too intimidated by French anti-Semitism to speak out and be visible in French society? Deidre Waxman, Newton, Mass.

A. I don't even understand what you are saying! For me, anti-Semitism is a form of terrorism and the very idea of letting myself be intimidated by any terrorism whatsoever completely horrifies me. Jewish or non-Jewish, intellectuals must speak out. Jewish or non-Jewish, they have a duty to truth. And, conversely, to tell them-or tell oneself-"A Jew has, because a Jew, a duty to reticence" would be to give into anti-Semitic terrorism. Not my style. I want to add that my defense of Israel is not so closely tied as you perhaps think to the fact that I am Jewish. There is an element of that, of course. But it is certainly not the essential. I defend Israel because I defend democracy. I defend Israel because I have a horror of all fascisms. I defend the Israelis in this war as in the past I have defended other peoples who have nothing to do with Judaism. Bosnia, for example. The Bosnian Muslims whom I defended, I believe, with no less ardor or passion.

Q. 7. Yesterday, at a bat mitzvah, I was discussing the war with fellow peaceniks who had just returned from visiting their in Israel. What struck me was how confused they were about the war. That was the word they used, confused, to describe their feelings of ambivalence. No longer could they feel that Israel should put down its weapons. They felt conflicted because of the real threat from Iran. But my question as a child psychiatrist, a pacifist, and a Jew is: what about the effects, on both sides, on generations to come? Will we ever be able to have children, both Israel and Arab, grow up without trauma? My concern is that the traumatization leads to fear of, and therefore hatred of, the Other, so that future violence is guaranteed. How can we stop this cycle without putting Israel at risk of annihilation? Celeste Wiser, M.D., Napa, Calif.

A. Everyone is "confused." Inevitably "confused." If only because this is a war of a new kind that is led by a historical actor that is itself different from what we have known in the past. Take a look at Hezbollah. It has the strength of a State without being a State. It has all the advantages of a terrorist State while simultaneously having the workings of a criminal NGO of the al Qaeda-type. In other words, its organization, including its military strategies and tactics, constitutes a relatively unprecedented synthesis. And that is inevitably disorienting.

Q. 8. Has this war tipped the balance of European sympathy more to the Israeli side? Are people there preparing themselves for the possibility of a much larger conflict? Joshua Salafsky, Burlingame, Calif.

A. This war is a bit like the developing solution used in the old darkrooms. At first the image is blurry. Pale and blurry. And then the shadows, contours, tints and half-tints, and contrasts gradually emerge, and the latent image that was seen without being seen is suddenly revealed and fixed. That's what is happening at this moment. Whether regarding the nature of Hezbollah; the state of moral and political corruption of a largely Hezbollahized Lebanon; Iran and its geopolitical game and nuclear ambitions ; or the slipping of moderate Islam toward fundamentalist Islam and, within this, at the heart of this sectarian international in the making, the slipping of the Arab zone of Islam toward the Asian, or Indo-European, zone where Iran aspires to be the hegemonic power-this war functions as a magnifier and revealer. At least, I hope so.

Q. 9. I'd be interested in your view on a couple of issues: The confusion of the American/Israeli identities in France in light of rising anti-semitism, the interchangeable use of "Jew" and "Israeli" in the French media, the difference between the words "colon" in French and "settler" in English, and lastly your views on the difference between the representation of this "new" conflict in the French European and American medias. Don Device, Paris, France

A. As with the media, I do not want to globalize. Contrary to the impression sometimes given by the American press, neither public opinion nor the political class in France is globally anti-Semitic. There are some limits that are being breached, to be sure. And there is a certain loosening of speech that one didn't feel ten or twenty years ago. It can even be said that we are witnessing in France as elsewhere the construction of a new anti-Semitic machinery based on the three pillars of anti-Zionism, historical revisionism, and the obsessive competition over victim status. But it cannot be said that France has for all that become a country unlivable for Jews. It cannot be said that the country's political institutions have yielded in the face of pressure. Quite the contrary. And I would even add that this mechanism I am speaking of, this new machinery, this way of saying that Jews are guilty of (1) supporting the

Bernard-Henri Levy

"criminal State" of Israel, (2) exaggerating the degree of their suffering through an alleged "religion of the Shoah," and (3) blocking, through their own tears and grief, the attention that the tears and grief of other peoples deserve-all this, I want to stress, you find in the United States at least as much as in France. That's right!

Q. 10. I wonder what impact you think women's voices and feminism in its multiple forms have on the way our modern cultures are facing the terrorist/facist rage of Iran/Syria/Hezbollah/ Hamas. Do you think their rage against "democracy," "the west," and "Jews" for all of these are in fact diverse and multiple is at all connected to how they view women? Freedom of choice? Dialogue? I do not mean this to be a simplistic question. Somehow, in the words of war and peace throughout time, but especially post-911, I see some connections. Jodi Tharan, California

A. Obviously yes. The question of women is at the heart of the problem. It is there, if I dare say, negatively in the sense that the hatred of women has always been at the heart of all the fascisms, including this fascism in particular (the phobia toward the feminine and its supposed impurity, the sexual panic, the fear of actual women: consider Mohammed Atta, the other 9/11 terrorists, or my portrait of Omar Sheikh, the organizer of Daniel Pearl's kidnapping). And it is easy to deduce that this question has an importance in the positive sense as well, in that women can be, and often are, a factor of resistance. Consider the democratization of Morocco: it happens via family laws and the rights that King Mohammed VI has courageously given women. Consider Algeria and the role that women played in the 90s in the resistance to the religious fanatics of the Islamic Salvation Front and the Armed Islamic Group. Consider the heroism of Afghan and Pakistani women.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo (Photo by Alexis Duclos/Polaris)

Load-Date: August 12, 2006

End of Document

Israeli PM faces bank sale probe; Military chief blamed for failure of Lebanon war quits

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 18, 2007 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 14

Length: 633 words

Byline: ED O'LOUGHLIN, JERUSALEM

Body

ISRAELI Prime Minister Ehud Olmert suffered twin blows yesterday, with the news that he is to be investigated for corruption and the resignation of his military chief, Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz.

Like Mr Olmert, General Halutz is widely blamed for last year's failed war in Lebanon. With his approval ratings running at 14 per cent, Mr Olmert already faced calls for his resignation before it was announced on Tuesday that he is to be formally investigated for his role in the sale of a state-controlled bank while serving as finance minister under the previous prime minister, Ariel Sharon.

Israel's Accountant-General, Yaron Zelekha, alleges that Mr Olmert improperly used his powers as finance minister to influence the sale of the state's stake in Bank Leumi to his friends, Australian businessman Frank Lowy and American magnate Daniel Abram.

Mr Lowy said last year that he dropped out of the bidding consortium shortly before the tender was awarded and that he and his family have and had no involvement with Bank Leumi.

The resignation of General Halutz removes one of the key figures - the other is Defence Minister and Labour Party leader Amir Peretz - who until now have shared the blame with Mr Olmert for last year's perceived military failure in Lebanon.

In a short letter of resignation, General Halutz said he had wanted to stay in office only long enough to set a string of inquiries in motion and begin implementing their findings.

Israel's failure to smash Hezbollah and recover two captured soldiers last July and August has led to massive recriminations among the country's political and military classes. The perception that General Halutz has now fallen on his sword is likely to leave both Mr Olmert and Mr Peretz further isolated.

If Mr Olmert is indicted for criminal activity, then precedent would require him to step down. However, it is likely to be several months before any indictment is possible, and in the meantime he may well be able to hold his ruling coalition together.

Polls suggest that early elections would give a substantial victory to the right-wing Likud party led by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, at the expense of the centre and right-wing parties who dominate the Government.

Israeli PM faces bank sale probe Military chief blamed for failure of Lebanon war quits

The Bank Leumi probe is one of a string of corruption allegations to have clouded Mr Olmert's career. In recent years Israel's elite has increasingly been associated with sleaze. Mr Olmert's lawyers sought to play down the new crisis by pointing out that he is the fourth Israeli prime minister in succession to be investigated for corruption.

Among current scandals, Israeli President Moshe Katsav is facing accusations of sexual assault, fraud and illegal wire-tapping. Former justice minister Haim Ramon is being tried for kissing a **female** conscript against her will and Finance Minister Avraham Hirschson risks being implicated in an embezzlement case.

General Halutz himself survived earlier calls for his resignation after it was learned that he had sold his share portfolio shortly before ordering Israel's massive offensive against Lebanon in July last year.

UNDER SUSPICION

- Police question Olmert's secretary on suspicion of pay-offs in exchange for tax breaks. She denies wrongdoing.
- Committee investigates handling of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** last year.
- State comptroller examines Olmert's 2004 purchase of \$US1.2 million apartment.
- Court to decide whether ex-justice minister Haim Ramon kissed former government employee forcibly. He says she initiated the kiss.
- IDF chief Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz criticised for selling his stock portfolio hours after **Hezbollah** gunmen kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in cross-border raid that sparked war.
- President Moshe Katsav under investigation for allegedly raping and molesting **female** employees. SOURCE: REUTERS

Load-Date: July 3, 2007

GUANTANAMO HEARINGS BEGIN

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

March 10, 2007 Saturday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-4

Length: 596 words

Body

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- The U.S. began a series of secret hearings yesterday to determine whether 14 alleged terrorist leaders at its prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, should be declared "enemy combatants" who can be held indefinitely and prosecuted by military tribunals.

No details were released and a military spokesman, Navy Cmdr. Chito Peppler, declined to identify detainees who appeared before the panel of three officers.

Edited transcripts of the hearings at the U.S. Navy base in southeast Cuba will be released later, Capt. Peppler said.

The 14 detainees were moved in September from a secret CIA prison network to the prison at Guantanamo Bay, where the U.S. holds about 385 men on suspicion of links to al-Qaida or the Taliban.

The 14 detainees include Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks who was captured in Pakistan in March 2003, and other alleged al-Qaida figures.

Abortion law liberalized

LISBON, Portugal -- Portugal's parliament voted overwhelmingly to legalize abortion up until the 10th week of pregnancy, a major step in bringing this small Roman Catholic nation in line with most of its European neighbors.

The Thursday night vote came less than a month after a popular referendum failed due to low turnout, but nonetheless showed that most voters were in favor of legalizing abortion -- in line with the trend across Europe.

By European standards, the new law is still on the restrictive side. **Women** can seek abortions up to the 24th week of pregnancy in Britain and up to the 12th week in Germany, France and Italy. In the United States, a 1973 Supreme Court ruling established the right to abortion, although individual states have passed laws with varying restrictions.

Some progress in Cyprus

NICOSIA, Cyprus -- The concrete wall that served as a symbol of this island's decades-long division fell to the roar of bulldozers yesterday, but the path between Nicosia's north and south remained barricaded -- this time by plastic and metal screens -- and prospects for reconciliation were still uncertain.

GUANTANAMO HEARINGS BEGIN

Acting before dawn and without prior announcement, the Greek Cypriot government demolished the 12-foot-high concrete wall that stretched across Ledra Street in the heart of the city's tourist area. The demolition of the barrier, a bitter symbol of the island's 32-year division into a Greek Cypriot south and a Turkish Cypriot north, raised hopes for more progress toward reuniting Cyprus.

But residents of Nicosia and the tourists who flock to Ledra Street's shopping district were still blocked from crossing: The wall was replaced in a matter of hours by screens, and armed soldiers still guarded the area.

Talks held in Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon -- In their first direct negotiations in four months, leaders of Lebanon's pro-government and opposition camps met twice in 24 hours and found some convergence of views on ending the country's political crisis.

Saad Hariri, the leader of the pro-government majority in parliament, met Thursday and last night with the parliamentary speaker, Nabih Berri, an opposition party leader who is aligned with Hezbollah, the official National News Agency reported.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said both domestic and international opinion favored a settlement. "We support the dialogue that began last night, and hope it will reach the desired results," he told a rally in southern Beirut.

But Mr. Nasrallah vowed to continue Hezbollah's campaign against U.S.-backed Prime Minister Fuad Saniora's government until it granted the opposition a veto-wielding share of the Cabinet.

Load-Date: March 13, 2007

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RECORDVIEW: KILLINGS ARE ON OUR CONSCIENCE

Daily Record

July 31, 2006, Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 336 words

Body

LEBANON'S children murdered with British help - the protest banner screamed its message of outrage loud and clear at Prestwick Airport yesterday.

Hundreds joined the protest against the Americans using Scottish soil as a staging post for the delivery of bombs to Israel.

News coverage of the demonstration should have made uncomfortable reading for the Prime Minister.

Tony Blair has so far turned a deaf ear to calls for a complete ceasefire.

Indeed, last night's temporary truce announced by Israel only came about as a result of global outrage at the worst slaughter so far in the 19-day conflict.

The numbers at Prestwick were swelled by many who had been shocked by the early morning television footage of the bombings which killed so many defenceless men, women and children in an Israeli airstrike on the town of Qana.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressed his "great sorrow" for the loss of civilian life and defended the strike, claiming the villagers were being used as human shields by Hezbollah to fire rockets at Israel.

Olmert said: "Everyone understands this. When we strike civilians, the world understands this is an exceptional case that does not represent how we act."

But most of the world does not understand.

The horrific images of the bombing of Qana may yet prove to be the turning point in the latest bout of apparently interminable violence in the Middle East.

The Israelis are now faced with almost unprecedented worldwide condemnation and criticism at their disproportionate military response to Hezbollah incursions.

When he spoke yesterday of the Middle East crisis, Pope Benedict XVI demanded an immediate cessation of violence, in the name of God.

But it is already too late for the little children of Qana...

Or the other 500-plus victims who have perished in the last three weeks.

RECORDVIEW: KILLINGS ARE ON OUR CONSCIENCE

Their deaths are on our collective conscience.

And, in the name of humanity, it can only be a matter of time before the shamed leaders of the US and Britain insist and ensure that Israel stop all military action.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

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Israeli politician convicted of kissing female soldier; Sexual misconduct conviction could earn three-year jail sentence

The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. C7

Length: 322 words

Body

An Israeli court convicted former Justice Minister Haim Ramon of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier - a case that riveted the country's attention and added another layer of scandal to Israel's beleaguered leadership.

The verdict was expected to clear the way for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to launch a major cabinet shake up.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 18-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

Ramon could face up to three years in prison. He is expected to appeal.

Ramon was a key political ally of the prime minister and served as Olmert's justice minister until the indictment forced him to step down last August. He had remained a member of parliament throughout his trial.

Ramon arrived to a chaotic scene at the Tel Aviv Magistrates Court. Hordes of reporters and TV cameras swarmed around him as he made his way to the small courtroom. With photographers snapping his picture, he sat stonefaced ahead of the verdict.

The conviction is expected to lead to a major reshuffle in the Israeli cabinet, where Ramon's old job as justice minister is being temporarily held by the foreign minister, Tzipi Livni.

The shakeup could also cost Labour Party leader Amir Peretz his job as defence minister, with other politicians changing their portfolios.

Peretz has been widely criticized for his handling of last summer's war against **Hezbollah**, and has poor relations with Olmert.

The case comes amid a spate of scandals involving Israeli leaders.

Last week, Israel's attorney general said he plans to indict President Moshe Katsav on charges of raping and sexually assaulting former **female** employees.

Katsav has taken a leave of absence, and this week vacated his official residence in Jerusalem, while he fights the charges.

Israeli politician convicted of kissing female soldier; Sexual misconduct conviction could earn three-year jail sentence

Load-Date: February 8, 2007

End of Document

Sheik up as mufti axed and role is abolished; 'Having one person lead the community is problematic'

The Sun Herald (Sydney, Australia)

April 8, 2007 Sunday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 575 words

Byline: Taghred Chandab

Body

CONTROVERSIAL Muslim leader Sheik Taj el-Din al Hilaly has been sacked by the peak Islamic body and the role of mufti has been abolished.

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), which employed the mufti for more than 15 years, has severed all ties with him.

But the sheik has retaliated by registering the title of mufti for himself and has vowed to carry on speaking on behalf of the Muslim community - even though no organisation wants him to represent them.

The move comes as the Australian Federal Police widens its probe into allegations that the sheik gave charity funds to supporters of the al-Qaeda and **Hezbollah** terrorist groups.

The Egyptian-born imam had been plagued by problems throughout his term as mufti. During a Ramadan sermon last year he likened scantily-clad **women** to uncovered meat, and earlier this year he said Muslims had more right to be in Australia than Europeans.

AFIC president Ikebal Patel said the organisation had stopped paying the sheik's salary and had no intention of keeping him on as mufti. He also said the organisation owned the title of mufti.

AFIC's decision comes as the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) decided to make the role of mufti redundant and create a group of imams, the Australian Council of Jurisprudence and Research, to deal with community issues. A chairman or president would be selected to act as spokesman.

ANIC spokesman Mohamad Abdalla said Sheik al Hilaly would not be the mufti once his three-month grace period ended. He said 39 of the 50 clerics who attended the ANIC conference last month voted against reappointing him.

"Muslims don't want al Hilaly as mufti," Dr Abdalla said.

"The Turkish community, for example, does not recognise him as their leader. Having one person lead the community is problematic."

Sheik up as mufti axed and role is abolished 'Having one person lead the community is problematic'

But the sheik, who is in Turkey at a conference, has established his own organisation in a bid to corner the title of mufti for himself.

The sheik's daughter, Asma al Hilaly, 25, said her father had been betrayed by the community and members of a number of organisations.

"Dad's fight is for the people. He wants to separate religion and politics and that's what he will be trying to do when he comes back."

She said her father walked out last year, taking with him the title of mufti, because he believed the AFIC had no authority over religious figureheads.

She said the family would not comment on the police probe because it was now in the hands of their lawyers.

The AFP has been called in to examine the allegations that he gave \$US10,000 of the \$70,000 donated to the Lebanese Muslim Association (LMA) to distribute to victims of the Israel-Hezbollah war to supporters of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah during a visit to Lebanon last year.

"The AFP has not received a referral to date," a spokesman said, but added that it is examining material to see "if an investigation is warranted".

The LMA itself is now embroiled in a bitter internal battle. The Sun-Herald has learned that it is struggling financially, community support is low and a group of former executive members has threatened legal action against its president, Tom Zreika.

BECOMING A MUFTI

- * In Islam there is no hierarchy such as the Vatican system for Catholics.
- * Muslim communities around the world democratically elect a mufti based on:
 - religious qualification;
 - credibility; and
 - uprightness.
- * A mufti does not have absolute authority and acts as a servant of the community.
- * There is no fixed term.

Graphic

PHOTO: TITLE CLAIM: Sheik al Hilaly has registered the term 'mufti' and has vowed to carry on speaking on behalf of the Muslim community. Picture: DANIELLE SMITH

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Protesters see Harper as U.S. floozy

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

August 5, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: CANADA; Pg. 7

Length: 298 words

Byline: Canadian Press

Dateline: CORNWALL, Ont.

Body

CORNWALL, Ont. (CP) -- Protesters accused Prime Minister Stephen Harper of toeing the American line on the Middle East conflict, as they rallied Friday outside the site of the Conservative caucus meeting.

About 80 people, mostly from Montreal, urged Harper to call for an immediate ceasefire in the region. So far, the Conservative government has supported a ceasefire only as long as certain conditions are met, such as a halt to attacks by both Hezbollah and the Israeli army.

"I'm astounded at the injustice of Harper's position in terms of unconditionally supporting Israel when at this point in time the civilian death count is over 900," said Jordan Topp, who has taught in Lebanon and has friends there.

"People have been killed across the country in Lebanon, and it's not what he's called a 'measured' response."

Demonstrators waved Lebanese flags and placards at passing motorists outside the Nav Canada facility, which is inaccessible to everyone but guests there. They chanted slogans such as "Harper stop fighting, come out and face the justice!"

Daad Elsaadi of Finch, Ont., said she and her husband had planned to visit Lebanon where they owned property, but instead donated the money from the plane ticket to humanitarian assistance.

"My house burned, my land burned, my olive trees burned, my walnut trees burned, and I don't care," cried Elsaadi.

"I only care for the innocent people and for the children who are dying, for the women who are giving birth in the backyard and their children are dying."

Later, staff members from Harper's office invited two of the protesters inside to meet with Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay and with Industry Minister Maxime Bernier.

Harper has called Israel's attacks on Lebanon to neutralize the threat of Hezbollah a "measured" response.

Graphic

Protesters see Harper as U.S. floozy

Photo: Canadian Press; Montreal resident Narjess Mustapha, centre, shouts during a demonstration in Cornwall, Ont., on Friday. A group of about 100 protesters demonstrated outside a building where the Conservative-caucus retreat was being held.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

End of Document

Another sex scandal rocks Israeli politics

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C10

Length: 565 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

TEL AVIV -- Israel was rocked by a sex scandal again Wednesday when former justice minister Haim Ramon was found guilty of indecent assault against a 20-year-old **female** soldier.

Three judges unanimously found the 56-year-old lawyer and member of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's ruling Kadima party, had lied to the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court when he denied "placing his lips on her lips and inserting his tongue in her mouth," repeatedly, and against the complainant's will when the two of them met, for the first time, in his office.

The incident took place moments before the Israeli cabinet voted to go to war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon last summer.

The judges found the testimony of the woman, who was only known in court as H, regarding the kisses was "authentic, coherent, credible, and reliable."

"This was not a kiss of affection," the court said. "This has all the elements of a sexual crime."

The conviction was another staggering blow to Olmert's coalition government, which has been reeling for months over severe public condemnation of its mishandling of the war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon.

As well, the prime minister himself faces at least two criminal investigations into financial misconduct, his finance minister is under investigation for abusing his position for financial gain and another former minister has been charged with fraud, bribery and perjury.

Only last week, Israel's 61-year-old-president, Moshe Katsav, was charged with sex crimes including rape that involved several **women** less than half his age, as well as separate charges relating to fraud and obstruction of justice.

Public outrage over the war in Lebanon, where Olmert failed in his stated objective to win the release of two soldiers kidnapped by **Hezbollah**, and over the rising tide of sexual and financial misbehaviour by the country's political leadership, has also had a devastating effect on the prime minister's popularity. Recent polls have found more than two-thirds of Israelis want Olmert to resign.

Another sex scandal rocks Israeli politics

A survey published two days ago by the popular Ynetnews website painted an even more damning picture.

It revealed only three per cent of the electorate wanted Olmert returned as prime minister in the next election.

"These are the lowest figures for an Israeli prime minister in the 30 years that I have been doing this," said pollster Rafi Smith, who conducted the Ynet poll.

Ruth Ben-Israel, a retired professor emeritus of law at Tel Aviv University, said she was "not only disappointed, but ashamed" of politicians who only thought of themselves and their positions.

"They are corrupted and not just sexually," the internationally respected 76-year-old expert on social justice said. "Once in office they think that they are nearly Gods and forget their ideals. It is all about power and interests."

Hours before his conviction, friends of Ramon's had confidently predicted in the media the divorced politician would be found not guilty for what was described as "a misunderstanding" over a "French kiss" and that he intended to resume the position as Olmert's justice minister, which he resigned from when charges were brought against him six months ago.

Instead, Ramon faces up to three years in jail when the court pronounces a sentence on Feb. 21.

When Ramon's conviction was announced in court his girlfriend, who appeared to be several decades younger than him, hugged him supportively.

Graphic

Colour Photo: AP; Former Israeli justice minister Haim Ramon and his girlfriend, Vered, leave the court Wednesday in Tel Aviv ;

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Inside Today

The Gazette (Montreal)

October 31, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 599 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

Hezbollah seeks more power in government

Emboldened by this summer's war with Israel, the radical Islamist group **Hezbollah** has gone on the political offensive inside Lebanon, demanding an increased share of government posts in the country's delicate power-sharing arrangement. In Israel, the cabinet agreed yesterday to bring a hawkish, divisive politician into the government, a decision that shored up the shaky coalition but effectively ruled out any serious moves to revive Middle East peace negotiations. Details, Page A18

Bush: Democrat win a U.S. loss

U.S. President George W. Bush charged yesterday that the opposition Democrats have no plan for Iraq, and "terrorists win and America loses" if the Republicans fail to win next Tuesday's congressional elections. Details, Page A19

Dorval fluoride plan stalls

The mayor of Dorval contends the Montreal island council is blocking his city's plan to put fluoride in its drinking water. Since Dorval needs new equipment so it can fluoridate its water, the island council contends it - and not Dorval - has the final say on fluoridation. Details, Page A7

Quebec gives its blessing

The Quebec government announced

yesterday it will give \$3 million to the Corporation de l'Abbaye d'Oka community group, which wants to buy the historic Oka abbey and transform the property

into an inn, tourist attraction and agricultural school. Details, Page A8

Tories rapped on new judges

The Conservative government has named three of its former political allies to federal judgeships, despite a record of criticizing past Liberal regimes for their patronage appointments and having been elected on promises to improve government

accountability. Details, Page A12

Rise seen in mothers on meth

An alarming number of pregnant women in Canada are addicted to crystal meth, say researchers who have found the illicit drug in wisps of hair from days-old babies. Details, Page A14

business

Securities laws to be beefed up

Quebec's financial watchdog is preparing legislative changes aimed at toughening securities laws in the wake of the financial scandals that have hit the province. The laws will make it easier for investors to sue public companies for issuing misleading disclosure documents. Details, Page B1

Sunice skiwear born again

Mark Fletcher has put the winter back in Sunice. This season, for the first time in three years, Sunice-brand ski jackets and ski suits will be available at retail stores in North America. The storied brand initially made its name after being launched in Calgary in 1976. Details, Page B4

Sports

Kovalev upbeat at centre

The freshly minted line of Sergei Samsonov, Alexander Perezhoghin and new centreman Alex Kovalev will be front and centre when the Canadiens host the Ottawa Senators at the Bell Centre tonight. Details, Page C1

Basketball cleans up its act

Nearly two years after the Auburn Hills brawl and Ron Artest's charge into the stands in Detroit during a game marked

a tipping point for the National Basketball Association, the league seems to be heading back in the right direction.

Details, Page C1

ARTS & LIFE

Can Lance go the distance?

Seven-time Tour de France cycling champ Lance Armstrong takes on a different kind of endurance race this weekend when he tackles the New York Marathon. Fitness writer Jill Barker wonders if he's up to it. Details, Page D4

Caine ready to retire, but ...

Michael Caine says he doesn't want to work much these days. So why is the revered actor so busy, with a flood of projects including an update of his 1972 hit Sleuth? Caine admits he finds the events of the past year somewhat astonishing. Details, Page D5

Graphic

Photo: **Hezbollah** seeks more power in government

Load-Date: October 31, 2006

End of Document

3 funerals for 3 best friends in Israel

The International Herald Tribune

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 560 words

Byline: Richard A. Oppel Jr.

Dateline: MAALOT-TARSHIHA, Israel

Body

Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Jerusalem for this article.

*

Mourning the dead took all night in one tiny neighborhood Thursday evening. Hundreds of people essentially the whole neighborhood of Hay al-Bedu made the same somber procession three times.

At the first stop, the men, solemn, talked quietly as they sat in white plastic chairs and praised each others' dead sons as "martyrs" or spoke of "Allah's will." The women, kept separate from the men, sat together in plastic chairs arrayed in semicircles around the grieving mother.

The mourners first stopped at the home of Shanati Shanati, a 20-year-old who was to be the best man at a friend's wedding next month.

They then gathered at the home of Amir Naim, 17, who left school after the ninth grade and worked as a gardener.

Then they went to the home of Mohammed Faour, 18, whom neighbors described as quiet, modest, friendly and humble, and who never had conflict with anybody.

All three young Muslims and close friends died Thursday when one of Hezbollah's Katyusha rockets crashed down beside a large rock where they had run from their car to take cover when missiles began to strike. The foot-deep crater was about 15 meters, or 50 feet, from the two-lane road where the three friends were parking their car when the Katyushas began to descend.

One of the young men, Shanati, was not even supposed to be there. He had agreed at the last minute to help his two friends do some work at a family farm, said another friend, Jalal Kharma, 28, on the way to the home of Naim's parents, near the Shanati home.

It was the kind of request Shanati was unlikely to have turned down. He grew up with the two other men and saw them almost every day.

As young boys, they loved sleepovers at Shanati's home, and later, as they got older, they enjoyed camping together, said Ahmed Heb, another friend and neighbor, as he walked from one house to another.

3 funerals for 3 best friends in Israel

The night before, the three young men had planned out their next camping trip, Heb said.

The young men were products of a well-kept neighborhood of Muslim, Bedouin and Christian Arabs in the western part of Tarshiha, a village of 4,000 Israeli Arabs. Tarshiha is legally attached to the Jewish city of Maalot, which contains roughly 20,000 people, half of them immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Hezbollah missiles, which also killed five Israelis in the coastal town of Acre on Thursday, seemed to swipe the life from this tight-knit Arab neighborhood, where everyone seemed to know the three young men.

"We need patience and power to overcome this crisis," one mourner told Shanati's father, as about 70 men some Muslim, some Christian sat in a large oval on the long, tiled back porch of the Shanati home.

"We have no other choice," he said, as explosions could be heard in the distance and an Israeli helicopter flew high overhead. "The politicians are the merchants of the meat of children and innocent people."

A few minutes later, about 40 of the men rose in unison to walk to the next mourning gathering.

Outside, Shanati's younger brother, Billal, said he was working at the family farm nearby when the rockets began to strike Thursday.

Billal recounted how his brother had narrowly escaped another **Hezbollah** rocket in an attack Wednesday, and he struggled to make sense of the events.

"It's what Allah wants," he said. "It's Allah's will."

Load-Date: August 6, 2006

Hope falters amid mad Mel and the media war

Canberra Times (Australia)

August 10, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 15

Length: 808 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

THE SUEZ invasion of 1956, Mel Gibson, the photograph of the young woman - her face contorted with grief for three dead members of her family in a village in Israel - the war in Vietnam, media sympathy and even support for Muslim terrorism, are in their different ways connected events.

The Suez invasion of 1956 was when Britain and France persuaded Israel, a country then eight years old, to invade Egypt, so that they could seize control of the Canal back from Egypt's president Nasser.

The Soviet Union threatened Britain and France with war, the US president, Ike Eisenhower, dumped Britain and France, and they backed down. The Soviet Union saw a diplomatic opening into the Arab world, and seized it, successfully.

The left, which had been sided with Israel, followed the Soviet Union, and as that generation in the West shaped by the revelation of the Holocaust was overtaken by subsequent generations, public opinion turned round.

Back in the days before the Berlin Wall came down and when I was a Reuter correspondent, an East German Agency reporter was explaining to me East German attitudes to Middle East issues. While his own sympathies lay with Israel, East Germans were generally supportive of the Arabs. He supposed, he said, that this was because of what he and other East German journalists wrote about the Middle East.

What stuck in my mind was the tone of rueful irony.

Journalists exert tremendous influence when they are all of a mind, and a fair amount when they are out on their own. Yet the written word is as nothing compared to the moving image.

The men in the trenches kept going, 90 years ago, because nobody could comprehend the nature of battle on the Western front. The Vietnam War was lost because television confronted the world and reshaped public opinion in America.

So now the networks are bringing us images of the victims of Israeli bombing.

Never mind that **Hezbollah** started the war with a border incursion and a kidnapping.

Hope falters amid mad Mel and the media war

Never mind that Hezbollah pours thousands of rockets into Israel. We didn't see the consequences of that, until this week when for the first time that I can recall, we were shown casualties from of a rocket attack, and the face of an Israeli Arab woman who had lost her family.

It adds up to tremendous pressure on Israel and on the nations which support Israel to agree to a ceasefire, that is to say, to Israel knuckling under to terrorist attack, to Israel surrendering the right to defend its country and its citizens from terrorism.

And Mel Gibson, a genius who acts, writes, produces and makes billions, a graduate of NIDA, of whom, because of his success, we used to be so proud.

"Mad Mel", as the papers are calling him because he hit the front as a star actor with the Mad Max films, is a great hater, of Brits as well as Jews. It doesn't matter that he falsifies history to suit his purposes, as he did most egregiously in Braveheart, the highly fictionalised account of the life and prolonged death of William Wallace, at the end of the 13th century.

What matters is that it stirred up feelings of hostility in Scotland towards Britain, and may well have contributed to the passage of the contemporaneous referendum on devolution which set up a Scottish parliament and loosened the ties that bind Britain, or so the commentators said at the time.

Gibson produced The Passion of the Christ, two hours of theological sado- masochism that involved Jesus carrying two billets of wood the size of railway sleepers up hill and down dale along the Via Dolorosa after having been beaten until the blood flowed and again while he was burdened with the railways sleepers. It was beyond the limits of human endurance and could not possibly have occurred.

Never mind. It made Mad Mel billions and delivered another message - that Jews are even more hateful than Brits. He got away with it, too, until the other day when, drunk at the wheel, he told the arresting officer that all the world's wars were started by Jews, and was he one of them.

Mel Gibson is among those shaping the attitudes of those who report the bombs that fall on targets in the Lebanon and the rockets that strike targets in Israel. He is among those shaping the views of those who fail to report that Hezbollah fires its rockets from the midst of civilian sites, knowing women and children will be killed and aiming the television coverage at the humanitarian West. And he is helping shape the attitudes of those who aren't especially bothered when Hezbollah fires its rockets at women and children in Israel, and don't show us those pictures.

He has made his contribution to the transformation of public opinion that has worked against Israel over the past 50 years.

Israel has not been in greater peril since it won its independence against the armies of five Arab countries in 1948.

David Barnett is a Canberra freelance writer.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

UC-Davis Middle East panel addresses conflicts, offers solutions

University Wire

October 20, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 The California Aggie via U-Wire

Length: 606 words

Byline: By Erik Steffenson, The California Aggie; **SOURCE:** UC-Davis

Dateline: DAVIS, Calif.

Body

The discussion and panel titled "Cycles of Violence in the Long Hot Summer of 2006: Israel, Palestine and Lebanon" held Wednesday evening at the Buehler Alumni and Visitors Center included a confluence of perspectives that prompted mixed reactions from audience members.

The capacity audience of close to 200 heard four speakers who voiced various viewpoints on the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, focusing on the events of the past summer. Beshara Doumani of the department of history at the University of California at Berkeley, Zeina Zaatari of the Global Fund for **Women**, Zeev Maoz of the UC Davis political science department and Fred Lawson, professor of international relations at Mills College, each delivered brief speeches on issues concerning Palestine, Lebanon, Israel and Syria.

The purpose of the event was to discuss the conflicts and address some misconceptions, including a lack of change in the region, cultural coherence among Middle Eastern nations and immediate causality. Suad Joseph, professor of anthropology and **women** and gender studies at UC Davis, who moderated the event, made special note of the misconception of binaries in world relations.

"There is no 'us and them.' There is 'us in them' and 'them in us,'" she said.

Lawson focused on the difficulties facing Syria after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. A number of economic issues currently face Syria, including the country's previous dependence on Iraq for oil and as a market for exported goods, Lawson said, and these economic assurances have been altered by the current U.S. presence. Lawson also cited a disruption in the domestic political system and changes in the relationships among Middle Eastern countries as potential problems.

Zaatari, program officer for the Middle East and North Africa for the Global Fund for **Women**, spoke about the nature of **Hezbollah** as an organization and as a Lebanese institution. **Hezbollah** was formed to counteract the expansion of Israel, and while many view it as a terrorist organization, Zaatari said it is a political organization uniquely close to its constituents. Despite its reputation as being tied to Iran, its home country is Lebanon, Zaatari said.

"**Hezbollah** is very much a Lebanese phenomenon," Zaatari said.

Professor Maoz spoke about Israel, its role in the recent war with Lebanon, and its current political direction. He said the Israeli people don't view the war as a success and the country is headed in a politically conservative direction.

UC-Davis Middle East panel addresses conflicts, offers solutions

Maoz said Israel makes decisions too hastily and militarily.

"In my view, Israel should have responded with diplomacy; then it would have been justified in going to war," he said.

Doumani discussed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the viewpoint of the Palestinians. He said much of the conflict is a result of the Palestinians' forced confinement in areas such as the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He also brought up the role of the United States.

"The U.S. is locked in a mutual embrace with the Middle East that it can't break out of," he said.

During the question-and-answer portion of the event, members of the audience voiced their opinions of the viewpoints given in the discussion.

Many were outraged by what they said was bias in the speakers' perspectives.

"It was completely one-sided and very extreme," said Rachel Kligfeld, a senior psychology major.

Some said they expected more solutions to the conflict to be presented.

"They missed an opportunity to have a balanced discussion. It was counterproductive," said Brian Levin, senior international relations major and president of Aggies for Israel.

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Load-Date: October 20, 2006

End of Document

Another taxing issue

Guardian.com

August 8, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1952 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

ON IMMIGRATION, RACE AND COUNCIL TAX

A reasonably technical complaint by local councils - that central government is not accurately recording the number of immigrants to some areas - collides with a couple of other stories to prompt a spate of articles on immigration and ethnicity. It is not, in all cases, edifying.

The Guardian plays the story with a fairly straight bat; tellingly, perhaps, the FT does not cover it at all. "The government's failure to measure the numbers of migrants accurately could mean council tax increasing by 6% in some areas," says the Guardian, quoting a letter from the Local Government Association to the home secretary, John Reid. The LGA's letter, the paper points out, comes after Mr Reid has said he wants independent advice on possible limits to immigration, and, more importantly, during a review by the national statistician into precisely the question of estimating migrant numbers for "managing the economy, policies and services".

For the Mail and the Express, of course, this is front page news. "Council tax will have to rise because of Labour's failure to get a grip on immigration," says the Mail, where the LGA's letter has become a warning that "there was no way local government could afford the public services that hundreds of thousands of immigrants from eastern Europe would demand." The Express is slightly more measured, explaining that without accurate figures, "grants from Whitehall, which are heavily based on population size, are too small to help councils provide the extra services required, particularly those areas receiving high numbers of migrants."

The Express, which "does not often find itself sympathising with town hall bosses seeking to explain away large rises in council tax ..." believes the "politically correct brigade ... is on the run". The Mail too, is in I-told-you-so mood, concluding that the government has finally "seen the light".

A separate Mail story reports remarks by "Britain's most senior Asian policeman" to the effect that anti-terror laws risk "criminalising" young Muslims, and may be contributing to the rise in extremism. The Mail's Richard Littlejohn offers his considered response: "If they hate us so much, why don't they leave?"

It's a very different world at the Times, where Libby Purves is in dismay at our national decline. She contrasts appalling educational achievement among Britons with "all these newly arrived Poles or Czechs, whose English is immaculate," and who, in addition to being literate, numerate and competent, have the commendable habit of eating the fish they catch, rather than, like English anglers, throwing them back in.

Another taxing issue

More seriously, the Times gives a double page spread over to reports that "thousands of would-be visitors to the UK are being illegally turned down for visas simply because they are from poor and repressive countries, according to an official immigration watchdog." A case study focuses on a Ugandan primary school teacher desperate to study in the UK so he can get a better job at home "giving his Aids-ravaged family a secure future". The piece is scathing about "British officialdom", which has twice rejected the man's visa applications.

Lastly, a study in the FT claims to show that "university students with a Chinese background are four times more likely to want to pursue an investment banking career than their white counterparts". Honestly, they come over here, and drive our economy.

- * Immigrant migrant numbers may lead to council tax rise

- * Times: Britain accused over visas for poor

- * FT: Ethnic origin 'influences career choice'

- * Mail: Council tax must rise to pay for migrants

- * Times: Libby Purves

DOUBLE STANDARDS

An intriguing piece by Gideon Rachman in the FT says that complaints of bias in the coverage of the Israel-Hizbullah conflict are probably justified, on both sides. His core point is that "white man syndrome" makes us more interested when Israelis - "someone like me" - die, but also more shocked when Israelis kill.

The Times and Telegraph today seem to bear Rachman out. The front page of the Telegraph shows weeping Israelis at the funeral of a soldier. The Times's coverage also seems - at first blush - unusually friendly to Israel. Its two main stories on the conflict are: "Arab moves stall ceasefire as Israel threatens more attacks" and "Hizbullah's hidden stronghold sends death across the border". In reality, the coverage is much more nuanced; the Times is calling strongly for Europe to get behind France's attempts to engineer a ceasefire. Its report subtly hints that opposition by the Arab League to the UN resolution currently being proposed is delaying an end to hostilities, but seems sympathetic to the Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, who "made a tearful appeal" to the Arab foreign ministers.

The Times also has a fascinating spread of cartoons from the Arab and Israeli press, introduced by its foreign editor, Bronwen Maddox.

The Guardian's coverage centres on a large colour photograph of a hand emerging from rubble in a Lebanese village, being gently held by the hand of a rescuer as other hands attempt to extricate the victim. A map shows the location of attacks from both sides yesterday: on the Lebanese side, Israeli strikes hit Beirut and as far north as Baalbek. On the Israeli side, Hizbullah rockets hit targets including Naharia, near Haifa.

The Independent, alongside its daily diet of Fisk and Donald Macintyre, reports that an Israeli attack on a Lebanese power plant has sent 30,000 tons of heavy fuel oil spilling out into the Mediterranean. A picture shows the slick on a deserted Beirut beach. A UN spokeswoman said the damage could last "for up to a century".

- * Lebanon to deploy army in south

- * FT: Gideon Rachman

- * Times: Hizbullah's hidden stronghold sends death across the border

- * Telegraph: Israel gives army free rein in Lebanon

- * Times: The war of images

SPEED LIMITS TO BE REVIEWED

Compare and contrast: "Speed limits could be cut to 20mph across the country" (Mail). "Speed limits on country roads to be cut"(Telegraph). "Plans to raise speed limits on the road" (Guardian). There's an element of truth in all those headlines: the Department of Transport has asked councils to review speed limits on all A and B roads. The Guardian agrees with the Telegraph that "the most dramatic change could involve a reduction in some rural areas in an attempt to cut casualty rates, which are not falling as fast as they are in towns and cities". Guidance from the DoT also notes that "unrealistically low" speed limits are "ineffective" and "lead to disrespect".

Neither the Mail nor the Telegraph is particularly het up about the guidance. After its attention-grabbing headline, the Mail seems broadly approving. The Telegraph, which guesses its readership will mostly be affected by rural speed changes, notes with concern that many drivers already admit to ignoring the 60 mph rural limit, and that 64% of road deaths occur outside towns.

The Express cartoon has a man on a psychiatrist's couch being told "Of course you feel persecuted - you're a driver." But as the Express doesn't feature the speed limit story, the cartoon may simply be from the Express's "use any time" drawer.

- * Speed limits face a major overhaul

- * Mail: Speed limits could be slashed to 20mph

BP SHUTS DOWN ALASKAN PLANT

The FT reports that BP yesterday "shut down half of Alaska's oil production after finding leaks in the corroding pipeline system". Oil prices "spiked", says the paper, while the US government offered to open its emergency stockpiles, and Saudi Arabia said it could increase production.

The FT's leader says this proves that tight regulation can be a good thing - "better to spill the beans than the oil" - and that BP actually benefits from an incentive to maintain its infrastructure. It contrasts this with an SFO investigation into "a Nigerian bribery scandal ... a case that exemplifies the lucrative, murky and highly political world of western oil interests in Africa".

The Express, meanwhile, is worried: "Oil crisis will send prices up at pump", it warns, clutching its A-level in economics. The paper's leader column is a heartfelt cry for tax cuts that will have every Wrap reader weeping only into his or her keyboard. "Cut taxes, not our treats," it begs. "Most of us will have little choice but to dig deeper for our fuel ... so a few more of the little treats which make life fun will fall by the wayside." The Express is damning about the government's failure to cut taxes so that everyone can have more tuck. "This is the economics of the madhouse." Quite so.

- * Another BP scare pushes oil price to record high

- * FT: Murky world of western oil interests in Africa

MYSPACE FINDS GOOGLE

Three interesting media stories form a cluster in today's FT. MySpace, the "social networking site" recently acquired by Rupert Murdoch, has made a "multi-year search and advertising deal" with Google, under which it is guaranteed \$900m by 2010.

AOL, meanwhile - a rival of sorts to both companies - admitted a "screw-up" in releasing "the search histories of 658,000 users". The paper says bloggers had spotted that one user had made several searches for "how to kill your wife" and was also keen to see images of dead people. Lastly, the FT reports that Viacom, the media company, is considering a bid for Bebo, one of MySpace's competitors.

- * FT: Google in ad deal with MySpace

* FT: AOL calls release of data 'a screw-up'

STOP DIGGING

The Guardian reports the curious case of William Lyttle, the "Mole Man of Hackney", who for 40 years has been burrowing under his house, and, it turns out, those of all his neighbours. The council has finally had to step in, evicting Mr Lyttle - pictured, a smiling, dapper gent - while it fills in the holes to stop structural damage to nearby buildings.

Mr Lyttle's 40 tonnes of excavations have caused trouble to his neighbours on various occasions, as when he hit an electrical main and put the power out for a nearby street. Mr Lyttle says he has not dug under anyone else's property. "I just have a big basement".

The Telegraph's basement story, meanwhile, is of a bar in Nanjing which encourages customers to break glasses and attack its (burly) staff. If clients are still not relaxed, they can enlist the services of a psychologist. If it helps, the staff will dress up as customers' bosses to make the beatings more cathartic. "The landlord, Wu Gong, 29, said that most of his customers were women."

And finally, my colleague Ros Taylor sends me the BBC story about a fireman who decided to go for a spin in a tumble dryer. A fire service spokesman told the BBC: "It is blatantly obvious that getting into a tumble dryer, especially of industrial design, is not only foolish, but dangerous in the extreme."

* No more digging for the Mole Man

* BBC: Firefighters' dryer prank probed

COMING UP ON GURDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

Tony Blair says he hopes to see a UN resolution for a Lebanon ceasefire agreed "by tomorrow", as he prepares to head off on holiday.

Anti-war campaigners say they boarded an aircraft at Prestwick airport today - the site's third security breach in three days.

The Croydon garden of a jailed paedophile is being dug up by police in a hunt for the remains of two youngsters, according to a report.

BP says the corrosion discovered at its Alaskan oil field is so severe it could shut down America's single biggest source of domestic crude for months.

* CLARIFICATION: We said yesterday that Sunday was "the bloodiest day so far" in the current Middle East conflict in Israel and Lebanon. Israel suffered its highest number of casualties on a single day, but overall the number of deaths was less than on the day of the Israeli strike on Qana. Apologies for any confusion.

Load-Date: August 8, 2006

News Summary

The New York Times

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 911 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-13

Lebanon Cease-Fire Holds As Thousands Go Home

Thousands in Israel and Lebanon made their way cautiously home while the cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah seemed to be largely holding. The Israeli Army said that Hezbollah had fired several rockets but that all had landed in southern Lebanon. A1

President Bush defended his handling of the war between Israel and Hezbollah, declaring that Hezbollah had been the loser in the fight and warning Syria and Iran against re-supplying the militia.

A9

Iraqi Official Mulls Abdication

Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, left, the speaker of Parliament and a conservative Sunni Arab, said he was considering stepping down because of bitter enmity from Kurdish and Shiite political blocs. A3

Afghan Polio Linked to Violence

Polio cases in Afghanistan have increased substantially, health officials said, linking new cases to provinces where fighting between insurgents and Afghan and international forces has prevented health officials from conducting vaccinations. A3

Airport Threat Levels Decrease

With air travelers facing a fifth day of delays, cancellations and restrictions on carry-on baggage, Britain and the United States lowered threat assessment levels as the British police continued to investigate the reported plot to blow up American airliners. A13

Diplomat Attacked in Sri Lanka

The Pakistani ambassador to Sri Lanka escaped injury from a roadside bombing, but seven people were killed in the blast, the police said. A6

News Summary

NATIONAL A14-17

Census Data Shows Immigrants' New Growth

The number of immigrants living in American households rose 16 percent over the last five years, fueled largely by recent arrivals from Mexico, according to fresh data released by the Census Bureau. Increasingly, immigrants are settling directly in parts of the country that until recently saw little immigrant activity. A1

Governors Oppose Guard Bill

In an unusual act of bipartisan unanimity, the governors of all 50 states and Puerto Rico voiced strong opposition to legislation that would allow the president to federalize National Guard troops during a disaster without the consent of the local authorities. A14

U.S. Looks to U.K. Terror Law

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales ordered a side-by-side review of American and British counterterrorism laws as a first step toward determining whether further changes in American law are warranted. A15

Pittsburgh Fears Loss of Heinz

As stockholders of the H. J. Heinz Company cast their final ballots, many people in Pittsburgh fear an investment group will gain a near majority on the board and eventually move the company's headquarters from the city. A14

More Gay Soldiers Discharged

The Defense Department discharged 726 service members last year for being gay, up about 10 percent from 2004, figures released by a gay rights group show. A17

U.S. to Take Over Cross

President Bush signed a law transferring a 29-foot-tall Latin cross high on a hill in San Diego to the federal government, stepping into a long-running dispute over the separation of church and state. A14

NEW YORK/REGION B1-6

Four Dead in Crash On New Jersey Turnpike

Four people were killed and four others were injured when a flatbed truck loaded with bricks slammed into a line of northbound traffic that was at a standstill on the New Jersey Turnpike four miles south of the George Washington Bridge, the authorities said. B1

Out of Service in New York

New York City's efforts to enforce regulations in buildings where elevators routinely malfunction can be alarmingly ineffective, an examination has found. A1

Immigrants Swell Region

The number of immigrants has continued to surge in metropolitan New York since 2000, according to census figures, and that increase, combined with high birth rates, has elevated the foreign-born and their children in New York City itself to fully 60 percent of the population. B1

SCIENCE TIMES F1-8

News Summary

A New Dead Sea Challenge

New archaeological evidence is raising more questions about the conventional interpretation linking the desolate ruins of an ancient settlement known as Qumran with the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were found in nearby caves. F3

Health & Fitness F5

ARTS E1-8

City Steps in on BAM District

The city is taking a more aggressive role in developing the BAM Cultural District in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, removing control from a nonprofit planning group and shifting the site of a theater designed by Hugh Hardy and Frank Gehry. E1

BUSINESS DAY C1-10

Dell Recalls Batteries

Dell is recalling 4.1 million notebook computer batteries because they could erupt in flames, the company said. It will be the largest safety recall in the history of the consumer electronics industry, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said. A1

PepsiCo Names ***Female*** Chief

PepsiCo Inc. said that its president and chief financial officer, Indra K. Nooyi, would succeed Steven S. Reinemund, as chief executive, a move that would make the company one of the largest to be led by a woman. C1

Tracking Online Behavior

Internet companies like Yahoo and AOL are using computer models to analyze records of what their users search for and then displaying advertising meant to speak directly to individual interests. A1

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A18-19

Editorials: Help wanted -- qualified judges; a public rebuilding downtown; who's afraid of Shirin Ebadi?; Adam Cohen on the Supreme Court case that must not be named.

Columns: John Tierney, Thomas Frank.

Crossword E6

Obituaries B8

TV Listings E7

Weather A16

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo

Load-Date: August 15, 2006

End of Document

'Fantasy' fails to grasp root of Mideast conflict

USA TODAY

August 8, 2006 Tuesday

FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10A

Length: 871 words

Body

Commentary writer George Bisharat's picture of a beautiful Beirut that has been ruined, in part, by Israel's "history of violence against Arab civilians" during the past 60 years is pure fantasy ("Did Israel really need to savage the beauty of Beirut?" The Forum, Wednesday).

Has Bisharat forgotten Syria's brutal and illegal 29-year occupation of Lebanon? Did he forget to tell us that beautiful Beirut has been held hostage since 1982 by Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that has created an illegal and insidious army within "tranquil" Lebanon? Hezbollah has not only amplified sectarian strife in that country, but also cared nothing about the consequences to the entire civilian population in Lebanon that have resulted from its violent ambitions against Israel to the south.

Beirut suffers today for the same reason that much of the Arab world has suffered since 1948: the inability of the Muslim world to recognize the reality of the existence of Israel and to further peaceful relations with the Jewish state and with Judaism. This sad reality has again gripped the region, as evidenced by Hezbollah's igniting the present conflict with Israel by its kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers within Israel's borders, and by its salvo of missiles aimed at murdering as many innocents as possible.

I hear much sorrow in Bisharat's lament over what is happening in Lebanon, and the whole world should know that Jews and Israelis as well share that sadness at the unnecessary loss of life. But I did not hear any regret at all from Bisharat for the loss of innocent men, women and children in Israel, for the hundreds of thousands in Israel whose lives have been displaced in the northern part of the country, and for all the Israeli families that now are sending their young sons to fight yet another battle against foes that wish Israel's destruction.

I agree only with Bisharat's conclusion. I, too, wish that Muslims could also enjoy the magic of their world, but I would add the following: Sadly, they will not see that beauty until they rid themselves of the extremism and terror against Jews and Israel that deny life, dignity and security for all in the region. And that vision must include all -- Muslims and Jews.

Dr. Stuart Altshuler, Rabbi

Congregation Eilat

Chapman University

Mission Viejo, Calif.

'Fantasy' fails to grasp root of Mideast conflict

Memories of violence

Many thanks for publishing George Bisharat's commentary.

My daughter was a student at the American University of Beirut in 1973. That spring, she invited my wife and I on a tour of the Middle East. She took us on a sight-seeing trip of a lifetime; we spent many hours in that lovely city, Beirut.

It so happened that we were in the Beirut international airport waiting for a flight to Egypt when the Israeli Air Force bombed and strafed the Palestinian refugee camp lying in a valley between the airport and the city. We stood at the entrance of the airport and watched the dive bombers do their work not far from where we stood.

It was a painful time for my daughter. She had volunteered as a teacher of English to the children in that camp. She knew these people.

Bullets found their way into the airport and we were herded into the basement and later evacuated. The airport was closed for the day.

Israel has many bloody years in its history, doing damage to its neighbors far beyond the call for self-defense.

Rev. Dana S. Green

Corpus Christi, Texas

Tactics will not work

George Bisharat's eloquent commentary is a breath of fresh air in contrast to the Israeli narrative in this country. For those of us who have lived and worked in the Middle East, watching Israel destroy Lebanon and the Palestinian territories is heartbreaking.

Once again, the civilian population is on the run from Lebanon, displaced in numbers comparable to Palestinians in 1948. Israel hasn't learned, and neither has its U.S. handler, that destroying villages, land and resources will not make the population weak. It only strengthens them.

The Palestinians have been fighting occupation since 1948. They haven't gone away. They never will.

And now, neither will the Lebanese. Instead of dividing these two Christian and Muslim populations, Israel just united them.

Will Israel never learn?

Greta Berlin

Los Angeles

Cease-fire looks bleak

It will be very difficult for Israel to accept some temporary cease-fire with the same familiar, ineffective guidelines, given the obvious failure of the United Nations peacekeepers and the Lebanese Army to prevent the massive importation of rockets and other weapons into southern Lebanon over the past few years.

It's obvious that this was part of a long-range plan by Hezbollah to stockpile weapons for the very purpose of attacking Israel. These rockets are not defensive weapons.

Larry Zini

Huntsville, Utah

'Fantasy' fails to grasp root of Mideast conflict

'Insight' badly needed

George Bisharat's commentary clearly provides historical insight, so badly needed, regarding the current situation in Lebanon.

Most often we hear from supporters of Israel, trying to use moral relativism to justify the unjustified destruction of an entire country, Lebanon. Please continue to help your readers grasp the significance and reality of the Middle East crisis with more articles that give balanced and un-politicized information.

Karen Dabdoub

Cincinnati

Graphic

PHOTO, B/W, Hussein Malla, AP

Load-Date: August 8, 2006

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Inside Today

The Gazette (Montreal)

October 17, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 376 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

Suicide bomber kills scores of Sri Lankans

Tamil rebels rammed a truck packed with explosives into a convoy of military buses yesterday, killing at least 93 sailors in one of the deadliest insurgent attacks since the 2002 ceasefire. The military said more than 150 were wounded. Details, Page A16

Hezbollah shows the way

Hezbollah's aid wing, Jihad al-Binaa, has an ambitious plan to complete reconstruction of southern Beirut within three years. It is seen as filling a vacuum created by the Lebanese government. Details, Page A14

UNICEF rethinks orange box

Bye-bye orange boxes. Hello bake sales and chess marathons. Those are a few of the possible fundraising events at schools this month for UNICEF Canada now that the orange Halloween collection box has been retired. Details, Page A6

Internet trumps blackout laws

Pulling the plug on the country's power grid would be the only way to enforce federal election-night blackout laws made obsolete by the Internet age, the Supreme Court of Canada was told yesterday. Page A9

Prison watchdog raps system

The Canadian prison system is practising "systemic discrimination" against aboriginal offenders, says the federal ombudsman for inmates - a finding that his political masters in the Conservative government refuse to accept. Page A12

Youth Zone

The pros and cons of co-ed

Inside Today

Do **females** learn better in an all-girls school? Do males focus on schoolwork more in an all-boys school? Or, are there benefits to being in a co-ed class? Not only are educators and academics split, so are students. Details, Page A24

Business

Bombardier revs up at show

The old rivalry between Bombardier and Embraer of Brazil in the world regional-jet market is spilling over into business jets at the National Business Aviation Association's 59th convention in Orlando, Fla., this week. Details, Page B1

Sports

Esks' Maciocia to coach Als?

As the Alouettes and the Eskimos prepare to meet at the Big O on Saturday, rumours abound that the Als will hire Edmonton head coach Danny Maciocia to coach the team next season. Details, Page C3

ARTS & LIFE

MSO launches new album

A new CD featuring the Montreal Symphony Orchestra lands on music store shelves today. Alain Lefevre OSM - Rhapsodies is the orchestra's first album in four years.

Details, Page D5

Graphic

Photo: Suicide bomber kills scores of Sri Lankans

Load-Date: October 17, 2006

U.S. Muslim advocacy group is object of suspicion

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

March 14, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 363 words

Byline: Neil MacFarquhar New York Times News Service

Body

With violence across the Middle East fixing Islam smack at the center of the U.S. political debate, an organization partly financed by donors closely identified with wealthy Persian Gulf governments has emerged as the most vocal advocate for American Muslims -- and an object of wide suspicion.

The group, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, defines its mission as spreading the understanding of Islam and protecting civil liberties. Yet a debate rages about the group, commonly known as CAIR, and its financing and motives.

A small band of critics have tried to link it to Hamas and Hezbollah, which have been designated terrorist organizations by the State Department, and have gone so far as calling CAIR an American front for the two.

In December, Sen. Barbara Boxer of California issued a Certificate of Appreciation to the CAIR representative in Sacramento, but she quickly revoked it when critics assailed her on the Web with headlines like "Senators for Terror."

"There are things there I don't want to be associated with," Boxer said later. Her decision to revoke the Sacramento commendation provoked an outcry from the American Civil Liberties Union and the California Council of Churches.

Founded in 1994, CAIR had eight chapters at the time of the Sept. 11 attacks, said Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the group, but has grown to some 30 chapters since American Muslims have felt unjustly scrutinized ever since.

CAIR officials say the accusations against it are rooted in its refusal to endorse the U.S. government's blanket condemnations of Hezbollah and Hamas, although it has criticized Hamas for civilian deaths.

"Traditionally within the government there is only one point of view that is acceptable, which is the pro-Israel line," said Nihad Awad, who helped found CAIR and is its executive director. "Another enlightened perspective on the conflict is not there, and it causes some discomfort."

Some Muslims, particularly the secular, find CAIR overly influenced by Saudi religious interpretations, criticizing it for stating in news releases, for example, that all Muslim women are required to veil their hair when the matter is openly debated among Muslims.

Load-Date: March 14, 2007

U.S. Muslim advocacy group is object of suspicion

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We must have a lasting solution

The Sun (England)

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION

Length: 619 words

Byline: David Blunkett

Body

IF Tony Blair wants a quiet life he will simply take one look at the horror of war that is tearing the Middle East apart and say: "We demand a ceasefire!"

Then he can sit back while we all feel better. And it will have the bonus effect of reducing the political flak, the bitterness and the hatred to which the Prime Minister is being relentlessly subjected to.

And there's been another benefit for Tony. Such a clear-cut message, stamping his foot and demanding everyone lay down their arms this instant, will lessen the vitriol being poured on him by some sections of the media. It might even end the sniping he has been subjected to from some disgruntled members of his own government who seem to be working on the basis that revenge for perceived hurts is anything but sweet.

And what good will it do? Absolutely none. Simply demanding a ceasefire is a cheap cop-out. And a cop-out chosen by lesser leaders of countries who run a mile rather than dirtying their hands by actually getting involved in a peace process.

Last night's confused statement by Europe's Foreign Ministers showed just how complicated real life is.

Outside **Hezbollah** - who want all Israelis driven into the sea - and some elements of the Israeli Defence Force, there cannot be a sane person on earth who doesn't want to see an end to the nightmare pictures of dead children and **women** that dominate our TV screens daily.

But simply demanding an immediate ceasefire would be pursuing the wrong objective.

What is really needed is an end to the violence, LINKED to a lasting solution that would stop the **Hezbollah** terrorists lobbing rockets into Israeli towns and cities as well as kidnapping Israeli citizens - though you don't always see this happening on the one-sided coverage on our own TV screens.

Settlement

Stopping the terrorism would remove the justification for Israeli attacks on Lebanese soil with the inevitable damage to the people of that benighted country.

But to achieve that sort of settlement we need some influence. And the country with influence is the United States.

We must have a lasting solution

To be effective we must have a voice that is listened to in Washington DC, painful as that thought may be to those peddling the anti-American sub-plot.

Tony Blair's stand may be courageous but it isn't rocket science. It is not mind-blowingly clever politics. It is common sense.

If you want to get someone attempting suicide to come down off the parapet, you don't shout at them. You find, if you can, someone they will listen to. You work out, if you can, what will prevent them climbing on to the parapet again.

For simply getting them down will not resolve the reason they were up there in the first place. And that is why, difficult, painful and uncomfortable as it is, it is vital to try to work out whether Syria and Iran can be persuaded to stop backing Hezbollah, well armed and fanatical as they are, in their determination to keep attacking Israel. And then getting Israel to agree a peace with Lebanon.

If a buffer zone can work, if outside forces can give guarantees to both sides, and if we can find brave service personnel to do it, then it should be done.

But wishing doesn't make it happen. Passing resolutions can often be the worst of all worlds. The UN's archives are littered with old resolutions that are puffs of air resulting in precisely nothing.

It is called hard choices. It is called leadership. It is time, then, for the Prime Minister's critics to put themselves in his shoes and decide what long term outcome they want. So my message to those who shout simplistic slogans is this.

Feel better if you must. But think about those under bombardment who have never felt worse. Whose lives are made a misery and whose future is being destroyed.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

For Muslims, Silence Means Acceptance

New York Sun (Archive)

August 29, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEW YORK; Pg. 2

Length: 666 words

Byline: ALICIA COLON

Body

A recent headline on Gawker.com - "Who is Alicia Colon and Why is a Religion of Peace Trying to Kill Her?" - has prompted an Albanian Muslim to send me an e-mail expressing concern that I had received death threats for my columns supporting Israel. I explained that the blog entry was satiric and not to be taken seriously.

Whoever edits the Gawker site decided that I was overwrought about Muslims in my community not rising up to condemn Islamic terrorism, especially in light of a Staten Islander being arrested for plotting to bomb our subway system. The site's entry began as follows: "Remember the plot to murder Sun columnist Alicia Colon? You don't? Well, it happened a couple years ago, but, as the target, she hasn't forgotten." Who could blame the Albanian for misunderstanding?

I explained to my correspondent that the threat was against all New Yorkers, not me in particular, and that I wasn't taking it personally. The point in my article was about the need for all Muslims to express their outrage against terrorist activity done in the name of Islam.

Once again, it is obvious that Staten Island has residents who are sympathetic to known terrorist groups. Last week, Javel Iqbal was arrested for allegedly giving a confidential informant satellite TV access to al-Manar, *Hezbollah's* network. His neighbors insist that Mr. Iqbal, a Palestinian businessman who's a permanent American resident living on Staten Island, is just a nice guy. Frankly, I'd be more interested in knowing about his regular customers than whether he's a nice guy.

My e-mail writer, Mr. G., made a vigorous defense of all Albanians. I learned more from him in a few paragraphs than I did during 28 years of living next to my Albanian neighbors, who never spoke about their religion. "Albanian Muslims have nothing to do with what you call Islamic world therefore they can not be picked as an example to illustrate your point," Mr. G. wrote. "They are Albanian and European first, and ... very few of them still practice any religion at all. ... Albanians feel strongly that they were forced into converting to Islam by 500 years of Ottoman rule ... and never fully forgot the Christian traditions."

From what I've observed among many of the Albanians who live on Staten Island, this lack of religious fervor may be accurate. While some local *women* wear headscarves, very few appear to observe hijab - the traditional Muslim dress - and I've yet to see a burkha. Nevertheless, to many outside the Muslim community, silence on the subject of terrorism by any Muslim, moderate or extremist, means acceptance.

Perhaps Mr. G, my neighbors, and the decent Palestinians and non-jihadist Muslims do not like being identified with the terrorists, but they aren't exactly holding rallies in the large cities to demonstrate their objections. No, it's always

For Muslims, Silence Means Acceptance

the anti-Israel, anti-Bush dingbats holding the demonstrations. A "Stop the U.S.-Israeli War" rally was held in San Francisco on August 12. It was one of several rallies held around the country that day. "Nazi Kikes Out of Lebanon" read one sign. Others were just obscene, but the most ridiculous was the one that read: "If Hezbollah Hides among civilians, the IDF have no choice - They must hold fire." Apparently, Hezbollah can do no wrong with this crowd.

There is a bright sign, however, that some in Hollywood are finally waking up to the true face of our enemy. Nearly 90 heavyweight stars, directors, and personalities took out a full-page ad in the Los Angeles Times last week to protest terrorism around the world.

The Hollywood heavyweights with their gray cells still intact include: Michael Douglas, Dennis Hopper, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Danny De Vito, Don Johnson, James Woods, Kelly Preston, Bernie Mac, Patricia Heaton, William Hurt, Gary Sinise, Kelly Preston, and William Friedkin.

Now that Hollywood is facing reality, perhaps my Muslim neighbors on Staten Island will take a stronger stand against the terrorists in our midst. Hope springs eternal.

Load-Date: August 29, 2006

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Criticism forces Olmert to shelve border plan

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 19, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 14

Length: 396 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem

Body

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, has put on hold his plans to unilaterally draw up a final border with the West Bank in the face of criticism over the war in Lebanon, according to senior political figures. A cabinet minister and an aide to Mr Olmert both said yesterday that the policy, which was the pillar of the prime minister's election victory five months ago, was now off the political agenda.

"It is my assessment the prime minister will not deal with this in the coming period, because it's really not on the agenda," Meir Shetreet, the housing minister, told Army Radio.

However, he said the idea of a partial withdrawal had not yet been scrapped. "I cannot say that the prime minister has dropped the plan. I don't think he has reached such a conclusion," he said. Mr Shetreet, a member of Mr Olmert's Kadima party, had long opposed the policy and preferred reaching a negotiated peace deal with the Palestinians.

Asaf Shariv, an Olmert aide, confirmed the rethink. "Right now, we will deal with other issues," he said. "It's not that it was cancelled, but it is not on the agenda."

Ha'aretz newspaper said yesterday that Mr Olmert had told his senior ministers and party members the plan was no longer "appropriate" after the Lebanon war.

The prime minister is facing widespread criticism of his handling of the war and his government's failure to comprehensively defeat the **Hizbullah** militia or even to retrieve the two soldiers whose capture on July 12 triggered the conflict.

Mr Olmert's West Bank plan received another blow yesterday when the justice minister, Haim Ramon, 56, a leading proponent of a unilateral partial withdrawal, said he would resign to stand trial over claims he sexually harassed an 18-year-old **female** soldier. He denies the charges.

Mr Olmert's reluctance to go ahead marks a sudden shift in policy. Before the conflict, he said he was committed to his separation plan in the West Bank despite fighting in Gaza. But 34 days of fighting has left the government struggling to explain why, after withdrawing from Lebanon and Gaza, it has had to return and fight again.

Mr Olmert had pledged to draw up a West Bank border over four years and remove thousands of settlers, while annexing three large settlement blocs. Palestinians say this would leave separate Palestinian enclaves, not a viable state.

Criticism forces Olmert to shelve border plan

Yoel Marcus, page 28 >

guardian.co.uk/israel >

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

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Ordinary citizens targeted in Lebanon blasts

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

February 14, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 928 words

Byline: Mlichael Slackman New York Times News Service

Body

BEIRUT, Lebanon -- A day before Lebanon prepared to mark the second anniversary of the assassination of its former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, three people were killed and about 23 others wounded when two minibuses were bombed as they ferried passengers to work, to shopping and to Bible study classes.

In a country so fragile and on edge because of its internal political struggles, the bombers managed to heighten tensions, but not by attacking government ministers or the politically outspoken. Instead the targets were passengers who paid the equivalent of about 80 cents to pile into a minibus for the half-hour ride to Beirut.

It was the first such attack -- directed at ordinary civilians, not public figures -- since the end of Lebanon's 15-year civil war in 1990. It caught people like Nidal Ashkar, 45, who was on her way to Bible study. She lost a leg. And Leila Gemayel, 39, who was going shopping with a friend. The friend was killed, and Gemayel suffered serious burns on both legs.

The names may be meaningful only to friends and relatives who crowded into the halls and waiting areas of the tiny Serhal Hospital along a beautiful mountain road just north of Beirut. But that -- apparently -- was the point.

"The message is clear," said Jihad Nasr, at the hospital bedside of Gemayel, his sister-in-law. "There was no politics between these people. These are normal people. Employees. They don't even have cars."

The message, the victims and their visitors said, was to spread fear beyond the rich and powerful into everyday homes. It worked. "How am I ever going to ride a bus again?" said Rata Kuosoumati, 48, a maid who was in the first bus when the bomb went off but was not badly hurt.

Officials said bombs had been planted inside the buses, which are more like oversized minivans, as they made their morning runs. Every 10 minutes in the early morning, these privately owned buses take people between the Metn district, a primarily Christian area in the mountains, and Beirut.

In the hospital, friends and relatives said they took the attack as an act of intimidation, aimed at making people afraid to attend the Hariri memorial planned for Wednesday.

In Lebanon public memorials are never just about grieving; they are also political statements, so the anniversary was to be a chance for the pro-government forces -- locked in a political battle with the Iranian- and Syrian-backed opposition, led by ***Hezbollah*** -- to rally their allies.

And then came the randomness of the attack.

Ordinary citizens targeted in Lebanon blasts

"It means, 'Don't come to the demonstration tomorrow,'" said Timur Guksel, former spokesman for the U.N. forces in Lebanon. "It has no meaning except to tell people, 'Don't come tomorrow.'"

Leaders of the governing coalition said that despite the attack, they planned to go forward with the memorial for Hariri.

The first minibus carried about 24 passengers, mostly women, according to witnesses. As it rounded a turn, passing a vista of snowcapped mountains and hillside villages, a bomb in the back blew up. With blood, body parts, smoke and screams filling the road, a second bus slowed and then stopped. Some of the passengers got out to see the mess, and as the driver opened his door, that bus blew up too.

The first bus was a twisted wreck. The second nearly disintegrated, its roof, doors, walls and windows gone. A heavy rainfall tamped down the smoke and quickly washed the road clean of blood.

"Why are we dying in Lebanon?" said Tania Hayek, 43, who was a few feet away in a cliffside cafe called Chez George when the first bomb went off. "We want to live. We are normal people. We just want to live."

Politics -- local and global -- have been making that increasingly difficult for the Lebanese. Locally there is a battle for power, fueled by foreign sponsors. On one side is the Shiite group Hezbollah and its alliance with Syria and Iran. The government and the March 14 coalition are on the other side with the United States, Sunni Arab leaders and Europe.

At least six attacks have occurred since Hariri died, killing or maiming officials or prominent journalists. But the attack on Tuesday came as Lebanon confronts its worst political crisis since the end of the civil war.

Hezbollah and its allies want the ability to veto all government actions and want the government to back off supporting the international tribunal being set up by the United Nations to hear evidence in Hariri's assassination. The government has refused both demands. The investigation has implicated top Syrian officials.

That is a rough outline of what politicians have been fighting over since the Hezbollah alliance began an open-ended protest in the center of Beirut in December.

Until Tuesday, that was not really part of Dr. Michel Saliba's world, he said. Then his wife woke him to tell him the news. His brother, Shady, 25, was the driver of the second bus. Michel Saliba, 40, bought the bus for his brother so he could support his wife and year-old son.

Saliba said he rushed to the hospital as other passengers arrived. "Butchered" was how he described them.

"I saw a woman who lost both legs, someone with no hands," he said. Then he went into surgery to repair his own brother's damaged skull. Later he sat outside his brother's room for hours as investigators tried to get the brother to remember details of who might have planted the bomb in the bus.

But he did not remember much.

"Welcome to the new Iraq," said Saliba. "I thought they would only bomb ministers and political people. We are not even part of a party. And still we are the target of this." Contributing: Nada Bakri

Load-Date: February 14, 2007

Iran's successful blend: charity, ideology

Christian Science Monitor

March 9, 2007, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 7

Length: 917 words

Byline: Scott Peterson Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: TEHRAN, IRAN

Highlight: Benevolence Day is a windfall for an organization that is a model for other Shiite groups in the world.

Body

Masumeh Delavar's life was in ruins a decade ago, and getting an education seemed a distant dream.

"My parents had died, and the rest of the family were drug addicts," says the soft-spoken art student, as she tells of her rescue by Iran's largest charity, the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

"This is the best thing that has happened to me," says Ms. Delavar, sitting Thursday with a handful of young women with similar stories at a Tehran women's shelter run by the charity. She wants to finish her university degree, find a job, and "be independent" - steps all paid for or heavily subsidized. "If I had stayed home, I would not have any of these opportunities."

Iran Thursday marked an annual day of giving to the charity, known as Komiteh Emdad in Farsi, which is named after the founder of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution. Today, Emdad reaches 4.5 million of Iran's 68 million residents, and by its own tally caters for 92 percent of Iran's poorest people in 52,800 towns and villages.

From its inception before 1979 - when it had no name, and focused on sustaining the families of strikers challenging the government of pro-Western Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi - this organization has grown along with the Islamic Republic, using charity to win public loyalty and support for clerical rule.

A source of jobs, loans, and housing

This Iranian example - of translating good works that range from job creation, bank loans, and orphan care to building cheap housing, into political power - has been copied by the Shiite militant group Hizbullah in Lebanon, and to a lesser degree by anti-American Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in Iraq.

The charity became a pillar of the revolution by "getting more people to be friendly with the clerics and the imam," says Hamidreza Taraghi, one of the foundation's directors. "Emdad emerged alongside the revolution with Imam Khomeini, and helped with support and money," says Mr. Taraghi. "[It] was successful in aligning many of the poor behind the revolution."

The foundation plays that role to this day, mixing its philosophy of outreach to the poor, with doses of the kind of ideology that define Iran's Islamic regime.

Iran 's successful blend: charity, ideology

The organization's reach is long and broad. Officials say that 170,000 "good Samaritans" are sponsoring 270,000 orphans and children in poor families. Thursday, one donation site - 1 of 30 in Tehran, was manned by women in black chadors sitting at tables covered with cards, each with a photograph of a child. Sponsors pay just over \$10 per month. Iranian TV carried live broadcasts from five of the donation sites.

The foundation says it insures 3.9 million Iranians, providing free or cheap healthcare, and fields nearly 100,000 volunteers. New housing also falls under its purview; poor families will soon to move into 350 new residential units in Tehran. The charity also estimates it has bankrolled 1.56 million loans since 1979.

Such scale was unimaginable when the charity first began, and budding revolutionaries were calling strikes to make their point, shutting some government and ministry offices.

"We started to help people who were striking against the former regime, to keep them strong," says Taraghi. "We would give them money, food, and salaries so they could endure."

Initially, families of those in Iranian jails were given support, and if a store or business were burned down during protests, the group would compensate the victims. Learning that lesson, Hizbullah has rebuilt businesses and homes after wars in Lebanon during the past 25 years, earning political capital along the way. In Iran, the charity's work expanded to every corner of the country after the revolution, when teams of volunteers sought out the poor in the remotest villages, and cared for families of "martyrs." In the early days, there was little more than token cash, clothing, and healthcare provided by volunteer doctors.

Public donates \$97 million a year

Today, with public donations estimated at \$97 million a year - plus funding from the government and office of Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei - no other organization has such a far-reaching impact on Iran.

Still, some here express skepticism. "I don't believe in these guys," says a woman in a black chador, after donating a hand-sized jug full of cash. "I don't know if they really give it to the poor; I think they take some of it. I am needy myself, and never received any help from [the charity]."

The charity says it now supports 800,000 students, and some 70,000 have been able to get university degrees. Among them is Marzieh Nazari, who just completed her law degree, and has lived more than nine years in the shelter for women whose families are shattered by drug addiction. She is the oldest among 35 others as young as 9. "This has had a big effect on my life.... I would not have been able to go to school," says Ms. Nazari, who is looking for a job with Emdad's help. "What I learned from [living] here is that I should give back whatever I have," says Nazari. "If I can reach a point where I can help other people, I always will help."

Gratitude is often expressed through loyalty to Iran's Islamic system, known as nezam, which runs the Relief Foundation in close association with the supreme leader's office. Charity is a tradition in Sunni as well as Shiite history, says Taraghi, "but the Shiites and Iranian revolution were successful in setting up this new system that no other country has been able to create."

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Load-Date: March 8, 2007

Stop it now

Evening Gazette

July 31, 2006, Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 422 words

Body

Israel has suspended its air strikes in southern Lebanon for 48 hours following world condemnation of a bombing that killed at least 56 Lebanese, most of them women and children.

Yesterday's bloody attack levelled a building where families had taken shelter from earlier Israeli strikes.

The carnage in the village of Qana escalated international pressure on Washington to back an immediate end to the fighting and prompted US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice to cut short her Middle East mission.

She said she would push for a ceasefire and a "lasting settlement" in the conflict through a United Nations Security Council resolution this week and today an emergency Council session passed a statement expressing "extreme shock and distress".

The announcement of the pause in overflights - first made by the US State Department - appeared to reflect American pressure on Israel to make a concession after the strike.

However, Israeli warplanes struck suspected guerilla positions in eastern Lebanon near the border with Syria half an hour before the start of the suspension.

And officials left open the possibility that they might hit targets to stop imminent attacks on Israel, and that the suspension could last less than 48 hours if the military completed its inquiry and interpretation before then.

They would allow opening of corridors for 24 hours for Lebanese civilians who wanted to leave south Lebanon for the north and would maintain land, sea and air corridors for humanitarian assistance.

The attack on Qana brought Lebanon's death toll to more than 510.

In Qana, workers pulled dirt-covered bodies of young boys and girls - dressed in the shorts and T-shirts they had been sleeping in - out of the wreckage of the three-storey building.

Two extended families, the Shalhoub and the Hashems, had gathered together in the house for shelter from another night of Israeli bombardment in the border area when the strike brought the building down.

"I was so afraid. There was dirt and rocks and I couldn't see. Everything was black," said 13-year-old Noor Hashem, who survived, although her five siblings did not. She was pulled out of the ruins by her uncle, whose wife and five children also died.

Stop it now

Israel apologised for the deaths but blamed **Hezbollah** guerillas, saying they had fired rockets from near the building.

The UN Security Council was holding an emergency meeting to debate a resolution for immediate ceasefire - a step Washington has stood nearly alone at the council in refusing until the assured disarmament of **Hezbollah**.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

End of Document

Israel vows war to the bitter end

The Sun (England)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: BLAIR CEASEFIRE HOPES CRASH

Length: 361 words

Byline: George Pascoe-Watson, Political Editor in San Francisco

Body

'Our goal is terror-free life'

TONY Blair's hopes of an immediate peace in Lebanon were rocked last night after Israel vowed to continue its deadly attacks on Hezbollah.

His hopes of a ceasefire and UN peace resolution as early as today became a distant dream after PM Ehud Olmert said his troops will smash Hezbollah until they are destroyed for good.

And Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz vowed to "expand and strengthen" its assaults. Mr Olmert issued orders for his forces to hunt down every terrorist and their weapons. He said: "There is no ceasefire, there will be no ceasefire...we are determined to succeed in this struggle. We will not give up on our goal to live a life free of terror."

He added: "We decided to fight back and we will end the fighting when the threat has been removed.

"We decided there was no other way other than a clear, decisive and unequivocal response. We could not have the terrorist state across our border to grow strong and amass missiles and rockets and lethal weapons. We need to reach all the terrorists and find all their hiding places and hit all their missile launchers."

But PM Olmert did apologise for the deaths of around 60 civilians - many of them children - in an airstrike on the town of Qana. He went on: "I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for all deaths of children or women in Qana. We did not search them out - they were not our enemies."

Mr Blair believed a peace deal was possible and a peacekeeping force would follow.

But France and the US have been "behaving like kids" according to insiders and blocking a solution. French President Jacques Chirac refused to put together a military force until a ceasefire had been declared by Israel.

Talks aimed at deciding on the force were delayed "indefinitely" because of the French indecision.

Last night Mr Blair broke off his tour of California to speak to world leaders.

His spokesman said he was going "hell for leather" to find a solution. The spokesman added: "We are making progress but there are difficulties. There is a willingness to bring this to a close but saying that is not going to actually do it."

Israel vows war to the bitter end

g.pascoewatson@the-sun.co.uk

The Sun Says - Page Eight

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

End of Document

UM WING OF PML SUGGEST NEW COMMITTEE ON HUDOOD BILL

The Frontier Star

September 16, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 408 words

Body

Peshawar: Ulema-e-Mashaikh (UM), Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) Saturday while suggesting of another committee on Hudood law comprising of four members from each political party, proposed to include clause in the bill regarding 'Sharai Pardah' that the wing claimed would eliminate 50 percent of the crime against women. "Government should avoid hasty decision regarding Women Protection Bill, first consensus should be developed on the issue however unless consensus is developed, we are not in favour of presenting the bill in the (National) assembly' UM General Secretary, Maulana Syed Chiragh Din Shah told a news conference.

He said though government had constituted committee of re-known religious scholars on the Bill but still some elements and political parties were opposing it therefore there should be yet another committee to formulate the final draft. Mr Shah proposed that every political party should be invited to nominate four member of the committee of whom two should be religious scholars while the other two be lawyers of their choice.

While announcing chapter of the organization at Peshawar Press Club Maulana Chiragh welcomed the initiative of federal government for inking a peace deal with Taliban in North Waziristan and urged Karzai government in Afghanistan to strike a deal on the same pattern with the Taliban for lasting peace in that country. He said Taliban were the nationals of Afghanistan that peace was only possible if they too were allowed to live in peace in that country.

Strongly condemning the Pope Benedict for derogatory statement against Islam and Holly prophet he said demanded action against him and said his statement grieved sentiments of the whole Muslim world. To a question, he said suicide attacks were no solution to the problems of the oppressed Muslim nations of the world and urged unity of the Ummah to stop the aggressors from committing atrocities.

"If just verbal support of the Muslim countries to Hizbullah, win them battle against Israel, who has the support of the only super power of the world, their practical support to each other would make them a power to reckon with," Shah said. He said Pakistan was passing through one of the difficult times of its history and needed the enthusiasm of 1947 to ensure its respectable existence in the comity of nations. He said PML was the founding party of Pakistan and that it had the mandate to guard the ideological boundaries of the country.

Load-Date: September 21, 2006

'They found them huddled together': Israel calls off air strikes after raid on Lebanese town kills more than 60 people, including 34 children

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 1

Length: 1415 words

Body

It was an unremarkable three-storey building on the edge of town. But for two extended families, the Shalhoub and the Hashems, it was a last refuge. They could not afford the extortionate taxi fares to Tyre and hoped that if they all crouched together on the ground floor they would be safe.

They were wrong. At about one in the morning, as some of the men were making late night tea, an Israeli bomb smashed into the house. Witnesses describe two explosions a few minutes apart, with survivors desperately moving from one side of the building to the other before being hit by the second blast. By last night, more than 60 bodies had been pulled from the rubble, said Lebanese authorities, 34 of them children. There were eight known survivors.

As yet another body was removed from the wreckage yesterday morning, Naim Raqa, the head of the civil defence team searching the ruins, hung his head in grief: "When they found them, they were all huddled together at the back of the room . . . Poor things, they thought the walls would protect them."

The bombing, the bloodiest incident in Israel's 18-day campaign against ***Hizbullah***, drew condemnation from around the world. Late last night Israel announced a suspension of aerial activities in southern Lebanon for 48 hours and said it would coordinate with the UN to allow a 24-hour window for residents in southern Lebanon to leave the area if they wished.

The bombing sparked furious protests outside the UN headquarters in Beirut. Lebanon's prime minister, Fouad Siniora, accused Israel of committing "war crimes" and called off a planned meeting with the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice. Israel apologised for the loss of life but said it had been responding to rockets fired from the village.

Muhammad Qassim Shalhoub, a slim 38-year-old construction worker, emerged with a broken hand and minor injuries, but lost his wife, five children and 45 members of his extended family. "Around one o'clock we heard a big explosion," he said. "I don't remember anything after that, but when I opened my eyes I was lying on the floor and my head had hit the wall. There was silence. I didn't hear anything for a while, but then heard screams."

"I said: 'Allahu Akbar (God is most great). Don't be scared. I will come.' There was blood on my face. I wiped it and looked for my son but couldn't find him. I took three children out - my four-year-old nephew, a girl and her sister. I went outside and screamed for help and three men came and went back inside. There was shelling everywhere. We heard the planes. I was so exhausted I could not go back inside again."

'They found them huddled together': Israel calls off air strikes after raid on Lebanese town kills more than 60 people, including 34 children

Ibrahim Shalhoub described how he and his cousin had set out to get help after the bombs hit. "It was dark and there was so much smoke. Nobody could do anything till dawn," he said, his eyes still darting around nervously. "I couldn't stop crying, we couldn't help them."

Said Rabab Yousif had her son on her knee when the bomb fell. "I couldn't see anything for 10 minutes and then I saw my son sitting in my lap and covered with rubble," she recalled. "I removed the dirt and the stones I freed him and handed him to the people who were inside rescuing us."

"I then started freeing myself, my hands were free, and then went with two men to rescue my husband. We pulled him from the rubble. I tried to find Zainab, my little daughter, but it was too dark and she was covered deep in rubble I was too scared that they might bomb us again so I just left her and ran outside." She was in hospital with her son and husband, who was paralysed and in a coma. There was no news of her daughter.

Rescue workers were pulling bodies from the rubble all morning. They came across the smallest corpses last, many intact but with lungs crushed by the blast wave of the bombing.

"God is great," a policeman muttered as the body of a young boy no older than 10 was carried away on a stretcher. The boy lay on his side, as if asleep, but for the fine dust that coated his body and the blood around his nose and ears.

The house stood at the top of a hillside on the very edge of Qana and its disembowelled remains had spilled down the slope. Bodies were lined up on the ground - a baby, two young girls and two women. The rigid corpse of a young man lay nearby, his arm rising vertically from beneath a blanket, his index finger pointing up to the sky.

"Where are the stretchers, where are the stretchers?" a rescue worker cried as Israeli warplanes roared overhead. Sami Yazbuk, the head of the Red Cross in Tyre said they got the call at 7am, but had to take a detour to Qana because of shelling on the road.

In a nearby ambulance the smallest victims were stacked one on top of the other to make space for the many to come. A boy and girl, both no more than four years old had been placed head to toe. They were still wearing pyjamas.

Family photos - one showing two young children - were scattered in the debris. Mohsen Hachem stared at the images. "They had to have known there were children in that house," he said. "The drones are always overhead, and those children - there were more than 30 - would play outside all day."

Anger at the attack erupted in Beirut, where windows in the UN building were smashed and its lobby invaded by demonstrators furious at the rising Lebanese death toll. After extensive coverage on Lebanese TV of corpses being taken from the remains of the building, thousands turned out in the city's main open square to vent their fury. Likewise, in Gaza crowds clashed with Palestinian police after smashing into a Unesco building.

Over the border, Israeli leaders expressed sorrow for the civilian deaths, but the military said that Qana had been targeted because Hizbullah had been using it as a base from which to launch rockets. "There was firing coming from there before the air strike. We didn't know there were civilians in the basement of that building," one Israeli defence force spokesman said. He added that rockets had been fired from Qana "in the last few hours" before the air strike.

The strike that destroyed the building was a precision-guided bomb dropped from the air, the same kind of bomb that destroyed a UN position in Khiyam last week, killing four UN observers. Writing on an olive green fragment of the munition which appeared to have caused the explosion read: GUIDED BOMB BSU 37/B.

"We don't know what the people were doing in the basement. It is possible they were being used as shields or being used cynically to further Hizbullah's propaganda purposes," the spokesman said. "We apologise. We couldn't be more sorry about the loss of civilian life."

'They found them huddled together': Israel calls off air strikes after raid on Lebanese town kills more than 60 people, including 34 children

More than 750 Lebanese, most of them civilians have been killed since Israel began its strikes in response to the kidnapping of two soldiers. A total of 51 Israelis, 18 of them civilians, have been killed.

For Qana, history has repeated itself. Ten years ago, more than a hundred civilians taking refuge in a UN compound there were killed by Israeli shelling.

At the site of the latest tragedy, a man broke down as another small body was brought out, followed quickly by another. The civil defence workers cradled the corpses before placing them delicately on the bright orange stretchers.

"He was the son of Abu Hachem," said a young man in the crowd outside the house. "They're Ali and Mohammed - they're brothers," a neighbour shouted.

At Tyre hospital, Dr Salman Zaynadeen said the casualties were the worst thing he and colleagues had ever faced. Twenty-two bodies were in a refrigerated lorry serving as the hospital's morgue, 12 of them children. "At least 20 more are expected. They range in age up to 75. They were crushed," he said.

Five dead boys lay in the yard outside. Army staff photographed them for identification purposes.

The youngest, Abbas Mahmoud Hashem, lay on his back with his head turned and his right leg drawn up. A dummy hung on a blue plastic chain round his neck; concrete dust covered his face and hair. He looked about 18 months old.

On a hospital bed, a 13-year-old survivor, Nour Hashem, lay fiddling with her bed sheet, her eyes welling with tears. She had been in the house where so many of her family had been killed but had miraculously escaped with only slight injuries.

"We were all sleeping in the same room, my friend, my sister and my cousin," she said, her voice still shuddering.

"I pulled the rubble off my mother and she took me to another house, then she went looking for my brothers and sisters. But my brothers and sisters didn't come and my mother didn't return."

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Bombs Kill 3 in Lebanon on Eve of Slaying Anniversary

The New York Times
February 14, 2007 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

Length: 936 words

Byline: By MICHAEL SLACKMAN; Nada Bakri contributed reporting.

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, Feb. 13

Body

A day before Lebanon prepared to mark the second anniversary of the assassination of its former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, three people were killed and about 23 others wounded when two minibuses were bombed as they ferried passengers to work, to shopping and to Bible study classes.

In a country so fragile and on edge because of its internal political struggles, the bombers managed to heighten tensions, but not by attacking government ministers or the politically outspoken. Instead the targets were passengers who paid about 80 cents to pile into a minibus for the half-hour ride to Beirut.

It was the first such attack -- directed at ordinary civilians, not public figures -- since the end of Lebanon's 15-year civil war in 1990. It caught people like Nidal Ashkar, 45, who was on her way to Bible study. She lost a leg. And Leila Gemayel, 39, who was going shopping with a friend. The friend was killed, and Mrs. Gemayel suffered serious burns on both legs.

The names may be meaningful only to the friends and relatives who crowded into the halls and waiting areas of the tiny Serhal Hospital along a beautiful mountain road just north of Beirut. But that -- apparently -- was the point.

"The message is clear," said Jihad Nasr, at the hospital bedside of Mrs. Gemayel, his sister-in-law. "There was no politics between these people. These are normal people. Employees. They don't even have cars."

The message, the victims and their visitors said, was to spread fear beyond the rich and powerful into everyday homes.

It worked. "How am I ever going to ride a bus again?" said Rata Kuosoumati, 48, a maid who was in the first bus when the bomb went off but was not badly hurt.

Officials said bombs had been planted inside the buses, which are more like oversized minivans, as they made their morning runs. Every 10 minutes in the early morning, these privately owned buses take people between the Metn district, a primarily Christian area in the mountains, and Beirut.

In the hospital, friends and relatives said they took the attack as an act of intimidation, aimed at making people afraid to attend the Hariri memorial planned for Wednesday.

Bombs Kill 3 in Lebanon on Eve of Slaying Anniversary

In Lebanon public memorials are never just about grieving; they are also political statements, so the anniversary was to be a chance for the pro-government forces -- locked in a political battle with the Iranian- and Syrian-backed opposition, led by Hezbollah -- to rally their allies.

And then came the randomness of the attack.

"It means, 'Don't come to the demonstration tomorrow,' " said Timur Guksel, former spokesman for the United Nations forces in Lebanon. "It has no meaning except to tell people, 'Don't come tomorrow.' "

Leaders of the governing coalition said that despite the attack, they planned to go forward with the memorial for Mr. Hariri.

The first minibus carried about 24 passengers, mostly women, according to witnesses. As it rounded a turn, passing a vista of snowcapped mountains and hillside villages, a bomb in the back blew up. With blood, body parts, smoke and screams filling the road, a second bus slowed and then stopped. Some of the passengers got out to see the mess, and as the driver opened his door, that bus blew up too.

The first bus was a twisted wreck. The second nearly disintegrated, its roof, doors, walls and windows gone. A heavy rainfall tamped down the smoke and quickly washed the road clean of blood.

"Why are we dying in Lebanon?" said Tania Hayek, 43, who was a few feet away in a cliffside cafe called Chez George when the first bomb went off. "We want to live. We are normal people. We just want to live."

Politics -- local and global -- have been making that increasingly difficult for the Lebanese. Locally there is a battle for power, fueled by foreign sponsors. On one side is the Shiite group Hezbollah and its alliance with Syria and Iran. The government and the March 14 coalition are on the other side with the United States, Sunni Arab leaders and Europe.

At least six attacks have occurred since Mr. Hariri died, killing or maiming officials or prominent journalists. But the attack on Tuesday came as Lebanon confronts its worst political crisis since the end of the civil war.

Hezbollah and its allies want the ability to veto all government actions and want the government to back off supporting the international tribunal being set up by the United Nations to hear evidence in the assassination. The government has refused both demands. The investigation has implicated top Syrian officials.

That is a rough outline of what politicians have been fighting over since the Hezbollah alliance began an open-ended protest in the center of Beirut in December.

Until Tuesday, that was not really part of Dr. Michel Saliba's world, he said. Then his wife woke him to tell him the news. His brother, Shady, 25, was the driver of the second bus. Dr. Saliba, 40, bought the bus for his brother so he could support his wife and year-old son.

Dr. Saliba said he rushed to the hospital as other passengers arrived. "Butchered" was how he described them.

"I saw a woman who lost both legs, someone with no hands," he said. Then he went into surgery to repair his own brother's damaged skull. Later he sat outside his brother's room for hours as investigators tried to get the brother to remember details of who might have planted the bomb in the bus.

But he did not remember much.

"Welcome to the new Iraq," said Dr. Saliba. "I thought they would only bomb ministers and political people. We are not even part of a party. And still we are the target of this."

Graphic

Photo: Soldiers examined the damage yesterday after bombs tore through two buses in Ain Alaq, northeast of Beirut on a busy commuter highway. (Photo by Bela Szandelsky/Associated Press)

Load-Date: February 14, 2007

End of Document

RISING FROM SLUMBER

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 427 words

Body

MR Shaukat Aziz's assertion that Pakistan will consider sending peacekeeping troops to Lebanon only after approval by the UN, the Lebanese Government and other stakeholders, coincided with a National Assembly resolution, which warned the UN that by failing to take steps to enforce an immediate ceasefire it was moving towards the fate of its 'liquidated predecessor', the League of Nations.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Friday soon after returning from Malaysia where he had gone to attend the OIC Extraordinary Summit, he very rightly pointed out that **Hezbollah** was one of the stakeholders in Lebanon. Mr Aziz however did not respond when asked why Pakistan had not so far condemned the US for supporting naked Israeli aggression against Lebanese.

There was hardly any reason to be carried away by the rhetoric that the OIC incorporated six of eight recommendations forwarded by Pakistan in the Summit Declaration, until it tries to restore its credibility, which inaction has ruined. It took this organisation four weeks to rise from deep slumber to condemn the 'sheer violations' of human rights, only after hundreds of unarmed civilians of Lebanon, including **women** and children, have fallen victim to Israeli barbarism. In addition, it is not clear whether the OIC has any idea what to do if the international community does not honour its call for a ceasefire.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly resolution has highlighted the need for the OIC to adhere to the Makkah Declaration that morally binds it to play its role to protect the sovereignty of members. The Opposition scathingly criticised the government for paying lip service to Lebanon's plight. Interestingly, PML President Ch Shujaat Hussain implicitly endorsed its assertion that the government should not resort to cautious diplomacy on this important issue when Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khusro Bakhtiar was pointlessly arguing that Pakistan was the first country to condemn the Israeli attack.

Ch Shujaat went to the extent of saying that before Mr Aziz left for Malaysia he told him that, instead of relying on the Foreign Office brief, his address to the summit should reflect the people's sentiments. Now that Pakistan has expressed its readiness to consider sending peacekeeping troops to Lebanon, it will have to tread very carefully in dealing with the Middle East situation. Perhaps it is no use contributing to any so-called peace effort initiated by the powers that characterise **Hezbollah** as a terrorist organisation rather than a stakeholder in this crisis.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

Overseas tension hits home for some U. Arizona students

University Wire

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 Arizona Daily Wildcat via U-Wire

Length: 962 words

Byline: By Craig Grau, Arizona Daily Wildcat; **SOURCE:** U. Arizona

Dateline: TUCSON, Ariz.

Body

University of Arizona student Basil Schaheen awoke from his first sleep in seven days surrounded by U.S. Marines on the bow of the Queen Orient, his eyelids frozen shut with sea spray.

Forced to cut short his summer spent working at a Beirut hospital -- as rockets and bombs began trading airspace throughout Lebanon and northern Israel -- Schaheen was among scores of Americans evacuated by ship to the neighboring island of Cyprus, July 21.

"I'm still a little bothered when I hear planes fly overhead and bass from a car speaker," said Schaheen, a molecular and cellular biology senior who returned to Tucson last week.

"Other than that, I have all my limbs, and I'm no worse for wear," Schaheen said. "I'm recovering."

As the Israeli military's response to the Hezbollah capture of two of the Israeli Defense Force's soldiers nears its third week, University of Arizona students with Lebanese and Israeli roots are confronted with fears and hopes that transcend nationalities.

The foremost concern expressed by those students is the constant unease over distant relatives living near combat zones.

Lara Schaheen, Basil's sister and a molecular and cellular biology senior, was afforded some assurance of her brother's safety, thanks to his American cell phone, as he rode out the initial wave of air strikes.

Calls to the U.S. State Department for information about the evacuation plan that whisked Basil from the embattled capital were of little consolation however, offering only recorded messages, according to Lara Schaheen.

"You feel phenomenally helpless -- it's very frightening when you can't get your loved ones out of there," Lara Schaheen said. "They really don't give you any direct answers."

Still, Basil was able to inform Lara of his whereabouts -- like the two days he spent waiting out in the sun on a concrete bridge for a bus ride to the Port of Beirut as the Lebanese capital was blasted behind him.

"For us, it was easier than for some families, because we had a means of communication," Lara Schaheen said. "There are many still with no idea, only optimism."

Overseas tension hits home for some U. Arizona students

Many families on the other side of the border in Israel have also been displaced and have suffered losses due to heavy and persistent Hezbollah missile attacks.

"The bombing on the north side of Israel is nonstop," said Danielle Steinberg, psychology sophomore and UA women's tennis captain. "We are hosting family members ourselves."

Steinberg's aunt and her children recently fled the heavily hit coastal city of Naharia for her grandmother's home in Holon, near Tel Aviv, Steinberg said.

Steinberg, who served in the Israeli army for two years while continuing to train in her sport, returned to her hometown of Tel Aviv for the remainder of the summer, close to family members who headed south to escape the fighting.

She's far from her laid-back Tucson existence, which she describes as a "great opportunity to focus on things like tennis and school and not war and bombs."

She said a key feature of her country's personality is that daily life must continue -- war or no war.

"That is a part of being Israeli," Steinberg said. "Since we have so much bad experience with terror and fighting, it's sad to say, but we are kind of used to it."

In Tucson, though, most aren't as familiar with the effects of war as Middle-Eastern natives.

"I'm very worried for my family over there," said Bethany Slim, a Lebanese-American journalism and political science senior, whose father was born in Beirut.

"To not get in touch with them or find out where they are or how they're doing is really scary," Slim said.

Two of Slim's cousins managed to escape the carnage and travel to Canada. Their parents still refuse to leave Lebanon, as Slim's grandmother -- the family matriarch -- is too old to travel.

"It kinda looks like they're going to be staying there," Slim said, followed by a long pause. "I'm kinda holding strong."

Slim is concerned that the mounting civilian casualties in Lebanon will only ignite more support for Hezbollah militias -- a vicious cycle foreboding more misery for those on both sides of international lines.

"I think that could definitely cause more trouble for (the Lebanese people)," Slim said. "Hezbollah is not a very diplomatic group, and I think that violence is really the only way they try and solve problems."

The sense of duty is a motivator for other students responding to the call for national survival.

It's a strong magnet that pulls recent UA Judaic studies graduate Drew Alyeshmerni to a new homeland, as an immigrant.

Alyeshmerni is headed to Israel this week to live on a kibbutz, or self-sufficient community, until she is drafted into the Israeli military in November.

"I feel that Israel needs me now more than ever," Alyeshmerni said.

Last semester, Alyeshmerni helped form the Tucson Peace Project, a dialogue group of Jewish and Muslim students for Middle East peace.

Despite her benevolent nature and her hopes for assignment to a non-combat post Alyeshmerni said she is willing to fight for her new country if necessary.

It's a move that her parents wish she would put off for a while because of obvious dangers, Alyeshmerni said.

Still, the future IDF soldier retains idealism about the conflict, recognizing the humanity of her adversaries.

Overseas tension hits home for some U. Arizona students

"There shouldn't have to be terrorists to begin with," Alyeshmerni said. "Every terrorist is a son or daughter or brother or wife or sister of somebody. We feel for any loss of human life."

And despite the approaching fall semester, it's apparent that meal plans and textbook prices are the last thing on the minds of these students who are uneasy about the future of the war-torn region.

"This could be a catalyst for wider problems," Slim said. "Everyone over there could sure use some help."

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Load-Date: August 2, 2006

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Royal cautious on human rights issues on 'listening' trip to China

The Irish Times

January 8, 2007 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 11

Length: 428 words

Byline: Laure Bretton in Beijing

Body

CHINA: French presidential candidate Ségolène Royal tentatively addressed the issue of human rights in China with journalists yesterday, on a visit aimed at bolstering her international credentials.

Ms Royal, who is bidding to become France's first woman president this spring, has little foreign policy experience and her trip to China follows a Middle East trip marred by gaffes.

Speaking to reporters in Beijing, the French socialist, often criticised for relying on image and being vague about detail, said human rights were a sensitive issue in China and had to be seen in the context of economic, environmental and social questions.

"[These] problems are shared by the entire world," Ms Royal said on a trip to the world's fourth-largest economy.

She said she hoped China would apply the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but did not say whether she would bring up the rights issue in a meeting with vice president Zeng Qinghong today.

Lawyers and journalists "who participate in the defence of rights must be protected", she said, without mentioning specific cases.

Royal is neck-and-neck with conservative Nicolas Sarkozy for the two-round presidential election, due to take place in April and May. A weekend Ifop poll put Ms Royal on 50.5 per cent and Mr Sarkozy 49.5 per cent.

Before she left for China, where she was due to meet officials, women's groups and business leaders, Ms Royal said she wanted to go there to listen and "not to give lessons".

China's human rights record and its growing economic weight have been causing some unease among French voters, with an inflow of Chinese textiles adding to competition and some workers fearing they could lose their jobs to cheaper Chinese labour.

Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders called on Ms Royal to request the release of imprisoned journalists and internet users during her trip, saying at least 32 journalists and 50 "cyber-dissidents" were in prison in China.

It is Ms Royal's second major foreign trip since winning the Socialist Party's presidential nomination in November.

Royal cautious on human rights issues on 'listening' trip to China

During a visit to the Middle East last month, she was criticised by opponents when she waited a day before condemning comments made in front of her by a Lebanese **Hizbullah** lawmaker who described past Israeli occupations of the country as Nazism.

She said she had not heard his words.

"Ségolène Royal does not seem like she wants to take a lot of risks this time," the Journal du Dimanche newspaper said yesterday. "Her recent controversial trip to the Middle East has maybe offered her a lesson in realpolitik."

Load-Date: January 8, 2007

End of Document

NEWSDESK

The Forward

September 15, 2006

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Section: News; Pg. 8

Length: 793 words

Body

Y.U. Gets \$100 Million

Yeshiva University, a leading Modern Orthodox institution, received a \$100 million gift. The gift came from Ronald Stanton, who is the school's former chairman and the chairman of Transammonia, Inc. It will be used to set up a revolving fund that the university president can use to buy or improve university facilities, pay faculty salaries, give scholarships and endow faculty research. Once the money is spent, the school will have to find benefactors to replace the funds. Stanton, whose company trades, distributes and transports fertilizer materials, liquefied petroleum gases, petrochemicals and crude oil, has, in the past, endowed Y.U.'s Heidi Steinberg Library at Stern College, the school's college for women.

Iranian Defends Hezbollah

Speaking at Harvard University, a former Iranian president defended Hezbollah for fighting Israel. Hezbollah today is a symbol of Lebanese resistance, Mohammad Khatami said Sunday. Khatami also denied that Iran funds the Shi'ite militant group, though that is widely accepted as fact around the globe. He criticized Osama bin Laden, both for the crimes he committed and for the fact that he committed them in the name of Islam. An estimated 200 people protested Khatami's speech, which took place at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Meanwhile, some Iranian Jewish émigrés sued the former Iranian president. The seven families, who currently live in Los Angeles and Israel, are taking legal action against Khatami for allegedly instituting policies that prevented them from gaining information about their relatives, who were arrested between 1994 and 1997 as they tried to leave Iran and cross into Pakistan. The lawsuit was filed September 7 and a summons was issued September 8 to Khatami, who was touring the United States on a two-week special visa. The plaintiffs are suing for compensation under an act that allows non-American citizens to sue in American courts.

British Jews Warned

The current threat to the Jewish community and to the wider British society is very real and is not going away, said Andy Hayman, assistant commissioner of specialist operations at the Metropolitan Police Service, on September 7, during an annual pre-High Holy Day security briefing for British Jews. The meeting took place as antisemitic incidents are on the rise in Britain. Some 300 synagogue security officers and volunteers with the Community Security Trust, the group that monitors security for British Jews, were briefed on what the trust and the police have done to ensure the community's safety during the holidays.

Release Report, BBC Told

NEWSDESK

The British Broadcasting Corporation no longer can keep private a report on the broadcaster's Middle East coverage, a tribunal ruled. Set up to deal with inquiries under Britain's 2000 Freedom of Information Act, the tribunal ruled that BBC cannot keep private a report presented in 2004 to BBC news executives by Malcolm Balen, its senior adviser on the Middle East.

Book Finalists Named

The public may vote on finalists for the best Jewish fiction of the past decade. The voting, at www.jbooks.com, will decide among Ravelstein by Saul Bellow, Everything Is Illuminated by Jonathan Safran Foer, In the Image by Dara Horn, The Puttermesser Papers by Cynthia Ozick, The Plot Against America by Philip Roth and The Wedding Jester by Steve Stern. The winner, as well as the other winners of this year's Koret Jewish Book Awards, will be announced November 15 in San Francisco. The Koret awards are managed by Jewish Family & Life in cooperation with the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

Israeli Schools Fail

The Israeli school system ranks among the worst in the developed world in several categories, a new study found. Education at a Glance 2006, published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, found that Israeli teachers earn the fourth-lowest salaries, Israeli classrooms are among the most crowded and the average number of years Israeli schoolchildren go to school is among the lowest of the 32 OECD member and partner states surveyed between 1995 and 2004.

Syria Blames U.S., Israel

The American-Israel relationship helped fuel the attack on the American embassy in Damascus, Syrian officials in Washington said. It is regrettable that U.S. policies in the Middle East have fueled extremism, terrorism and anti-U.S. sentiment, said a statement issued Tuesday from the embassy. What has happened recently in Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Iraq is exacerbating the fight against global terrorism. Four gunmen and a Syrian security official were killed in the shooting attack Tuesday.

Load-Date: November 2, 2006

The NHS is still not fixed

The Evening Standard (London)

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

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London Evening Standard

Section: A MERGE; Pg. 12

Length: 718 words

Body

EARLIER this year, the financial crisis in the Health Service dominated public debate - and the more the Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt tried to put a brave face on the problem, notoriously by declaring that this was the "best year ever" for the NHS, the worse it looked. But there are grim signs that the crisis has not been resolved.

As we report today, just 16 weeks into the new financial year, NHS trusts are in debt again. For the last financial year, only 16 of the 42 NHS organisations in London balanced their books. Now, the NHS chief executive, David Nicholson, is saying that it will need an extra Pounds 70 million as a contingency fund to ensure the health service is out of debt by next April.

That Pounds 70 million will have to be provided by the 16 trusts that did manage to keep out of deficit. Many of them are in east London, which is relatively impoverished by comparison with west London. Some are mental health trusts.

It seems unjust that organisations that stay out of debt - by making redundancies and closing beds - should be penalised for their prudence by having to bail out improvident ones. Further savings will have to be made by cutting patient services. But this situation is a foreseeable consequence of the Government's health service reforms, which have given hospitals and health trusts greater autonomy - and with independence, some perform much better than others. At the same time, well-intentioned government targets have imposed formidable burdens on the health service as a whole.

So, is Mrs Hewitt prepared to see the underperforming health trusts close hospital beds, sack nurses and cut back on services? Or does she want the trusts that keep within their budgets to bail out those which do not? When the holidays are over, those hard questions will still have to be answered.

Impasse at the UN

UP TO 100 MPs are demanding that the Commons be recalled to debate the crisis in Lebanon. Yet the reality is that the debate that actually matters is taking place, not in Westminster, but in New York.

The NHS is still not fixed

There, the UN Security Council is encountering real difficulties in arriving at a resolution.

Following an impassioned intervention by the Arab League yesterday, the original draft resolution is unlikely to be adopted. Instead, the Lebanese Government has called for a withdrawal of Israeli forces in the near future but for the deployment of 15,000 members of the Lebanese army to work with an international monitoring force in policing the south of the country. One of the tasks of that forces would be to prevent the militant group, Hezbollah, from continuing to launch rocket attacks on northern Israel from the area.

Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, has called the proposal "interesting" - which, in the highly charged language of diplomacy, is a positive response. The controversy centres, then, largely on whether Israel should withdraw from Lebanon before the deployment of a multinational/Lebanese force or whether, as its government insists, it will only do so once these troops are in place.

Behind Israel's insistence on this matter lies real concern about its own vulnerability. The Israeli Security Council debates today whether to escalate its ground offensive, but there is no doubting that it has no desire to remain in Lebanon in the long term. What it wants is to ensure that the threat to its cities from Hezbollah - and Hezbollah's backers, Iran and Syria - will not be resumed. It has not achieved its objectives by air power.

A resolution that meets Israel's valid security needs as well as the Lebanese government's desire to gain control of its own territory is plainly in both sides' interest. At present, the impasse is about the sequence in which the Israelis move out of southern Lebanon and the Lebanese/multinational forces move in. Resolving the problem is surely not beyond the wit of statesmen.

If the shoe fits...

A SURVEY of 1,000 women for Harper's Bazaar magazine has revealed the full extent of female obsession with shoes. Half own at least 30 pairs, and one in 10 has more than 100. Three quarters are willing to wear uncomfortable shoes to look good.

Imelda Marcos, once mocked for her shoe fetish, now looks more like Everywoman. Men will never entirely understand this fixation - but undoubtedly, they appreciate the results.

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

Blair wants urgency on ceasefire

Birmingham Post

August 1, 2006, Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 674 words

Byline: Joe Churcher

Body

Tony Blair was pressing on "hell for leather" yesterday with attempts to secure a United Nations resolution for a ceasefire in the Middle East.

The Prime Minister, on a visit to the US, had already spoken by telephone to the prime ministers of both Israel and the Lebanon in a bid to help find an acceptable way forward.

As events in the Middle East lent "even greater urgency" to the efforts, Mr Blair was also speaking to his counterparts in Turkey, Italy and Germany.

And the UK was involved in negotiations with the French and Americans at the UN in New York to draw up a resolution "as soon as possible" that could have an immediate impact on the ground.

"We are pushing with the same urgency - in fact I would say a greater urgency - for a resolution after the events of the last few days, as we were last week," Mr Blair's spokesman said.

"We believe a resolution can help bring this conflict to an end and I think the sooner we have it the better. That's why we are still going hell for leather for a resolution.

"We are working flat out in London, in the UN and from here to try to reach the situation as quickly as possible where there is agreement on a text in New York. His words came as Israeli PM Ehud Olmert said there would be no let-up in the offensive in the immediate future as air-strikes continued.

A 48-hour halt to hostilities - aimed at allowing civilians to leave and aid to get in - did not hold after Hezbollah continued to fire rockets at Israeli targets. It was called under US pressure following outrage over the strike on Monday that levelled a house in Qana, killing at least 56 people - mostly women and children - taking refuge there.

Asked if the Prime Minister was disappointed that the halt had not been observed, the spokesman said: "There has been, as I understand it, action on both sides. The important point is that we negotiate to bring the action on all sides to a close.

"That's where our focus is."

Mr Blair's efforts have not included discussions with Syria, he conceded, despite the nation's links with Hezbollah, because of its limited influence.

Blair wants urgency on ceasefire

"You have to concentrate your efforts on where you actually think you can influence things and that's what the Prime Minister is doing."

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz has said Israel plans to "expand and strengthen" its attack on Hezbollah.

The Prime Minister's spokesman said "exhortation" would not resolve the situation - only agreement on both sides of the way forward.

"There are two sovereign governments here. This will not proceed unless those two sovereign governments are in broad agreement with where we're going.

"We are not dealing with puppets at the end of a string ... sovereign governments make up their own minds."

Mr Blair had earlier called for "maximum restraint" in the Middle East conflict and "maximum pressure" to achieve a United Nations resolution to halt the bloodshed.

"This is still going to require a lot of work, throughout tonight and today, and everyone is going to have to exercise the maximum restraint and maximum pressure and will to get the UN Security Council resolution agreed."

"There is a chance, there is a will and I think the elements of this package can be agreed as quickly as we can and get the situation forward towards an end to the hostilities."

The spokesman insisted the Prime Minister still had "full confidence" in Commons leader Jack Straw, who said at the weekend that the Israeli action was "disproportionate".

Margaret Beckett - who succeeded Mr Straw as Foreign Secretary in May -refused to endorse his assessment, warning that the use of certain kinds of language could lead to the country disengaging from the process of seeking peace.

"I care more about what the UN Security Council resolution says in New York this week and much more about whether that can lead to international forces and to a durable ceasefire than I do about the exact words anybody has used," she said.

We are not dealing with puppets at the end of a string . . . sovereign governments make up their own minds

Tony Blair spokesman

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

HEZB'S VICTORY A LESSON FOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE

The Nation (AsiaNet)

September 8, 2006 Friday

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Length: 762 words

Body

LAHORE - The victory of Hezbollah over Israel has a lesson for the oppressed people across the world, struggling against the imperialist forces, which are bent upon exploiting them under the garb of globalisation. This was stated by Chairperson PPP (SB) Ghinwa Bhutto, while delivering a lecture on the current political situation, arranged by The Nation and Nawa-i-Waqt at Hameed Nizami Hall on Friday.

Ghinwa, born and brought up in Lebanon, was praised Hezbollah fighters who according to her, have emerged as a symbol of resistance against the imperialist states of US and Israel.

She was of the view that destiny of the oppressed people everywhere in the world was closely linked, as all were the victim of imperialism, now spreading its tentacles in the form of globalisation.

The PPP (SB) leader told the audience that US had declared third world war on the poor masses in different parts of the world, either directly or through its proxy governments in various regions. If the people are not having adequate health and education facilities, and have been forced to live under the effects of inflation, it is owing to advancement of imperialist agenda of globalisation by the US and its allied states, she maintained.

Ghinwa Bhutto urged the downtrodden masses in the world to emulate Hezbollah and rise against the imperialist forces to safeguard their rights. "They should organise themselves, have knowledge of their constitutional rights and create a leadership from among them to send it to the parliament," she emphasised. Ghinwa was highly critical of political parties in Pakistan for their alleged links with the US. She said that the PPP, the PML (N) and dictators in Pakistan seek their strength from the US and not from their own people to remain in power.

"When the US would get bankrupt, they would also become bankrupt," she said and predicted that fall of the US and its allies was imminent, and the people should prepare themselves to fill the vacuum. The PPP (SB) chairperson also lamented the role of religious forces in state affairs, especially in the Hudood Bill, saying that intelligence agencies had been using them to achieve their ends.

About democracy, she said Pakistan needed participatory democracy in which people could take decisions about different issues on their own. In a democracy, people should have the right to decide how much tax is to be levied, and how many funds need to be allocated under different heads of expenditure. Similarly, they are to decide as to where and how many schools and hospitals are needed, she maintained.

"If we want real democracy in the country, we would have to bring the oppressed people into power", she said and cited the example of Chilli, where, she said, people have elected a woman as president, who had been a victim of rape and torture in the past. She said the democracy didn't come through elections. General Zia and Musharraf

HEZB'S VICTORY A LESSON FOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE

held elections, but there was no democracy in the country. Even during the so-called democratic rule, the people were not empowered, she opined.

She criticised the Charter of Democracy, signed by the PPP and the PML (N), saying there was no democracy in the document which was meant only to regain the lost power, not for the people but to further their own interests. She performed a postmortem of a clause in the CoD binding the two parties to abide by the international agreements.

She said both parties had pledged to abide by the international pacts with the IPPs, the oil companies, the IMF and the World Bank, all signed against the interests of poor Pakistanis.

The oil companies were in agreement with the federal government that they would not bring down oil prices despite their decrease in the international market, she told the audience and added that this was the agreement which the PPP and the PML (N) had vowed to honour. About the proposed formation of supreme judicial council in the CoD, she said it was actually meant to manipulate the judiciary through their handpicked judges.

She said the provision to ensure 33 percent women in the parliament would not empower them. "They would be brought in the assembly through a process of selection and not by the due course of election. It is actually empowerment of those who would select these 33 percent women," she added. Commenting on the provision in the CoD about keeping the intelligence agencies away from power, Ghinwa said that all political parties including the PPP, PML (N) and the MQM were the product of these agencies. She said the agencies would get weak when people would be empowered.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

End of Document

Briefing - The Friday Column - An eye for an eye, to hell with the truth

Irish News

August 4, 2006 Friday

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 689 words

Byline: Fergal Hallahan

Body

Black is white, up is down, day is night. So say those in the Israeli PR machine, a slick apparatus with an impressive record - think of how it has appropriated the word terrorist and made it, now more than ever, just a shorthand way to demonise. They could be right - repeat something often enough and it becomes a sort of reality.

"These people may have been killed by Israeli fire but they are the victims of Hezbollah. They are the victims of terror," Israel's ambassador to the UN said after Sunday's Qana massacre.

Presumably the fatal attack by an Israeli warplane on two Red Cross ambulances in Qana the week before was terror's fault too.

An Israeli government spokesman said Hezbollah was blocking aid "to create a humanitarian crisis ... to make Israel look bad". The UN's chief relief coordinator in Lebanon told the Associated Press news agency, however, that convoys had met "no problems" from Hezbollah.

Israel's Haaretz newspaper quoted an air force commander as saying the building under which the Qana victims were buried only collapsed eight hours after it was hit - an account at odds with those of witnesses.

"The question we don't have an answer to is what happened between 12 midnight and eight in the morning," Brigadier General Amir Eshel said.

But it was clear from the fact that the general raised such a question that he himself had an answer in mind, perhaps something along the lines of those perfidious Lebanese buried their own people under a house - to make Israel look bad.

Such crude propaganda, the stock-in-trade of Israeli officials, suggests to the Israeli public - and with repetition reinforces the idea - that Arabs place so little value on human life that they sacrifice their women and children for political ends. The Arabs - the terrorists - are base, cruel; the Israelis are the good guys, the ones who make the desert bloom.

Anywhere else this would be called racism but we shy away from harsh criticism, as we do from any specific sanction, of Israel.

A UN investigation diplomatically concluded that the 1996 Qana massacre, in which 106 civilians were killed by repeated Israeli shelling of a UN compound, was "unlikely" to have been the result of "technical and/or procedural

Briefing - The Friday Column - An eye for an eye, to hell with the truth

errors". It seems the UN mission in Lebanon believes the latest Israeli killing of four UN observers was unlikely to have been accidental either.

When the 1996 report came out Israel's then prime minister, Shimon Peres, said: "I think it was a scandal that (the victims) were permitted into the camp without (the UN) letting us know about it."

Nothing to do with us. We warned you to leave your homes but you didn't so you're obviously a terrorist, which makes it all right to kill you. If you weren't a terrorist you shouldn't have been there.

Dermot Ahern called Israel's Lebanon offensive "bad security policy and ... illogical foreign policy". But it is perfectly in keeping with the logic of a society which has traded meaningful moral examination for a conception of itself which, with the help of military might, sustains the conviction that it is absolutely right and good and that the societies around it are absolutely wrong and bad.

Black is white, up is down. Israel says it's so and Israel - genuinely, it seems - believes it.

If you repeat something often enough you believe it. If you tell your people something often enough they believe it. But then you have to keep telling them so they'll keep believing it and you have to keep believing it yourself because if anyone stops believing, their first question will be what was all the killing for?

When I asked an Israeli friend how he could justify firing live rounds at stone-throwing children in the occupied Palestinian territories, he told me they shouldn't be there - they should be in school.

The same man, otherwise warm, witty and kind-hearted, told me he'd shot two UN peacekeepers - on specific orders from a superior officer - in south Lebanon in the 1990s.

Did he regret it? No, he said angrily - they shouldn't have been there.

Call me an optimist but I took it from the vehemence of his defence on both counts that, deep down, he wasn't so sure.

Load-Date: August 4, 2006

Arabs' anger at America is hurting moderates; Islamists lifted by U.S. support of Israel

The International Herald Tribune

August 10, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 1148 words

Byline: Neil MacFarquhar

Dateline: DAMASCUS

Body

Mona el-Naggar contributing reporting from Cairo.

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Moderates who seek changes across the Arab world say American support for Israel's battle with **Hezbollah** has put them on the defensive, tarring them by association and helping Islamist parties.

The very people that the United States wanted to encourage to promote democracy from Bahrain to Casablanca instead feel trapped by a policy that they now ridicule more or less as "destroying the region in order to save it."

Indeed, many of those who have been working for change in their own societies often isolated, harassed by state security or marginalized to begin with say American policy either strangles nascent reform movements or props up repressive governments that remain Washington's best allies in the region.

"We are really afraid of this 'new Middle East,'" said Ali Abdulemam, a 28-year-old computer engineer who founded the most popular political Web site in Bahrain. "They talk about how they will reorganize the region in a different way, but they never talk about the people, they never mention what the people want. They are just giving more power to the systems that exist already."

His opinion is shared by advocates of change across the Arab world.

Fawaziah al-Bakr, who works to promote educational change and **women's** rights in Saudi Arabia, helped organize **women** to protest the Israeli attacks. "Nobody is talking about reform in Saudi Arabia," she said. "All we talk about is the war, what to do about the war. There is no question that the U.S. has lost morally because of the war. Even if you like the people and the culture of the United States, you can't defend it."

The statement by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a fleeting stopover in Beirut last month that the situation in Lebanon represented the birth pangs of a "new Middle East" is being juxtaposed with the mounting carnage to rally popular opposition against all things American.

Arabs' anger at America is hurting moderates Islamists lifted by U.S. support of Israel

In Lebanon, Israel continues bombing, even though the violence could destabilize the government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, elected last year in a vote that the United States hailed as a democratic example for the Middle East. Iraq was the previous such example, moderates note bitterly.

In Bahrain, Abdulemam fears that a proposed new terrorism law could severely curb the freewheeling discussions on BahrainOnline.org, his Web site. It could perhaps even shut it down, because among other things the law bans attacking the Constitution. Recently, the government cut off access to Google Earth, he said, probably because too many citizens were zeroing in on royal palaces.

Members of Islamist political organizations, in particular, consider American actions a godsend, putting their own repressive governments under pressure and distancing their capitals from Washington, moderates say.

The Americans "wanted to tarnish the Islamic resistance and opposition movements, but in reality they only served them," said Sobhe Salih, a 53-year-old lawyer in the Muslim Brotherhood, which was swept into the Egyptian Parliament in last autumn's election after capturing an unprecedented 20 percent of the seats.

Glance at any television screen and chances are it will be showing mayhem in Lebanon, Baghdad or Gaza. It usually takes a minute or so to decipher which Arab city is burning. Popular satellite channels like Al Jazeera say repeatedly that the carnage arrives via American policy and American weapons.

Before 2003, the hardest step for any Islamic movement was recruitment, noted Mohamed Salah, an expert on Islamist extremist movements who writes for the pan-Arab daily Al Hayat from Cairo. Moving someone from being merely devout to being an extremist took a long time. No longer, he said. Moderate Arab governments, which have pursued peace with Israel for nearly 30 years, have seen that policy undermined among their publics by Hezbollah's ability to strike at Israel.

"Recruitment has become the easiest stage because the people have already been psychologically predisposed against the Americans, the West and against Israel," Salah said.

Moderates say they are driven to despair by what they see as inconsistencies in Washington's Middle East policy. For example, in Lebanon lives a black-turbaned Shiite cleric who runs a secretive militia close to Iran. His name is Hassan Nasrallah and Washington approves of Israel's campaign to stamp out his group, Hezbollah.

There is another black-turbaned Shiite cleric who runs a different secretive militia close to Iran. His name is Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, and he lives in Iraq. He is an American friend.

"In Iraq the same kind of group is an ally of the United States, while in Lebanon they are an enemy whom they are fighting," said Samir al-Qudah, a Jordanian civil engineer. "It has nothing to do with reform, but where America's interests lie."

The overwhelming conclusion drawn by Arabs is that Washington's interests lie with Israel, no matter what the cost.

"Those calling for democratic reform in Egypt have discovered that once Israeli interests are in conflict with political reform in the Middle East, then the United States will immediately favor Israel's interests," said Ibrahim Issa, the editor of the weekly Al Dustour, who faces a jail sentence on charges of insulting President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Advocates of change invariably add that a credible effort to solve the issue of Arab land occupied by Israel, which they believe is the taproot of extremism, does not even seem to be on Washington's radar.

Nasrallah is particularly adept at exploiting public anger at civilian deaths in Lebanon by talking about how fickle the United States can be as a friend.

"I want you never to forget that this is the U.S. administration, Lebanon's friend, ally and lover," he mocked in a speech last Thursday. He also issued a pointed warning to other Arab leaders, that if they spent more time defending their thrones than the people of Lebanon, they might find themselves pushed off those thrones.

Arabs' anger at America is hurting moderates Islamists lifted by U.S. support of Israel

There is a general sense in the region that the Bush administration soured on pushing democracy because of the successes of Islamist parties in the most recent Egyptian and Palestinian elections the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas, an offshoot of the Brotherhood, in the Palestinian territories.

Political analysts are again comparing governments like that of Mubarak to that of the late shah of Iran an isolated despot who ignored the broad wishes of the population while currying favor with an American administration.

Some rulers are clearly nervous.

King Abdullah II of Jordan criticized Hezbollah when the fighting erupted nearly a month ago, but in an interview with the BBC on Tuesday he was dismissive of American plans for a "new Middle East." The monarch said he could "no longer read the political map" of the region because of black clouds gathering from Somalia to Lebanon.

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My Views Of Israel.

The New York Times

August 6, 2006 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 6; Column 3; Magazine; Pg. 27

Length: 4291 words

Byline: By Bernard-Henri Levy

Bernard-Henri Levy, a French philosopher and writer, is the author, most recently, of "American Vertigo: Traveling America in the Footsteps of Tocqueville." This article was translated by Charlotte Mandell from the French.

Body

When I arrived in Israel, it was the anniversary of the day the Spanish Civil War began. It was 70 years ago that the Spanish generals set off the war -- civil, ideological and international -- that the fascist governments of the time wanted. And I could not help thinking about this as I landed in Tel Aviv. Syria in the wings. . . Ahmadinejad's Iran maneuvering.

. . . **Hezbollah**, which everyone knows is a little Iran, or a little tyrant, taking Lebanon and its people hostage.. . . And behind the scenes, a fascism with an Islamist face, a third fascism, which is to our generation what the other fascism, and then communist totalitarianism, were to our elders'. As soon as I arrived; yes, from the very first moment I visited with my old friends in Tel Aviv, whom I had not seen so tense or so anxious since 1967; from my first conversation with Denis Charbit, an ardent peace activist who did not, it seemed to me, doubt the legitimacy of this war of self-defense; from my first discussion with Tzipi Livni, the young and talented Israeli foreign minister, whom I found strangely disoriented in this new geopolitics, I sensed that something new, something unprecedented in the history of Israeli wars, was being enacted. It was as if Israelis were no longer in the framework of Israel and the Arabs alone. It was as if the international context, the game of hide-and-seek between visible and invisible players, the role of Iran and its **Hezbollah** ally, gave the whole crisis a flavor, a look, a perspective that were entirely new.

Before I went to the northern front, near the border with Lebanon, I traveled to Sderot -- the martyred city of Sderot - - to the south, on the border with Gaza. Yes, the martyred city. Because the images that reach us from Lebanon are so terrible, and because the suffering of Lebanese civilian victims is so unbearable to the conscience and the heart, it is hard to imagine, I know, that an Israeli city could also be a martyred city. And yet. . . these empty streets. . . these gutted houses, riddled by shrapnel. . . this mountain of exploded rockets piled up in the courtyard of the police headquarters, all of which fell in the last few weeks.. . . Even that day (it was July 18), a rain of new bombs fell on the center of town and forced the few people who wanted to take advantage of the summer breeze to scurry back down into their basements.. . .

And then, finally, piously pinned on a black-cloth-covered board in the office of Mayor Eli Moyal, these photos of young people, some of them children, who have died under fire from Palestinian artillery. One thing obviously doesn't erase the other. And I'm not one to play the dirty little game of counting corpses. But why shouldn't what is

My Views Of Israel .

due to some also be due to others? How come we hear so little, at least in the European press, of those Jewish victims who have died since Israel pulled out of Gaza? I have spent my life fighting against the idea that there are good deaths and bad deaths, deserving victims and privileged bombs. I have always agitated for the Israeli state to leave the occupied territories and, in exchange, win security and peace. For me, then, there is a question here of integrity and fairness: devastation, death, life in bomb shelters, existences broken by the death of a child, these are also the lot of Israel.

Haifa. My favorite Israeli city. The big cosmopolitan city where Jews and Arabs have lived together ever since the country was founded. It, too, is now a dead city. It, too, is a ghost city. And here, too, from the tree-covered heights of Mount Carmel down to the sea, the wailing of sirens forces the rare cars to stop and the last passers-by to rush into the subway entrances. Here, too, it is clear that this is the worst nightmare in 40 years for Israelis.

Zivit Seri is a tiny woman, a mother, who speaks with clumsy, defenseless gestures as she guides me through the destroyed buildings of Bat Galim -- literally "daughter of the waves," the Haifa neighborhood that has suffered most from the shellings. The problem, she explains, is not just the people killed: Israel is used to that. It's not even the fact that here the enemy is aiming not at military objectives but deliberately at civilian targets -- that, too, is no surprise. No, the problem, the real one, is that these incoming rockets make us see what will happen on the day -- not necessarily far off -- when the rockets are ones with new capabilities: first, they will become more accurate and be able to threaten, for example, the petrochemical facilities you see there, on the harbor, down below; second, they may come equipped with chemical weapons that can create a desolation compared with which Chernobyl and Sept. 11 together will seem like a mild prelude. For that, in fact, is the situation. As seen from Haifa, this is what is at stake in the operation in southern Lebanon. Israel did not go to war because its borders had been violated. It did not send its planes over southern Lebanon for the pleasure of punishing a country that permitted Hezbollah to construct its state-within-a-state. It reacted with such vigor because the Iranian President Ahmadinejad's call for Israel to be wiped off the map and his drive for a nuclear weapon came simultaneously with the provocations of Hamas and Hezbollah. The conjunction, for the first time, of a clearly annihilating will with the weapons to go with it created a new situation. We should listen to the Israelis when they tell us they had no other choice anymore. We should listen to Zivit Seri tell us, in front of a crushed building whose concrete slabs are balancing on tips of twisted metal, that, for Israel, it was five minutes to midnight.

We should also listen to the bitterness of Sheik Muhammad Sharif Ouda, the leader in Haifa of the little Ahmadi community, a Muslim sect; his family has lived here for six generations, and he welcomes me into his home, in the hilly Kababir neighborhood, dressed in a Pakistani turban and shalwar kameez. Hezbollah's crime, he says, was its decision to strike indiscriminately. It was to kill Jews and Arabs alike -- consider the massacre at Haifa's train depot, where there were 8 dead and more than 20 wounded. And it was also to establish a climate of terror, of anxiety every instant, as in Sarajevo, where people used to speculate about the fact that all it took was a stroke of luck, a change of plans at the last minute, a meeting that went on longer than expected, or that was cut short, or that miraculously changed its venue, to escape being at the point of impact when a rocket landed. Creating such conditions is a crime.

Ouda insists, however, that there is another crime: Hezbollah has in effect relegated the Palestinian question to the background. As indifferent as the traditional Arab leaders may have been, in their innermost selves, to the fate of the inhabitants of Gaza and Nablus, at least they still pretended they cared. Whereas the Hezbollah leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, doesn't even try to pretend. The suffering and rights of the Palestinians are no longer, in his own Islamo-fascist geopolitics, either a cause to fight for or even an alibi. You just have to read the very charter of his movement, or listen to his proclamations on Al Manar, the Hezbollah TV channel, to see that he has little concern with that relic from ancient eras that is Arab nationalism in general and Palestinian nationalism in particular. (Only the naked hatred remains.) Instead, he dreams of a reconciled Islamic community, a new umma, with Iran as the base, Syria the armed branch and Hezbollah the invading spear tip. He will employ the means of war without the usual practical goals of war. There remain the three neglected casualties of this new Iranian-style jihad: Israel, Lebanon and Palestine.

More rockets. I have traveled from Haifa to Acre and then, along the Lebanese border, to a succession of villages and kibbutzes and other cooperatives that have lived, for 10 days by this point, under Hezbollah fire. There's a

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veritable rain of fire today over these biblical landscapes of Upper Galilee, not to speak of a storm of steel. "I've never really known what you should do in these cases," Lt. Col. Olivier Rafovitch says to me, forcing himself to laugh, as we approach the border town of Avivim and as the noise of the explosions seems also to be coming closer. "You tend to speed up, don't you? You tend to think that the only thing to do is get away as fast as possible from this hell. But that's stupid, really. For who can tell if it isn't exactly by speeding up that you come right to where it's. . .?" In response, we speed up all the same. We rumble through a deserted Druze village, then a big farming town and a completely open zone where a Katyusha rocket has just smashed up the highway.

The damage these rockets can do, when you see them up close, is insane. And insane, too, is the racket you hear when you've stopped talking and are just waiting for the sound they make to blend with the noise of the car's engine. A rocket that falls in the distance leaves a dull thud; when it goes over your head, it creates a shrill, almost whining detonation; and when it bursts nearby, it shakes everything and leaves a long vibration, which is sustained like a bass note. Maybe we shouldn't say "rocket" anymore. In French, at least, the word seems to belittle the thing, and implies an entire biased vision of this war. In Franglais, for example, we call a yapping dog a rocket, roquet; the word conjures a little dog whose bark is worse than his bite and who nibbles at your ankles. . . So why not say "bomb"? Or "missile"? Why not try, using the right word, to restore the barbaric, fanatical violence to this war that was desired by Hezbollah and by it alone? The politics of words. The geopolitics of metaphor. Semantics, in this region, is now more than ever a matter of morality.

The Israelis aren't saints. Obviously they are capable in war of Machiavellian stratagems, operations, even denials. In this war, though, there is a sign that they did not want it and that it landed on them like an evil fate. And this sign is the Israeli government's choice of Amir Peretz as defense minister: a former activist for Peace Now, long committed to the cause of sharing the land with the Palestinians, Peretz was head of the trade union Histadrut and was in principle much better prepared to organize strikes than to wage war. "I didn't sleep a wink all night," he tells me, very pale, his eyes red, in the little office in Tel Aviv where he welcomes me, along with Daniel Ben-Simon, a writer for the Israeli paper Haaretz. This office is not at the ministry but at the headquarters of the Labor Party. "I haven't slept because I spent all night waiting for news of a unit of our boys who were caught in an ambush yesterday afternoon in Lebanese territory." Then a young aide-de-camp who also looks like a union activist holds out to him a field telephone. Without a word, his eyes lowered, his big mustache trembling with ill-contained emotion, Peretz receives the news he has been dreading. He looks up at us and says: "Don't spread the news right away, please, since the families don't know yet -- but three of them died, and we still haven't heard about the fourth one. It's terrible. . ."

I have known many of Israel's defense ministers over the past 40 years. From Moshe Dayan to Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Ariel Sharon and others, I have seen heroes, demi-heroes, tacticians of genius and talent, skillful or poor or mediocre men succeed one another. What I have never seen before is a minister who was so -- I won't say "human" (the sanctification of the life of every soldier fallen in combat is a constant in the country's history), or even "civilian" (Shimon Peres, after all, didn't really have a military past either), but one so apparently unprepared to command an army in wartime (wasn't his first decision, unique in the annals of Israeli history, to cut the budget of his own ministry by 5 percent?). What I have never seen before is a defense minister answering so exactly to the famous saying by Malraux about those miraculous commanders who "wage war without loving it" and who, for this very reason, always end up winning.

Amir Peretz, like Malraux's commanders, will probably win. He's facing a tougher enemy than expected; he will experience heavier casualties as well; there will be growing doubts, throughout the country, about the wisdom of his strategy; but he will probably win. And in any case, the point is here: the very fact that he was appointed to the post shows that Israel believed that after withdrawing from Lebanon and Gaza it was entering a new era when it would have to wage not war but peace.

I met another war leader, also a member of the Labor Party and a supporter, like Peretz, of a negotiated peace with the Palestinians. It was in the field that I met him, near the Lebanese border, in a place called Koah Junction, which means "junction of the force" and is for the kabbalists one of the places where, when the day comes, the Messiah will become manifest and pass through. His name is Ephraim Sneh. In his youth he was a medical officer with the paratroopers, the commander of an elite army unit and then commander of the Southern Lebanon Military

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Zone from 1981 until 1983. And he has the air of a calm father, at once friendly and gruff, that reserve generals often have in Israel when they come back to the service -- which in the present circumstances takes the form of a kind of inspection mission for the defense committee of the Knesset. Why this meeting? Why here, in this landscape of dry stone, brought to a white heat by the sun, to which he has invited me but where I can't see a living soul aside from ourselves? Does he want to show me something? Explain to me some detail of army strategy that would be visible to me only here? Will he take me to Avivim, less than a mile north of here, where a battle is taking place? Does he want to talk to me about politics? Will he, like Peretz, like Livni, like almost everyone in fact, tell me about Israel's disappointment with France, which could have played a great role in the region by pushing for the refoundation of the Land of the Cedars and for the disarmament of Hezbollah, as demanded by United Nations Resolution 1559, but which prefers, alas, to confine itself to opening up humanitarian corridors?

Yes, he does tell me that. A little of it. In passing. But I quickly see that he had me come here to talk, first of all, about a matter that is not related, at least apparently, to the present war: nothing other than my book about the kidnapping, captivity and decapitation of Daniel Pearl.. . .A conversation about Danny Pearl at a stone's throw from a battlefield.. . .An officer with a literary bent deciding that, with our two cars immobilized in the blazing scree, nothing is more urgent than discussing jihad, enlightenment Islam, the trouble with Huntington's theory of the clash of civilizations, Karachi and its terrorist mosques.. . .I had never seen anything like this before -- for it to be conceivable, it took this expedition to the front lines of a war in which Israel and the world are entangled as never before.

At the same time.. . .It would seem that history has, sometimes, less imagination than we would like, and that old generals don't have such bad reflexes after all. For the fact is that a few miles to the south, in the commune of Mitzpe Hila, near Maalot, I will not long after experience a deeply moving reminder of the Pearl affair. I visit the home of the parents of the soldier Gilad Shalit, whose capture by Hamas near the town of Kerem Shalom, along the border with Gaza, on June 25, was one of the things that brought about this war. I wonder about the irony of history, which has placed this young man, without any special distinctions, just an ordinary individual, at the origin of this enormous affair. We are sitting now in the sun on the lawn where Shalit played as a child and where you can hear, very close, a few hundred yards away maybe, Katyusha rockets falling, to which his parents seem to have stopped paying attention. We are sitting outside around a garden table, discussing the latest news brought by the U.N. envoy who visited the Shalits just before me, and I find myself thinking that if this war has to last -- if the Iranian factor will, as I have sensed since the instant I arrived, give it new scope and duration -- then this modest army corporal will be the new Franz Ferdinand of a Sarajevo that will bear the name Kerem Shalom.. . .

What is happening, then? Is it his mother Aviva's expression when I ask her about what she knows of her son's captivity? Or his father Noam's look when he tries to explain to me, a faint gleam of hope in his eyes, that the young man has a French grandmother, Jacqueline, who was born in Marseille, and that he hopes my government -- that of France --will link its efforts with Israel's? Is it the debate, which I can guess is raging inside Noam, between the father who is prepared for any kind of bargaining to get his son back and the former army soldier who, out of principle, will not give in to blackmail by terrorists? Is it my visit to the corporal's childhood bedroom? Is it the house itself, so similar, all of a sudden, to Danny Pearl's house, in Encino, Calif.? Whatever the reason, I am overcome by a feeling of *deja vu*; over the faces of this man and this woman it seems to me as if the faces of Ruth and Judea Pearl, my friends, have been superimposed, the courageous mother and father of another young man, like this one, kidnapped by religious fanatics whose ideological program wasn't very different, either, from that of Hamas.. . .

Up north again, near the Lebanese border, I travel from Avivim to Manara, where the Israelis have set up, in a crater 200 yards in diameter, an artillery field where two enormous batteries mounted on caterpillar treads bombard the command post and rocket launchers and arsenals in Marun al-Ras on the other side of the border. Three things here strike me. First, the extreme youth of the artillerymen: they are 20 years old, maybe 18. I notice their stunned look at each discharge, as if every time were the first time; their childlike teasing when their comrade hasn't had time to block his ears and the detonation deafens him; and then at the same time their serious, earnest side, the sobriety of people who know they're participating in an immense drama that surpasses them -- and know, too, they may soon pay a steep price in blood and life. Second, I note the relaxed -- I was about to say unrestrained and even carefree -- aspect of the little troop. It reminds me of reading about the joyful scramble of those battalions of young republicans in Spain described, once again, by Malraux: an army that is more friendly than it is martial; more

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democratic than self-assured and dominating; an army that, here, in any case, in Manara, seems to me the exact opposite of those battalions of brutes or unprincipled pitiless terminators that are so often described in media portraits of Israel. And then, finally, I note a strange vehicle. It resembles the two self-propelled cannons, but it is stationed far behind them and doesn't shoot: this is a mobile command post that you enter, as in a submarine, through a central turret and down a ladder; there are six men in it, seven on some days, and they are busy working with a battery of computers, radar screens and other transmission devices. Their role is to determine the parameters of the firing by collecting information that will be transmitted to the artillerymen. Here, at the root of Israeli firepower, is a veritable laboratory of war where soldier-scholars deploy their intelligence, noses glued to the screens, trying to integrate even the most imponderable facts about the terrain into their calculations. Their goal is to establish the distance to the target and how fast the target moves, as well as to consider the proximity of the civilians, whom they want to avoid at all cost.

Does it work? And are these soldier-scholars infallible? Of course not! There is no way, everybody knows, to wage a clean war. And the fact that Hezbollah long ago made the strategic choice to establish its fighters in the most populated areas and thus to transform Lebanese civilians into human shields obviously doesn't help matters. The fact remains that at least an effort is being made to avoid civilian targets. Here at least, in Manara, that is the Israeli approach. And, as distressed as we may be by the suffering of the Lebanese civilian population, the terrible deaths of hundreds, you cannot conclude that the Israelis have the strategic intention or the will to harm civilians.

When I met David Grossman, it was in an open-air restaurant in the Arab village of Abu Gosh, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, which seems like a garden of Eden after the hell of the last few days -- bright sunshine, the buzz of insects rather than airplanes or tanks, a casualness in the air, a light breeze.. . We talk about his latest book, which is a retelling of the myth of Samson. We talk about his son, who was just called up for duty in a tank unit, and about whom he trembles with anxiety. We talk about a statistic he has just read, which worries him: almost a third of young Israelis have lost faith in Zionism and have found tricks to try to get themselves exempted from military service.

And then of course we discuss the war and the huge distress it seems to have plunged him into, along with other progressive intellectuals in the country.. . For on one hand, he explains to me, there is the terrible extent of the destruction, women and children killed, the humanitarian catastrophe under way, the risk of civil war and of Lebanon burning -- and the government's mistake of, at first, setting the bar so high (destroy Hezbollah, render its infrastructure and its army incapable of doing any more harm) that even a semi-victory, when it comes, risks having a whiff of defeat. But, on the other hand, there is Israel's right, like any other state in the world, not to sit by in the face of such crazy, groundless, gratuitous aggression; there is the fact, he adds, that Lebanon plays host to Hezbollah and permits it to participate in its government: where could an Israeli counterattack have taken place but on Lebanese soil?. . I observe David Grossman. I examine his handsome face, the face of the former enfant terrible of Israeli literature, who has aged too quickly and is devoured by melancholy. He is not just one of the greatest Israeli novelists today. He is also, along with Amos Oz, A.B. Yehoshua and a few others, one of the country's moral consciences. And I think that his testimony, his firmness, his way of not yielding, despite everything, on the essential soundness of Israel's cause, ought to convince even the most hesitant.

And then, finally, Shimon Peres. More than ever I did not want to end this journey without going, as I do each time, to visit Peres -- the country's elder statesman. I met him in the company of Daniel Saada, an old friend and founding member of the French progressive organization SOS Racisme, who has now settled in Israel and become a diplomat as well as a friend of Peres. Shimon, as everyone here calls him, is now 82 years old. But he hasn't lost any of his handsomeness. Or the look of a prince-priest of Zionism. He still has the same face, all forehead and mouth, that emphasizes the melodious authority of his voice. And I even have the impression, at times, that he has adopted a few of the mannerisms of his old rival Yitzhak Rabin: a slight bitterness in his smile, a gleam in his eyes, a way of carrying himself and, sometimes, of shading his words.. .

"The whole problem," he begins, "is the failure of what one of your great writers called the strategy of the general staff. No one, today, controls anyone else. No one has the power to stop or overpower anyone else. So that we, Israel, have never had so many friends, but never in our history have they been so useless. Except.. ."

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He asks his daughter, who is present as we talk, to go to the neighboring office and find two letters, one from Mahmoud Abbas and one from Bill Clinton. "Yes, except for the fact that you have them," he then continues. "The men of good will. My friends. The friends of enlightenment and peace. The ones who will never renounce peace because of terrorism, or nihilism, or defeatism. We have a plan, you know. Still the same plan for prosperity, for shared development, which will end up triumphing. Listen.. ."

Shimon, a young man who is 82 years old, has had a dream. His invincible dream has lasted, in fact, for 30 years; the present impasse, far from discouraging him, seems mysteriously to stimulate him. So I listen to him. I listen to this Wise Man of Israel explain to me that his country must simultaneously "win this war," foil this "quartet of evil" made up by Iran, Syria, Hamas and **Hezbollah** and clear the way for "paths of speech and dialogue" that will, one day, lead the Middle East somewhere. And as I listen to him, and let myself be lulled by his oft-repeated, indefinite prophecies, I find that, today, for some reason, those prophecies have a new coefficient of obviousness and force. I, too, catch myself imagining the glory of a Jewish state that would dare, at the same time, almost in the same gesture and with the same movement, to deliver two things at once: to some, alas, war; to others, a real declaration of peace that would be recognized as such and accepted.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: An improvised Israeli military base a few miles south of Haifa.

Kiryat Shmona Cemetery: On duty near the border with Lebanon. (Photographs by Shai Kremer for The New York Times)

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America the terrible

University Wire

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Byline: By Trevor Sides, Rocky Mountain Collegian; **SOURCE:** Colorado State U.

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Body

Good intentions are a flash-flood on dry prairies. The prairie needs water, but when the rain comes in the wrong fashion, the results are ruinous.

A couple of weeks ago, the town hall meeting "Islam in America: Hope not Hate" at Lory Student Center left me with the same impression.

I know Dr. Lori Peek, Kathy Gockel and Imam Mahdi Bray were trying to help fix the mess our world is in. But like flash-floods on a parched prairie, so were the answers these activists put forth.

Due to time and space, I will focus on the main tenets each so passionately espoused.

Peek used FBI statistics to speak out against the prejudice and hate crimes that have plagued Muslim Americans post-9/11. Bias and disdain based purely on skin color or religion is backward at best and destructive at worst, and there I agree with Peek.

In 2000, only 28 anti-Muslim hate-crime incidents were reported; that figured jumped to 481 in 2001. Yuck. But over the next three years, the number of anti-Muslim hate crimes plummeted to 155, 149, and 156, respectively.

This doesn't mean that race should be the only factor involved in spotting potential terror threats in, say, an airport. The Transportation Security Administration has a 30-point checklist for spotting questionable behavior. But doesn't it make sense to keep half an eye out for male Muslims from Middle Eastern countries?

As for Ms. Gockel, her bleeding-heart plea to "put ourselves in others' shoes" was completely na'ive. She asked us to think about Iraqis and how they're probably wondering why North Korea or Pakistan or India weren't invaded - because they, too, have nuclear weapons programs.

Of course, Gockel assumes she's speaking for all Iraqis - a big flaw (I have an uncle who spent six months in Iraq; many of the Iraqis are thrilled that we came). But I don't think any North Koreans were involved in the 9/11 attacks, and India and Pakistan are too self-absorbed to care about anything except Kashmir and their own arms race.

Gockel also pleaded for us to sympathize with terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah. She believes their status as terrorists isn't fair because they offer social services to the poor in their communities. Good for them. Soviet Russia

America the terrible

and Nazi Germany also offered social services, and communist Cuba provides social services for their poor. Does that vindicate those repressive and backwards regimes as well?

Hamas and Hezbollah also use women and children to deter their heinous, Western enemies. Thus, civilian casualties have risen in that region - another major concern of Gockel's. But instead of condemning the terrorists who use civilians as battle-field shields and suicide bombers, Gockel sees fit to rail against U.S. security policy and warfare.

Amidst much "trembling for our nation," Bray used his platform to vent against President Bush's labeling of militant Islamists as "Islamofascists." Bray noted that Bush should retake some poli-sci classes and that "nothing in the tenets of Islam" promotes fascism.

Something Peek didn't tell the audience, though, was that the number of anti-Jewish hate crimes was ridiculously higher than anti-Muslim hate crimes. In 2001, anti-Jewish hate crimes more than doubled anti-Muslim hate crimes; between 2002 and 2004, anti-Jewish hate crimes averaged around 780 more incidents than anti-Muslim hate crimes.

Peek used the hate-crime stats to show that Muslim Americans are living without much of their freedoms. Based on that logic, Jewish Americans live with no freedom at all.

She also views racial profiling as essentially racist and a blatant attempt to strip Muslim Americans of their liberties.

Who flew planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon? Middle Eastern, Islamic men. Who bombed the U.S.S. Cole? Middle Eastern, Islamic men. Who tried to blow up the WTC in 1993? Middle Eastern, Islamic men. In his Aug. 18 editorial in the Chicago Tribune, Jonah Goldberg stated that "roughly 99 percent of jihadi terrorists are of either Middle Eastern or South Asian descent and 100 percent of them are Muslim."

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Bombings target Shia Muslims on holiest day

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Body

At least 39 people were killed yesterday as Shia worshippers in three Iraqi cities suffered ambushes and bombings during the climax of ceremonies marking Ashoura, the holiest day in the Shia calendar.

Mortar shells slammed into predominantly Sunni neighbourhoods in Baghdad hours later. At least five people were killed and 20 wounded.

Tens of thousands of Shia Muslims converged on the holy city of Karbala under tight security, beating their chests and heads to mark the seventh-century death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson.

The entire city was sealed off and pilgrims were searched at numerous checkpoints.

All vehicles including bicycles were banned a day after the Iraqi army said it had foiled a plot to storm the nearby city of Najaf.

The bloodiest attack yesterday was when a suicide bomber blew himself up among a crowd of worshippers entering a Shia mosque, killing 19 people and wounding 54 in Mandali, a predominantly Shia city north east of Baghdad and near the Iranian border.

To the north, a bomb in a bin exploded as scores of Shias - most of them Kurds - were performing rituals in Khanaqin, a majority Kurdish city also near the Iranian border. At least 13 people were killed and 39 wounded.

The two bombings occurred on the edge of Diyala province, not far from Baqouba, where fighting has raged for weeks between Sunni militants, Shia militiamen and US-Iraqi troops.

Gunmen in two cars also opened fire on a yellow minibus carrying Shia pilgrims in Baghdad, killing at least seven people and wounding seven others.

In ceremonies to mark Ashoura in Pakistan, an explosion next to a pre-dawn procession provoked an outburst of shooting that left two Sunni Muslims dead in the western town of Hangu.

In the Lebanese capital Beirut, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, used the occasion to rebuke US president George Bush.

He referred to the conflict in July and August that began after Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers on the border.

Bombings target Shia Muslims on holiest day

"The ones who fomented chaos in Lebanon, who destroyed Lebanon, who killed women and children, old and young, in Lebanon, are George Bush and (Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice, who ordered the Zionists to launch the war on Lebanon," Mr Nasrallah said.

He was responding to a statement from Mr Bush on Monday when the US leader deplored last week's riots in Lebanon and said those "responsible for creating chaos must be called to account".

Ashoura ceremonies in Saudi Arabia and Iran also took place in an atmosphere of tension.

In Bahrain, which has a Shia majority, about 15,000 people marched through the capital Manama before dawn chanting the praises of Imam Hussein.

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End of Document

A matter of faith? Or just Politics? Tension in the Middle East resonates in interfaith relationships here

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

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Byline: By Aisha Sultan ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Body

For the past six years, an Iranian baby sitter has been like a member of the family for Rabbi Andrea Goldstein of Olivette.

But lately, the conversations have been a bit more guarded when Goldstein picks up her children. The women avoid mentioning Lebanon or Israel.

The war that rocked that area of the Middle East for about two months has been a hot topic of conversation within many religious and ethnic communities here. But even between Muslims and Jewish friends, the topic is largely taboo.

"Because of political correctness, you can't talk about it," said Faisal Malik, a management consultant, who has many Jewish co-workers. "The topic is so emotionally charged."

And for those who already harbor stereotypes and hostility, the crisis has likely magnified those feelings, religious leaders say.

Carl Moskowitz, of Creve Coeur, says he met a hospitable Arab family in Israel years ago while visiting his son there. He said he does not feel prejudiced toward any people, but he struggled to find the words about how the conflict has affected his views. He said that in a generalized way, it has heightened his animosity toward the other side.

Ghazala Hayat, who leads a local group that aims to bring various faiths together, said honest debate with mutual respect can strengthen people's ties. Hayat, president of the Interfaith Partnership board, is part of an adult Muslim and Jewish dialogue group. Its purpose is social, so members haven't discussed the war.

But Hayat has attended seminars and lectures hosted by Jewish groups, where she has been the only Muslim in the audience. "Initially, it may be a little scary, but you have to talk," Hayat said.

Robert A. Cohen, editor in chief emeritus of the St. Louis Jewish Light newspaper, described the situation in terms of a family fight. It's hard to sit through a family dinner when there is chaos and fighting among siblings, he said.

Different perspectives

A matter of faith? Or just Politics? Tension in the Middle East resonates in interfaith relationships here

As the bombing in Lebanon intensified, Maronite Bishop Robert J. Shaheen fielded more calls from upset Maronite Christians with Lebanese roots. Some cursed the Muslims, others the Jews and some the Lebanese government. Many don't understand the historical background.

Shaheen offers some context: When Israel was created, more than 100,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled from their homes into southern Lebanon, he said. They have lived in squalid refugee camps for more than 50 years and now number more than 400,000. An entire generation has been born and raised in those camps.

"Hezbollah comes in and treats them nice," providing basic needs the international community has largely ignored, Shaheen said. They also radicalize the disenfranchised, he said.

He condemns Hezbollah's attacks on Israel. The sentiment among many parishioners at St. Raymond's Maronite Catholic Church is that Israel is defending itself, yet they are upset at the massive destruction of their country's infrastructure and heavy civilian casualties.

Goldstein said the congregants at her synagogue, Shaare Emeth in Creve Coeur, believe that Israel is in a fight for its life and that Hezbollah started the conflict by kidnapping two Israeli soldiers.

"Israel needs to do whatever it can to keep her people safe," she said. Some at the reform synagogue have approached her with concerns of how the war has destroyed Lebanon. She tells them that she believes Israel is doing whatever it can to fight fairly. She believes that Hezbollah is deliberately using civilians as a shield, and that the Israeli army and government are trying to minimize the damage.

Restaurant owner Gershon Schwadron is an Orthodox Jew who says he has some Muslim friends. That doesn't change his perspective on fighting in the Middle East, though: "It's a biblical war playing itself out. In the end of days, that's what's going to happen."

Schwadron said, "There will never be a political solution." He says he believes Arabs will accept a solution only in an attempt to further their cause to destroy the state of Israel.

Eventually, when the Messiah arrives, "people will realize that we are the spiritually chosen people," he said.

Goldstein said making connections between local Jews and Muslims would help humanize the other side.

Politics vs religion

Qamar Abbassi, who works in information technology, said one of his workers was a former Israeli soldier. He was able to talk to Abbassi freely about his experiences and views.

"It's not a religious issue," Abbassi said. "It's a political issue."

Hayat said that if more Jews and Muslims discussed their views, they might be surprised to discover some common ground. In fact, most Muslims locally do believe in Israel's right to exist, she said. Yet they are worried that if they criticize the policies of the Israeli government, they will be branded anti-Semitic, she said.

"What we need to say to our Jewish friends is, 'If we can criticize American policy, why can't we criticize Israeli policy? It's the government, not the Jewish people'." "

She said that many Muslims are upset at what they view as excessive force against civilians in Lebanon. They believe Israel has punished the entire country of Lebanon for the actions of a few and that targeting the infrastructure, like the airport, roads, ports and bridges, made the Lebanese people virtual prisoners in their own country.

Some local Muslims said they also want terrorists rooted out but believe that cutting off electricity or food to entire populations is not the most effective or moral way to battle terrorism.

A matter of faith? Or just Politics? Tension in the Middle East resonates in interfaith relationships here

Malik said the media are partly to blame because people don't hear both sides of the issue. The reporting focuses on offensive and defensive moves, and rarely talks about peace initiatives, he said.

Many on both sides of the issue feel the American media are biased against them. Goldstein said many Jews feel Israel is not given a fair shake; Hayat said Muslims often turn to international sources, such as the BBC or satellite channels, for stories that don't get told here.

"People watch what they are comfortable with," Hayat said.

While the Interfaith Partnership is a nonpolitical organization and not a forum for debate, Hayat said she would like to organize a separate roundtable where people from all sides of the issue can talk about what their own side can do to improve the situation.

"If we don't start discussing these hard questions, how can we ever hope to solve them?"

Load-Date: August 21, 2006

End of Document

Anger at U.S. hurts Arab moderates; Its support of Israel is lifting Islamists

The International Herald Tribune

August 10, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 1084 words

Byline: Neil MacFarquhar

Dateline: DAMASCUS

Body

Mona el-Naggar contributing reporting from Cairo.

*

Moderates who seek changes across the Arab world say American support for Israel's battle with Hezbollah has put them on the defensive, tarring them by association and helping Islamist parties.

The very people that the United States wanted to encourage to promote democracy from Bahrain to Casablanca instead feel trapped by a policy that they now ridicule more or less as "destroying the region in order to save it."

Indeed, many of those who have been working for change in their own societies often isolated, harassed by state security or marginalized to begin with say American policy either strangles nascent reform movements or props up repressive governments that remain Washington's best allies in the region.

"We are really afraid of this 'new Middle East,'" said Ali Abdulemam, a 28-year-old computer engineer who founded the most popular political Web site in Bahrain. "They talk about how they will reorganize the region in a different way, but they never talk about the people, they never mention what the people want. They are just giving more power to the systems that exist already."

His opinion is shared by advocates of change across the Arab world.

Fawaziah al-Bakr, who works to promote educational change and women's rights in Saudi Arabia, helped organize women to protest the Israeli attacks. "Nobody is talking about reform in Saudi Arabia," she said. "All we talk about is the war, what to do about the war. There is no question that the U.S. has lost morally because of the war. Even if you like the people and the culture of the United States, you can't defend it."

The statement by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a fleeting stopover in Beirut last month that the situation in Lebanon represented the birth pangs of a "new Middle East" is being juxtaposed with the mounting carnage to rally popular opposition against all things American.

In Lebanon, Israel continues bombing, even though the violence could destabilize the government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, elected last year in a vote that the United States hailed as a democratic example for the Middle East. Iraq was the previous such example, moderates note bitterly.

Anger at U.S. hurts Arab moderates Its support of Israel is lifting Islamists

Members of Islamist political organizations, in particular, consider American actions a godsend, putting their own repressive governments under pressure and distancing their capitals from Washington, moderates say.

The Americans "wanted to tarnish the Islamic resistance and opposition movements, but in reality they only served them," said Sobhe Salih, a 53-year-old lawyer in the Muslim Brotherhood, which was swept into the Egyptian Parliament in last autumn's election after capturing an unprecedented 20 percent of the seats.

Glance at any television screen and chances are it will be showing mayhem in Lebanon, Baghdad or Gaza. It usually takes a minute or so to decipher which Arab city is burning. Popular satellite channels like Al Jazeera say repeatedly that the carnage arrives via American policy and American weapons.

Before 2003, the hardest step for any Islamic movement was recruitment, noted Mohamed Salah, an expert on Islamist extremist movements who writes for the pan-Arab daily Al Hayat from Cairo. Moving someone from being merely devout to being an extremist took a long time. No longer, he said. Moderate Arab governments, which have pursued peace with Israel for nearly 30 years, have seen that policy undermined among their publics by Hezbollah's ability to strike at Israel.

"Recruitment has become the easiest stage because the people have already been psychologically predisposed against the Americans, the West and against Israel," Salah said.

Moderates say they are driven to despair by what they see as inconsistencies in Washington's Middle East policy. For example, in Lebanon lives a black-turbaned Shiite cleric who runs a secretive militia close to Iran. His name is Hassan Nasrallah and Washington approves of Israel's campaign to stamp out his group, Hezbollah.

There is another black-turbaned Shiite cleric who runs a different secretive militia close to Iran. His name is Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, and he lives in Iraq. He is an American friend.

"In Iraq the same kind of group is an ally of the United States, while in Lebanon they are an enemy whom they are fighting," said Samir al-Qudah, a Jordanian civil engineer. "It has nothing to do with reform, but where America's interests lie."

The overwhelming conclusion drawn by Arabs is that Washington's interests lie with Israel, no matter what the cost.

"Those calling for democratic reform in Egypt have discovered that once Israeli interests are in conflict with political reform in the Middle East, then the United States will immediately favor Israel's interests," said Ibrahim Issa, the editor of the weekly Al Dustour, who faces a jail sentence on charges of insulting President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Advocates of change invariably add that a credible effort to solve the issue of Arab land occupied by Israel, which they believe is the taproot of extremism, does not even seem to be on Washington's radar.

Nasrallah is particularly adept at exploiting public anger at civilian deaths in Lebanon by talking about how fickle the United States can be as a friend.

"I want you never to forget that this is the U.S. administration, Lebanon's friend, ally and lover," he mocked in a speech last Thursday. He also issued a pointed warning to other Arab leaders, that if they spent more time defending their thrones than the people of Lebanon, they might find themselves pushed off those thrones.

There is a general sense in the region that the Bush administration soured on pushing democracy because of the successes of Islamist parties in the most recent Egyptian and Palestinian elections the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas, an offshoot of the Brotherhood, in the Palestinian territories.

Political analysts are again comparing governments like that of Mubarak to that of the late shah of Iran an isolated despot who ignored the broad wishes of the population while currying favor with an American administration.

Some rulers are clearly nervous.

Anger at U.S. hurts Arab moderates Its support of Israel is lifting Islamists

King Abdullah II of Jordan criticized **Hezbollah** when the fighting erupted nearly a month ago, but in an interview with the BBC on Tuesday he was dismissive of American plans for a "new Middle East." The monarch said he could "no longer read the political map" of the region because of black clouds gathering from Somalia to Lebanon.

Load-Date: August 24, 2006

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NO GENERAL TO BE ACCEPTED AFTER MUSHARRAF'S EXIT

The Nation (AsiaNet)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Length: 449 words

Body

LAHORE: MMA President and Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Qazi Hussain Ahmad has said that General Pervez Musharraf is ruling the country according to his personal whims and wants to give the entire nation in the servitude of America. Addressing a meeting of Women Wing Jamaat-e-Islami Lahore on Tuesday here at Mansoor, Qazi said 2006 is the year of change therefore people of Pakistan will observe August 14 as Youm-e-Nijat. He said all opposition parties are unanimous that no general will be accepted after the exit of Pervez Musharraf.

Lebanon, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kashmir are in the clutches of colonial powers, he maintained. Washington is equally responsible for the every brutal act committed by Israeli army in Lebanon and Palestine because Zionists are using the US and providing arsenals to eliminate Muslims and innocent citizens. He was of the view that Zionist state cannot defeat Hamas and Hizbullah, as the spirit of jihad cannot be crushed with force.

Qazi said people would throng Minar-e-Pakistan on August 14 from every nook and corner of Lahore while similar activities will be witnessed in Peshawar, Karachi and Rawalpindi on August 20, 27 and September 6 respectively. He said people attending these mammoth rallies and public meeting will urge the army to go back to barracks because the country's borders are in danger.

If the corruption and dishonesty is controlled in Pakistan, it will boost the morale of expatriate Pakistanis and move them to invest here. He said only mass drive could ensure free and fair elections in the country. To a question about amendments in Hudood ordinance, Qazi said that present campaign in favour of abolishing the Islamic punishment is foreign funded. He said West is out to crush Islamic movements and Islam.

Qazi grieved Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan; Qazi Hussain Ahmad has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and material during recent rains and flood in certain areas of NWFP including Charsadda. He has sent immediate relief of one million rupees to the affected areas and appealed the masses to donate generously in this hour of need. In a statement on Tuesday Qazi said natural calamities are beyond human control but the damaged caused by the calamities can be mitigated by helping the affected brethren. Seminar on Lebanon Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan will hold a seminar today (Wednesday) on the topic of "Lebanon Now" at 5:30 pm at Mansoor.

JI Ameer Qazi Hussain Ahmad will chair the seminar while Editor-in-Chief The Nation Majid Nizami, President PPP Lahore Aziz-ur-Rehman Chan, Secretary-General JUP Qari Zawwar Bahadur, Director Foreign Affairs Abdul Ghaffar Aziz and others will speak on the occasion.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

NO GENERAL TO BE ACCEPTED AFTER MUSHARRAF'S EXIT

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Labour members defect to Lib Dems over Lebanon

Guardian.com

August 25, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 392 words

Highlight: Margaret Beckett has suffered a mass defection of Labour party members in her Derby constituency over the government's stance on the crisis in Lebanon.

Body

Margaret Beckett has suffered a mass defection of Labour party members in her Derby constituency over the government's stance on the crisis in Lebanon.

Thirty-seven members of her constituency party have left for the Liberal Democrats in what appears to be a carefully managed coup for Sir Menzies Campbell's party.

The defectors are predominantly Muslims of Pakistani origin and the principle reason behind their move is the crisis in Lebanon, they said.

Ravail Peeno, the ex-chairman of the local Labour party, said: "The Lebanon war has made me change my mind and made me feel I am in the wrong party.

"The people who are getting killed out there are innocent women and children.

"It's sad. For many years I have been a Labour party member but we have no choice. We can't take it any more."

Sir Menzies called the defections "significant".

"The government's position on the Middle East and Iraq shows just how out of touch it is with many in its party and the majority of the general public," he said.

The Labour party put a brave face on the decision, but also called in question the motives of those leaving.

A spokesman said: "We understand that there are ongoing local factors arising from a selection process last year which have led to this defection.

"It is always disappointing when any member decides to leave the Labour party.

"It is important that the foreign secretary and prime minister continue to work hard to achieve a sustainable ceasefire in Lebanon - something we're sure all Labour party members would unite around."

Labour members defect to Lib Dems over Lebanon

At a press conference at a Pakistani community centre in Derby, fellow defector, father of three Shayad Mahmood, 31, said: "We need to stop aligning ourselves to America.

"We are not backing Hizbullah but we are against the killing of innocent women and children. They are dropping bombs in highly populated areas where civilians are.

"In this day and age, in 2006, there is no way this government can allow this to carry on."

Former city and county councillor Masud Akhtar said today's defections reflected concerns among Muslim communities nationwide about the government's Middle East policy.

He said: "For the Muslims, the Liberal Democrats have taken a very principled stand and have listened to what the electorate have told them.

"Their foreign policy strikes a chord with Muslim people not just in Derby but across the UK."

Load-Date: August 25, 2006

End of Document

War Clouds Gather Over The Golan; OPINION

The Forward

March 9, 2007

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Section: News; Pg. A1

Length: 1720 words

Byline:

Martin van Creveld, a professor of military history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is the author of the forthcoming *The Changing Face of War: Lessons of Combat, From the Marne to Iraq* (Presidio Press).

Body

While the world's attention is riveted on the conflict in Iraq and a possible American attack on Iran, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad may be quietly preparing for a war against Israel.

From the mid-1950s until the end of the Cold War, what made Syria's aggression against Israel possible was the fact that Damascus got its military hardware almost for free from the Soviet Union. With the collapse of communism, this arrangement came to an end, leaving late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad with a debt of well over \$10 billion. Since he did not have the money to pay, most procurement was brought to a halt.

Equipped only with the weapons they had been provided in the wake of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Syrian armed forces were allowed to decay until much of their equipment was fit only for the junkyards. Now, however, the balance seems again to be tilting toward Damascus.

The first step was taken in January 2005. In an apparent effort to reassert Moscow's power in the Middle East, Russian President Vladimir Putin forgave Damascus three quarters of its debt; the rest, it seems, has now been paid by Iran. This agreement enabled the Syrians to start rebuilding their armed forces.

Damascus began by completing the large array of surface-to-surface Scud missiles that, with North Korean help, they had been building throughout the 1990s. As a result, they now have several hundred such missiles. Some are armed with chemical warheads, and some are capable of reaching just about any target inside Israel.

Of late, the Syrians have gone on a real shopping spree. They have bought Russian-made anti-aircraft missiles, anti-tank missiles and anti-ship missiles capable of being launched either by sea or by land. The equipment in question is modern and extremely sophisticated. Some of it has yet to even enter service in Russia itself and much of it is as good as, if not better than, anything found in the West.

Meanwhile, the Syrian High Command has also been studying the lessons of the recent war in Lebanon. From the little that has leaked out, it is possible to put together the following picture: Seen from Damascus, Israel's strategic deterrent

has proved irrelevant, and it can, provided some limits are observed, be safely ignored. During this past summer's hostilities with *Hezbollah*, the only part of the Israeli military that performed credibly

War Clouds Gather Over The Golan OPINION

was the air force.

To be sure, excellent intelligence and superb command and control enabled the air force to knock out every single Hezbollah-owned surface-to-surface missile

launcher either before it could come into action or immediately after it had done so. The Israelis, however, had an easy task, since their fighter-bombers were facing practically no opposition; even so, fearing casualties, they hardly dared use their helicopters. Moreover, the air force failed to stop the short-range rockets raining down on northern Israel.

The Israeli air force could wreak much destruction, but it could not force a decision.

At sea and on land, Israel did much worse. Following a successful Hezbollah missile strike that hit, but did not sink, one of Israel's ships, the navy was forced to stay well away from the Lebanese shore. It blockaded Lebanon's ports but was unable to do much to influence the battle.

The ground forces, both conscripts and reservists, proved heavy handed, hesitant,

slow, ill trained and ill motivated. In part, they were also badly commanded; too many senior officers, instead of leading

their men as they used to do, stayed behind their computers well in the rear. Overall there was precious little to show that these were the same forces that as recently as 1982 had taken just one week to reach Beirut. Considering these demonstrated shortcomings

on the Israeli side, the outline of a possible Syrian plan of attack is not hard to guess. In contrast to Syria's launching of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, there will be no large-scale offensive action either in the air expect, perhaps, by commando forces or on the ground.

Instead, some incident will be generated and used as an excuse for opening rocket fire on the Golan Heights and the Galilee. Once that happens, Hezbollah will most likely be induced to join in. The United Nations forces in Lebanon will, as usual, prove to be a broken reed.

Should the Israelis respond by sending in their heavy armor, the Syrians will stay on the defensive, relying on their newly acquired anti-tank missiles to break the assault. Should the Israelis send in their air force, the Syrian anti-aircraft missile batteries will be waiting for them.

To deter the Israelis from escalating the struggle and smashing Syria's infrastructure,

as they did in Lebanon, the Syrians will rely on their missiles. The overall goal will be to draw out the conflict and inflict casualties, civilian as well as military,

until Jerusalem finally throws in the towel. To be sure, the Syrian plan is not without

risk. One problem facing the Syrians is that the terrain on and east of the Golan Heights, unlike southern Lebanon, provides scope for the kind of armored maneuver warfare that, long ago, used to be Israel's forte. Damascus, therefore, will have to start by creating a vast array of artificial obstacles capable of trapping the Israeli tanks; indeed, for some time now they have been doing just that.

Second, relying on chemical warheads to balance the Israeli air force's ability to strike at Syria may be extremely dangerous,

given both Jews' aversion to gas and the widespread belief that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Such, however, are the hazards of war, and experience suggests that they may be contained. Given Israel's reluctance to take casualties and its lack of fighting spirit as demonstrated all too clearly this past summer in Lebanon overall the emerging Syrian plan is a good one with a reasonable chance of success.

War Clouds Gather Over The Golan OPINION

When will the Syrians go to war? Obviously, much will depend on what happens in Iraq and Iran. A short, successful

American offensive in Iran may persuade Assad that the Israelis, much of whose hardware is either American or American-derived, cannot be countered,

especially in the air. Conversely, an American withdrawal from Iraq, combined

with an American-Iranian stalemate

in the Persian Gulf, will go a long way toward untying Assad's hands.

In any case, the Syrian forces will need time to prepare. By a rough guess, absorbing

the new weapons may take more than a year, but almost certainly less than the three or four years that some Israeli intelligence

sources, seeking to reassure their own people, say are needed.

On the other hand, Damascus surely will not make the mistake of waiting until the Israeli anti-missile weapons, which are now under development, become operational and enter service. Finally, the season must be selected in such a way as to make the weather work against the Israelis as much as possible. Fog, cloud, rain and snow impede air operations and make a ground offensive difficult.

Hence, everything considered, October 2008 does not seem like a bad choice. The fact that the Americans will be busy with their elections, and that time must pass before a new administration finds its feet, could count as a bonus.

What steps can Israel take? In part, it can continue doing what it has been doing for a long time namely, gather as much intelligence as possible on Syria's surface-to-surface missiles and preparing to launch a devastating air strike against them if necessary. In addition, ways and means, either technical or tactical, must be found to counter the new Syrian surface-

to-air and anti-tank missiles.

In that context, it might be a good idea to have Mossad buy or steal some of those missiles' warheads. Back in the early 1970s, that is how Israel learned the secrets of the French-made Exocet sea- to-sea missile, which was then in Arab hands. Once the way that the electronics work is understood in detail, countermeasures

should not be too difficult to devise.

Above all, Israel must rebuild its ground forces, where the bulk of its conscripts and reservists serve. As has happened in other advanced countries, those forces have had their morale undermined by social developments. This includes an aging population and declining fertility, both of which have made the nation less willing to take casualties. It also includes the spread of feminism, which has given women a considerably greater role in the armed forces and consequently made military service less attractive to men, while at the same time driving home the impression that Israeli troops are nothing but a bunch of sexual predators.

Furthermore, the ground forces have borne the main burden of fighting the Palestinian intifada over the past 20 years. Doing so has weakened their morale almost to the vanishing point; in some cases, crybabies have taken the place of soldiers. One is reminded of the Argentinean troops who, after years of fighting their own civilian population, ran away when confronted by a British force one-third their size in the Falklands in 1982.

Of all the problems afflicting the Israelis, this is the worst. So long as the occupation of the Palestinian territories lasts, it is anybody's guess whether the men's former willingness to fight and die can be restored.

War Clouds Gather Over The Golan OPINION

Finally, Israel could try to forestall another war by reaching a peace agreement with Syria. As we now know, under Ariel Sharon secret Israeli-Syrian talks went on for two years.

No sooner had last summer's hostilities in Lebanon ended a war that was probably launched by Hezbollah without any consultation with Damascus than leading Syrian personalities started saying they were interested in resuming negotiations and bringing them to a conclusion. But in the fall, Israel went out of its way to reject Syria's overtures, partly because it wanted Damascus to stop assisting Hezbollah and the Palestinians and partly owing to American pressure.

Now, however, the Americans themselves are about to talk to Damascus, as well as to Tehran. Where the master leads, the follower cannot be far away or else, Israel had better be prepared to take on the consequences.

Graphic

IMAGE: own From the Heights:At an abandoned army post from the Six-Day War, an Israeli signpost overlooking Syria showsthe distance to Damascus and to the prime minister's office in Jerusalem.; getty images

Load-Date: March 12, 2007

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Rise in radical Islam is final straw for Lebanon's embattled Christians

The Sunday Telegraph (LONDON)

April 1, 2007 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 32

Length: 470 words

Byline: MICHAEL HIRST in Beirut

Body

CHRISTIANS ARE fleeing Lebanon to escape political and economic crises and signs that radical Islam is on the rise in the country.

In a poll to be published next month which was exclusively leaked to The Sunday Telegraph, nearly half of all Maronites, the largest Christian denomination in the country, said they were considering emigrating. Of these, more than 100,000 have submitted visa applications to foreign embassies. Their exodus could have a devastating effect on the country, robbing it of an influential minority which has acted as an important counter-balance to the forces of Islamic extremism.

About 60,000 Christians have already left since last summer's war between Israel and Hezbollah. Many who remain fear that a violent showdown between rival Sunni and Shia factions is looming.

"If we love our children we have to tell them to get out," said Maria, a Christian mother of one from the northern city of Tripoli, who refused to give her surname for fear of reprisal. "When my daughter finished her high school I sent her to Europe, and I will follow her if I can."

Christine, another Christian woman, said that all of her family's younger generation had left the country, adding that Tripoli had become increasingly Islamised in recent years. There is a rising number of veiled women and religiously bearded men on the streets - although she blamed economic and political instability for much of the emigration. Christians, who make up 22 per cent of the population, have historically played a major role in the development of Lebanon's political, social and cultural institutions. Currently the president, the army commander and the head of the central bank are all Maronites, and under the agreement which ended the civil war in 1989, half the 128 seats in Lebanon's parliament are reserved for Christians.

"Lebanon has always been a bastion of religious tolerance, but now it is moving towards the model of Islamisation seen in Iraq and Egypt," said Fr Samir Samir, a Jesuit teacher of Islamic studies at Beirut's Université Saint-Joseph.

Lebanon's Christian community is concerned that its influence is waning as a result of a continuing internal power struggle, which for the past five months has pitted a Sunni-led government against a predominantly Shia opposition, spearheaded by the Shia militant group Hezbollah. The collapse in influence has been exacerbated by a roughly equal split in support among Christians for rival Shia and Sunni leaders. The battle between Muslim factions has paralysed the Lebanese administration and crippled the economy.

Rise in radical Islam is final straw for Lebanon 's embattled Christians

The exodus of young workers crosses the religious spectrum. Some 22 per cent of Shias and 26 per cent of Sunnis say they are considering going abroad, according to the study by Information International, an independent Beirut-based research body.

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End of Document

Former Israeli justice minister convicted of indecent assault

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

TEL AVIV -- Israel was rocked by a sex scandal again Wednesday when former justice minister Haim Ramon was found guilty of indecent assault against a 20-year-old **female** soldier.

Three judges unanimously found the 56-year-old lawyer and member of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's ruling Kadima party, had lied to the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court when he denied "placing his lips on her lips and inserting his tongue in her mouth," repeatedly, and against the complainant's will when the two of them met, for the first time, in his office.

The incident took place moments before the Israeli cabinet voted to go to war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon last summer.

The judges found the testimony of the woman, who was only known in court as H, regarding the kisses was "authentic, coherent, credible, and reliable."

"This was not a kiss of affection," the court said. "This has all the elements of a sexual crime."

The conviction was another staggering blow to Olmert's coalition government, which has been reeling for months over severe public condemnation of its mishandling of the war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon.

As well, the prime minister himself faces at least two criminal investigations into financial misconduct, his finance minister is under investigation for abusing his position for financial gain and another former minister has been charged with fraud, bribery and perjury.

Only last week, Israel's 61-year-old-president, Moshe Katsav, was charged with sex crimes including rape that involved several **women** less than half his age, as well as separate charges relating to fraud and obstruction of justice.

Public outrage over the war in Lebanon, where Olmert failed in his stated objective to win the release of two soldiers kidnapped by **Hezbollah**, and over the rising tide of sexual and financial misbehaviour by the country's political leadership, has also had a devastating effect on the prime minister's popularity. Recent polls have found more than two-thirds of Israelis want Olmert to resign.

Former Israeli justice minister convicted of indecent assault

A survey published two days ago by the popular Ynetnews website painted an even more damning picture.

It revealed only three per cent of the electorate wanted Olmert returned as prime minister in the next election.

"These are the lowest figures for an Israeli prime minister in the 30 years that I have been doing this," said pollster Rafi Smith, who conducted the Ynet poll.

"These numbers are even lower than those for (U.S. President) George W. Bush.

"This is a very grim picture that effects not only how Israelis regard politicians and the Knesset, but other institutions -- the police, the health sector and even the courts. It is like the public and public figures inhabit two completely different worlds. Only the military is still held in high regard, but in the public's mind, it, too, has slipped."

Ruth Ben-Israel, a retired professor emeritus of law at Tel Aviv University, said she was "not only disappointed, but ashamed" of politicians who only thought of themselves and their positions.

"They are corrupted and not just sexually," the internationally respected 76-year-old expert on social justice said. "Once in office they think that they are nearly Gods and forget their ideals. It is all about power and interests.

"Israel of today is not the Israel that my husband and I helped create. It is not the Israel we dreamed of."

Hours before his conviction, friends of Ramon's had confidently predicted in the media the divorced politician would be found not guilty for what was described as "a misunderstanding" over a "French kiss" and that he intended to resume the position as Olmert's justice minister, which he resigned from when charges were brought against him six months ago.

Instead Ramon faces up to three years in jail when the court pronounces a sentence on Feb. 21.

When Ramon's conviction was announced in court his girlfriend, who appeared to be several decades younger than him, hugged him supportively.

Through his lawyers Ramon indicated he intended to appeal his conviction.

Arye Eldad, who represents one of the religious party's in the Knesset described Ramon's conviction as "another nail in the coffin of the ... most corrupt government Israel has ever had," and demanded new elections.

But Ramon still had the support of at least one Knesset member.

Yuval Steinitz, of the right-wing Likud party said the trial proved the legal definition of sexual harassment should be weakened.

"It cannot be that a misunderstanding between a man and a woman that causes immense discomfort to one of them should end in conviction," Steinitz said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: (Haim) Ramon ;

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Israel won't lift sea and air blockades yet

USA TODAY

August 31, 2006 Thursday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8A

Length: 474 words

Byline: Paul Leavitt

Body

Israel rejected demands from visiting U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan that it lift a sea-and-air blockade of Lebanon and withdraw its forces. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert wants to wait until implementation of a U.N.-brokered cease-fire that calls for 15,000 Lebanese and 15,000 United Nations troops to deploy in southern Lebanon and enforce an arms embargo on Hezbollah.

The truce halted 34 days of fighting that erupted in July after Hezbollah, which the United States considers a terrorist group, kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid.

3 terror suspects make

London court appearance

Three British men accused of plotting to blow up U.S.-bound airliners with liquid explosives were ordered held pending another hearing Sept. 28 in London. Mohammed Yasar Gulzar, 25, Mohammed Shamin Uddin, 35, and Nabeel Hussain, 22, are charged with conspiracy to commit murder and preparing to commit terrorism.

Those charges have been filed against 11 people; four others are accused of lesser offenses such as withholding information. Five people are in custody without charges, and five have been released.

British police said Aug. 10 that they had foiled an alleged plot to blow up planes using liquid explosives disguised as drinks.

Iran releases writer

accused of aiding U.S.

Iran released Ramin Jahanbegloo, a writer who was accused of spying. He was freed on bail, said his wife, Azin Moalej.

Jahanbegloo, who has dual Iranian-Canadian citizenship, was arrested in April but not charged. He was involved in U.S. efforts to overthrow the government, Intelligence Minister Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei said in July. Canada and international writers and academics had lobbied for his release.

Japan court rejects

Israel won't lift sea and air blockades yet

sex-slavery lawsuit

Tokyo's District Court rejected a claim by Chinese women who sought a government apology and about \$200,000 each for being forced into sexual slavery during World War II. The court said the government is not responsible for military actions under the wartime constitution.

"The ruling was so unfair, and I feel enraged," said Chen Yipian, who was 14 when she was confined at a Japanese military base for two years and repeatedly raped.

Two of the eight plaintiffs have died since the lawsuit was filed in 2001. Historians say up to 200,000 Asian women were forced to service millions of Japanese soldiers.

Chavez in Syria to build

support for U.N. seat

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said his country and Syria would work together to build a world coalition free of "American imperialist aggression." The leftist leader said after meetings with Syrian President Bashar Assad in Damascus that "no matter how strong the American empire becomes and no matter how much force it uses, it will be defeated." Chavez has been visiting capitals to build support for Venezuela's bid for a seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Load-Date: September 1, 2006

Ceasefire talks gather pace as Israel resumes air strikes

UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is The NorthEast

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 423 words

Dateline: The Northern Echo

Body

Tony Blair was pressing on "hell for leather" last night with attempts to secure a United Nations resolution for a ceasefire in the Middle East. The Prime Minister, on a visit to the US, had already spoken by telephone to the prime ministers of Israel and the Lebanon to try to help find an acceptable way forward, said his spokesman. Mr Blair was also speaking to his counterparts in Turkey, Italy and Germany. And the UK was involved in negotiations with the French and Americans at the UN, in New York, to draw up a resolution as soon as possible that could have an immediate impact on the ground. "We are pushing with the same urgency - in fact I would say a greater urgency - for a resolution after the events of the last few days, as we were last week," the spokesman said. "We believe a resolution can help bring this conflict to an end and I think the sooner we have it, the better. That's why we are still going hell for leather for a resolution." "We are working flat out in London, in the UN and from here to try to reach the situation as quickly as possible where there is agreement on a text in New York." "We hope that will then have an immediate effect on the ground." His words came as Israeli PM Ehud Olmert said there would be no let-up in the offensive in the immediate future as air strikes continued.

A 48-hour halt to hostilities aimed at allowing civilians to leave and aid to get in did not hold after Hezbollah continued to fire rockets at Israeli targets. It was called under US pressure following outrage over a strike on Sunday morning that levelled a house in Qana, killing at least 56 people - most of them women and children - who were taking refuge there. Asked if the Prime Minister was disappointed that the halt had not been observed, the spokesman said: "There has been, as I understand it, action on both sides. The important point is that we negotiate to bring the action on all sides to a close. That's where our focus is." Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz has said Israel plans to "expand and strengthen" its attack on Hezbollah. Liberal Democrat defence spokesman Michael Moore said that was a major setback for diplomatic efforts. And he called on Mr Blair and US President George Bush to put pressure on Israel to call an immediate ceasefire. But the Prime Minister's spokesman said "exhortation" would not resolve the situation. "There are two sovereign governments here. This will not proceed unless those two sovereign governments are in broad agreement with where we're going," he said. Life in Gaza - Page 10

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Beckett suffers new crisis as 30 activists defect to Lib Dems

The Times (London)

August 26, 2006, Saturday

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Section: HOME NEWS; Pg. 18

Length: 442 words

Byline: Sam Coates, Political Correspondent

Body

MARGARET BECKETT'S handling of the crisis in Lebanon produced a tangible setback yesterday, as more than 30 Labour Party activists from her constituency defected to the Liberal Democrats.

The Derby South members, who are mostly Muslim and of Pakistani origin, were angry that the Foreign Secretary failed to back a ceasefire when violence erupted in the Middle East. The defectors include a ward chairman and a former city councillor.

Mrs Beckett was accused by members of her local party of helping the US to obstruct international efforts to reach a peace deal between Israel and **Hezbollah**.

At the early stages of the Lebanon crisis some Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials suggested that Mrs Beckett had been "invisible". She later played a key role in securing the UN resolution in New York.

Mohammad Rawail Peeno, a former chairman of the Labour Party branch, said: "We could not remain in the Labour Party after its mishandling of the Lebanon crisis.

When Margaret Beckett refused to back a ceasefire and instead sided with George Bush, it was the breaking point."

Shayad Mahmood, another defector, said: "We need to stop aligning ourselves to America. We are not backing **Hezbollah**, but we are against the killing of innocent **women** and children. They are dropping bombs in highly populated areas."

Sir Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat leader, welcomed the move. He said: "These defections in the Foreign Secretary's own seat are significant. The Government's position on the Middle East and Iraq shows just how out of touch it is with many in its party and the majority of the public."

A Labour Party spokesman said: "We understand that there are local factors arising from a selection process last year which have led to this defection. It is important that the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister continue to work hard to achieve a sustainable ceasefire in Lebanon -something we are sure all Labour Party members would unite around."

There is nervousness across the Labour Party about the political consequences of the Prime Minister's handling of the Middle East crisis.

This month Kitty Ussher, the moderate Labour MP for Burnley, made a stinging attack on Mr Blair.

Beckett suffers new crisis as 30 activists defect to Lib Dems

She wrote in the New Statesman that "(the) only conclusion any right-minded person can draw is that the Prime Minister thought it was OK for Muslims to keep dying".

She said that the Muslim community in Burnley was asking why its blood seemed cheaper than that of Jews and Christians, and that much of the work done since Iraq to persuade Muslims that they were not being persecuted had been wasted.

The Foreign Office said last night that Mrs Beckett was still on holiday.

Load-Date: August 26, 2006

End of Document

Vancouver rally supporting Israel draws more than 1,600: Organizers, police tighten security after Seattle shootings

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

FINAL C Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 442 words

Byline: Emily Chung, with files from Jonathan Fowlie, Vancouver Sun

Body

Unfazed by Friday's shooting of six **women** at a Jewish centre in Seattle, more than 1,600 people turned out at a Vancouver synagogue Monday night in a show of support for Israel's actions in the Middle East.

"Israel has no choice but to defend itself," said Morris Soronow, 61, who attended the Stand with Israel solidarity rally at the Schara Tzedek Synagogue on Oak Street.

He said the violence in Seattle worried him briefly, but "none of that would ever stop anybody from coming out to support Israel."

And apparently it did not. Many families attended with small children, while both young and old arrived with friends, filling the synagogue's main hall and two overflow rooms in the basement.

Inside, those in attendance said prayers for Israel and its army.

Among the speakers who addressed the crowd was Rabbi Philip Bregman, chairman of the Rabbinical Association of Vancouver, who likened Israel's attack on **Hezbollah** to chemotherapy.

"You cannot stop until the cancer is eliminated," he said.

They also heard from Jason Murray of the Canada-Israel Committee, who asked people to express their support for Israel to the government and media, and from Craig Diamond of Combined Jewish Appeal, who requested donations for emergency relief services and rebuilding in regions of Israel under attack by **Hezbollah**.

The rally was mainly organized by the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and local branches of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canada-Israel Committee.

Four police officers and private security personnel provided security and the event ended uneventfully, despite earlier concerns that prompted organizers to increase the amount of security after Friday's shootings in Seattle.

Meanwhile, local Muslims denounced the shootings which left one woman dead and five injured. A Seattle man is on custody held on \$50 million bail.

Vancouver rally supporting Israel draws more than 1,600: Organizers, police tighten security after Seattle shootings

"There is no justification to kill an innocent person," said Intikhab Ahmed, a Surrey resident who describes himself as a political and social activist in the Muslim community.

Ahmed said the same holds true for Israel, referring to Sunday's air raids in Qana, Lebanon, which killed 54 civilians, including children.

Luay Kawasme, regional director for the Vancouver area of the Canadian Islamic Congress, agreed. But he said he worries events overseas may lead some people to commit irrational acts.

"If someone has a person or close relative -- like a child or a son or a father -- killed somewhere, their mental state becomes questionable," he said.

Kawasme said local Muslims also face increased threats as a result of tensions from the Middle East, but are keeping their fears in perspective.

echung@png.canwest.com

Graphic

Colour Photo: Peter Battistoni/Vancouver Sun; A man listens during a rally in support of Israel at the Schara Tzedek Synagogue.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Carnage: At a building in Qana, 34 of 56 victims were children.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

July 31, 2006 Monday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A01

Length: 762 words

Byline: Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers

Body

Many of the bodies were as tiny as dolls, with limp little fingers and debris that clung to their curls. Many still wore the action-figure pajamas and thin nightgowns they'd been dressed in when they were laid down to sleep.

By late afternoon, at least 34 children - more than half of the 56 or more people who died in a predawn Israeli air strike yesterday - had been pulled from the rubble of a house where families had gathered each night in the mistaken hope that safety from the Israeli strikes could be found in numbers.

The attack was the deadliest so far in Israel's 19-day war with Hezbollah militants. Israeli officials called the bombing a mistake, saying that had they known there were civilians in the building, it would not have been hit.

But the words meant little to those recovering the dead.

"I have a dead father and son in the back right now," said Dawoud Kahwaji, a local Red Cross worker who leaned against his ambulance at the scene, waiting for another batch of bodies. "Go look."

Nestled among the olive groves and tobacco farms of south Lebanon's Shiite Muslim heartland, Qana makes no secret of its support for Hezbollah. Memorials to dead fighters hang among the storefronts. Hezbollah's yellow flags are everywhere. Yesterday's bombing only bolstered that support.

"I will tell you the truth. Yes, we have resistance fighters in Qana, but, no, they weren't in that area that Israel hit," said Sanaa Faraj, a 32-year-old mother of three. "Don't they know that the more they bomb us, the more connected we become to the resistance?"

Witnesses here say the strike came at 1 a.m., followed by others at dawn. The barrage partially collapsed the house and flattened nearby buildings - though Israel has hit Qana so hard in recent days that it's difficult to distinguish old rubble from the new.

There are two main clans in Qana: the Shalhoub and the Hashems. Most of the Shalhoub who had remained in town had begun spending their nights in the house, which was owned by a Hashem. It was clearly a residence, villagers said, so they thought it would be safe.

Carnage: At a building in Qana, 34 of 56 victims were children.

The air strike wiped out dozens of Shalhoub, including a generation of children.

"All the Shalhoub are gone," Hosniya Shalhoub, 40, told a caller as she watched the broken bodies of her relatives brought to the hospital in Tyre.

She explained that she and many of her relatives hadn't fled Qana before because they didn't have the \$7 it would take for a taxi to another village. Besides, she said, "we never thought this would happen."

Mahdi Shalhoub lost his mother and 18-year-old sister. His brother-in-law was still missing in the rubble. He seemed in shock.

"I don't want to go. Where should I go? I am from here," he said, his eyes vacant. "I'll just die here. Die at home."

Rabab Yusuf, 40, and her husband, Mohamed Ali Shalhoub, 41, survived the attack. So did their 4-year-old son, Hassan. But there was no sign of their daughter, Zeinab, 6. Both children had been cradled next to their mother as they slept, Yusuf said.

Yusuf said she dug her husband from beneath rubble to free him and rescue workers later freed Hassan.

The family was separated at the hospital, where doctors tugged off Yusuf's veil to inspect a bleeding head wound. Her legs had been crushed, so they gingerly lifted her into a wheelchair and set off down a corridor. Nurses pushed a gurney in the opposite direction - on it lay Hassan, weak and bloody, but alive.

"I'm coming, my darling, I promise I'm coming soon," Yusuf called to him.

Yusuf was placed in a hospital bed next to her husband's. She shouted at nurses, demanding news of her daughter, Zeinab. A doctor brushed visitors aside and whispered two words to Yusuf: "She's gone." The father bowed his head and the mother sat silent for a moment.

"God gave her to me as a gift, and God took her away," Yusuf said quietly. "Oh, my darling Zeinab, God is greatest."

In the hospital courtyard, Red Cross workers unloaded more bodies. When the workers ran out of black body bags, they began unrolling clear plastic sheets on the ground. The limp bodies of babies and young children were placed one to a square, then wrapped up and sealed with duct tape.

A villager accompanied doctors, identifying the neighborhood children by sight. Flies buzzed around their long eyelashes.

One little boy wore pajamas emblazoned with the words *Strike Zone*. **Women** who had fled Qana before the strike arrived at the hospital, drawn by news of the tragedy.

"Here you go, Israel, take your terrorists," they shouted, as a second wave of dead children was unloaded from stench-filled ambulances.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Middle East Crisis - No ceasefire as Israel plans to broaden offensive in Lebanon

Irish News

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 12

Length: 805 words

Body

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert yesterday said no ceasefire would be forthcoming in Israel's 20-day campaign against **Hezbollah** guerrillas in southern Lebanon.

A day after Israeli airstrikes levelled a building in the southern Lebanese town of Qana, killing at least 56 people, Mr Olmert said Israeli forces continued fighting in the air, from the sea and on the ground in Lebanon.

He said Israel had no choice but to begin its attacks on **Hezbollah** after the guerrillas crossed over the border on July 12, killed three soldiers and kidnapped two others.

"We could not let the terror organisation on our border get stronger, let them get more missiles," he said.

"If we had held off, the day would have arrived soon when they would have caused unprecedented damage."

He also said he was sorry for the deaths of **women** and children during raids in Qana.

The Qana killings increased international pressure on Washington to back an immediate end to the fighting and prompted US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice to cut short her Middle East mission to return to the United States yesterday.

In a televised speech before leaving Israel, Ms Rice said she would seek international consensus for a ceasefire and a "lasting settlement" in the conflict between Lebanon and Israel through a United Nations Security Council resolution this week.

"I am convinced that only by achieving both will the Lebanese people be able to control their country and their future, and the people of Israel finally be able to live free of attack from terrorist groups in Lebanon," she said.

But Israeli defence minister Amir Peretz made clear in a speech to parliament that Israel would not agree to an immediate ceasefire and had plans to expand its operation in Lebanon.

"It's forbidden to agree to an immediate ceasefire," Mr Peretz told parliament, as several Arab politicians heckled him and demanded an immediate cessation.

"Israel will expand and strengthen its activities against the **Hezbollah**."

Israel's top ministers also were to discuss expanding the army's ground operation at a meeting later today, while thousands of reserve soldiers trained for the possibility that they will be sent into Lebanon.

Middle East Crisis - No ceasefire as Israel plans to broaden offensive in Lebanon

It was unclear whether the senior ministers would approve a broader ground assault, defence officials said.

Mr Olmert said at the weekend that Israel would need 10 to 14 more days to finish its offensive.

The EU said yesterday that Israel's 48-hour suspension of airstrikes should be used to get much-needed aid to those affected by fighting in southern Lebanon.

"This 48-hour ceasefire is an important step towards relieving in particular the humanitarian situation," a spokesman said.

"However, the (European) commission thinks the final aim should always be an immediate ceasefire and a long lasting solution to the conflict."

The EU's 25 foreign ministers will meet today in Brussels to try to advance an EU push for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire and speed up efforts to get aid to those displaced or otherwise affected by the conflict.

The United Nations said yesterday it was sending food and medical supplies to Qana and the coastal city of Tyre.

In London, British foreign secretary Margaret Beckett said she hoped the UN Security Council would debate a resolution as early as Wednesday to bring an end to the conflict.

Austria's foreign minister, Ursula Plassnik, appealed for an immediate truce and criticised Israel's military for using "blind force".

In Helsinki, Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, was optimistic that ministers would come up with "a clear, united EU plan of action which will include an earlier demand for the immediate cessation of hostilities, a political solution to Lebanon's problems ... and support for the UN secretary-general's attempts to collect an international force working under the mandate of the UN".

EU ministers will also discuss plans to make available an extra EUR30 million (£20.5 million) in aid to Lebanon to provide food and shelter to those fleeing the fighting.

The commission last week sent EUR20 million (£13.6 million) in humanitarian aid.

CHARITY TO HOLD PROTEST RALLY IN BELFAST

Trocaire is planning a rally to protest against the conflict in the Middle East.

The rally will take place next Tuesday outside Belfast City Hall, beginning at 1pm. Speakers will include Protestant and Catholic clergy.

Trocaire said the rally would demonstrate the charity's commitment to the alleviation of human suffering in the conflict zone and that there would be a call for adherence to international human rights legislation.

Last night hundreds of protesters gathered outside the US embassy in Dublin for a demonstration organised by Trocaire.

Lebanese nationals, Palestine supporters, charities and political parties took part in the peaceful but noisy protest.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Ceasefire talks gather pace as Israel resumes air strikes

UK Newsquest Regional Press - This is The NorthEast

August 31, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 423 words

Dateline: The Northern Echo

Body

Tony Blair was pressing on "hell for leather" last night with attempts to secure a United Nations resolution for a ceasefire in the Middle East. The Prime Minister, on a visit to the US, had already spoken by telephone to the prime ministers of Israel and the Lebanon to try to help find an acceptable way forward, said his spokesman. Mr Blair was also speaking to his counterparts in Turkey, Italy and Germany. And the UK was involved in negotiations with the French and Americans at the UN, in New York, to draw up a resolution as soon as possible that could have an immediate impact on the ground. "We are pushing with the same urgency - in fact I would say a greater urgency - for a resolution after the events of the last few days, as we were last week," the spokesman said. "We believe a resolution can help bring this conflict to an end and I think the sooner we have it, the better. That's why we are still going hell for leather for a resolution." "We are working flat out in London, in the UN and from here to try to reach the situation as quickly as possible where there is agreement on a text in New York." "We hope that will then have an immediate effect on the ground." His words came as Israeli PM Ehud Olmert said there would be no let-up in the offensive in the immediate future as air strikes continued.

A 48-hour halt to hostilities aimed at allowing civilians to leave and aid to get in did not hold after Hezbollah continued to fire rockets at Israeli targets. It was called under US pressure following outrage over a strike on Sunday morning that levelled a house in Qana, killing at least 56 people - most of them women and children - who were taking refuge there. Asked if the Prime Minister was disappointed that the halt had not been observed, the spokesman said: "There has been, as I understand it, action on both sides. The important point is that we negotiate to bring the action on all sides to a close. That's where our focus is." Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz has said Israel plans to "expand and strengthen" its attack on Hezbollah. Liberal Democrat defence spokesman Michael Moore said that was a major setback for diplomatic efforts. And he called on Mr Blair and US President George Bush to put pressure on Israel to call an immediate ceasefire. But the Prime Minister's spokesman said "exhortation" would not resolve the situation. "There are two sovereign governments here. This will not proceed unless those two sovereign governments are in broad agreement with where we're going," he said. Life in Gaza - Page 10

Load-Date: August 31, 2006

Hamas is using its media properties to back terrorists and incite violence

The Philadelphia Inquirer

November 17, 2006 Friday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A19

Length: 783 words

Body

Jonathan L. Snow

is manager of research for the Coalition Against Terrorist Media, a project of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (www.defenddemocracy.org) in Washington

Gaza is exploding in violence. Street battles have been going on in the territory ever since Hamas took control of the government in January. These fights have ranged from skirmishes between Palestinian factions to military engagements between Hamas gunmen and the Israeli Defense Forces.

A standoff on Nov. 3 between the IDF and Hamas terrorists hiding inside a mosque illuminates a dangerous development: Hamas's use of the media as a weapon of terror.

Earlier that week, Israel launched a military offensive, "Operation Autumn Clouds," in an attempt to stop weapons smuggling and keep rockets from being fired at Israeli targets from Gaza. The IDF is trying to prevent Hamas and other terror groups from creating a Hezbollah-like terrorist infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

The standoff at a mosque in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun began when militants fleeing the IDF soldiers sought refuge there. The Israelis encircled the mosque, demanding the surrender of the terrorists inside, most of whom were believed to be members of the Ezzedin al-Qassim Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas movement.

Scenes like this are not unusual in the region. What was different in this case was how the 19-hour standoff came to a close. As options for the gunmen began to diminish, a Hamas-run radio station in Gaza, Sawt al-Aqsa (Voice of al-Aqsa), put out a message over the airwaves calling on Palestinian women to act as human shields for the terrorists inside the mosque. Hundreds of women responded, placing themselves between the gunmen and the IDF troops, allowing the armed men to escape under the cover of the mob.

The international media heavily reported the story, with a focus on the fact that two of the women who rushed out as human shields were accidentally killed. What is not being discussed is how Hamas used its own media arm to allow scores of armed terrorists to escape almost certain capture, nor how Hamas has repeatedly used its media properties to recruit suicide bombers, incite violent attacks, raise money, and provide direct operational support for terrorists.

Hamas is using its media properties to back terrorists and incite violence

The Sawt al-Aqsa radio station is just one part of a web of Hamas media properties, including newspapers, magazines, Internet sites, and radio and television stations. Hamas' television station, also called al-Aqsa, began broadcasting in January, just in time to reinforce Hamas' violent message to Palestinians heading to the polls. The station, modeled after Hezbollah's al-Manar television in Lebanon, uses "news reports," music videos, and fiery speeches to inspire acts of violence and inculcate hate against Jews and the West.

Hamas hopes to soon launch an international broadcast of its television station. It recently began testing its signal via the Saudi-owned Arabsat satellite system, which reaches millions of homes across the Middle East, Northern Africa and Europe, and which already broadcasts Hezbollah's al-Manar.

Hamas is a terrorist group founded to fight against its Jewish neighbors. It has carried out scores of suicide bombings, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands more. Violence is inherent in the DNA of the movement.

The United States and Europe must recognize the threat posed by Hamas' media, and reject arguments by those who see terrorist media as yet another form of free expression.

Just as the U.S. government designated al-Manar as a terrorist organization, it should do the same for al-Aqsa. This would put strict limits on the kinds of business that U.S. companies and banks can do with the station - a potentially crippling economic hit for a movement already facing a cash crunch.

The European Union, likewise, should prevent Hamas TV from being carried on European satellites. Private-sector companies, which had advertised on al-Manar until being alerted to its true nature, must also refuse to purchase commercial space on the Hamas station.

Further, U.S. and European officials must put more pressure on the Saudi government, which is the majority owner of Arabsat, to deny al-Aqsa, as well as al-Manar, distribution over their satellites. Saudi Arabia portrays itself as an ally against terrorism; removing al-Manar and al-Aqsa television would certainly help improve its shaky image in this regard.

The proliferation of terrorist-controlled media outlets represents a direct threat to any country that it reaches. Taking them off the international airwaves is not an assault on free speech, but rather a legitimate effort to save lives.

Contact Jonathan L. Snow at Jon@defenddemocracy.org.

Load-Date: November 17, 2006

Taxing the poor will fund cushy jobs for friends

South China Morning Post

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 10

Length: 1395 words

Body

I must be missing something here. We are told that we need a goods and services tax because of dire shortcomings such as a narrow tax base and a fiscal structure that undermines Hong Kong's ability to cope with cyclical downturns in the economy.

So Team Donald puts on its collective thinking cap and comes up with ... two new tiers of government, adding \$62 million a year in fixed public expenditure.

Way to go, guys. Let's tax the poor, give profits-tax cuts to the rich and use what's left over for cushy, multimillion-dollar-a-year jobs for your mates.

No wonder the powers that be are so scared of universal suffrage. Who would vote for people as far off the planet as these?

And on the subject of the extra layers of bureaucracy, supposedly intended to nurture future political talent à la Singapore, here's a suggestion for Donald Tsang Yam-kuen: why not carry the Singapore Approach to Development (let's call it Sad for short) a step further and bankrupt anyone who disagrees with you? This may raise enough extra cash to make a GST unnecessary.

TIM GALLAGHER, Causeway Bay

How easily we forget

Now that Hong Kong is enjoying an economic recovery, residents have probably forgotten the bad old days when the government ran a fiscal deficit for six long, hard years. They have forgotten that former chief executive Tung Chee-hwa was forced to turn to the central government for help.

Opponents of a goods and services tax ignore the importance of stable government revenues. Let's imagine what would happen if there were no funds to run public hospitals, schools or universities, or to pay for social welfare for the elderly and poor.

Opponents of a GST claim it will burden the poor. Have they ever thought about how the government gets and spends its money, or how many people in Hong Kong are genuinely too poor to afford a GST? Have they ever considered who will support poor people when they really cannot manage?

Obviously, the government cannot rely on a small group of taxpayers to support the entire community. As a responsible resident of Hong Kong, I believe it should implement a fair tax system as soon as possible.

Taxing the poor will fund cushy jobs for friends

ALICE SUEN, Kwai Chung

Borne on the wind

I'd like to congratulate Hong Kong's power suppliers, bus companies, logistics operators and all private motorists for the speed with which they heeded Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen's call to support the government's clean-air initiatives. Monday's blue skies and relatively clean air must surely have been due to the prompt actions of Hong Kong's public-spirited people - not.

Those misguided souls who call for Hongkongers to act must surely realise that our pollution comes from over the border, and any reprieve in the smog is due simply to the prevailing winds.

To improve our quality of life,

Mr Tsang must do his best to persuade the mainly Hong Kong-owned factories in southern China and the mainland authorities that they must also control pollution. Either that, or he should seek divine intervention to change our wind patterns.

DEREK MACKAY, Tai Hang

A worthy candidate

I would like to express my strong support for Margaret Chan Fung Fu-chun in her candidacy for the post of director-general of the World Health Organisation.

As Hong Kong's director of health, she was resolute and sensitive in her handling of Sars, a new disease that created fear worldwide. Despite criticism from her detractors, she was appointed director of the WHO's department of protection of the human environment in 2003, and has gone on to become assistant director-general for communicable diseases.

Like many people in Hong Kong, I believe her knowledge, background and experience make her eminently suitable for the post of WHO director-general.

I hope the Hong Kong government will do its utmost to support her campaign.

HILTON CHEONG-LEEN,

To Kwa Wan

Back in the public eye

First, former security chief Regina Ip Lau Suk-yee re-emerges on the political scene, and now former health director Margaret Chan Fung Fu-chun has returned.

It is absurd that both are back in the public eye and being seen as potential leaders in their fields. Are they really being taken seriously by people here? Doesn't anyone remember the pain they caused?

With Dr Chan's blighted record, one wonders if Beijing is championing her candidacy for chief of the World Health Organisation because of racial pride or because it will be able to rely on her to help it cover up the next time an epidemic starts on the mainland.

Is Beijing also funding a publicity campaign for Mrs Ip?

There is an old saying in political circles that people get the government they deserve. Hong Kong people need to speak out now against these two.

F. THOMSON, Discovery Bay

Taxing the poor will fund cushy jobs for friends

Some peacemaker

I refer to Friday's overenthusiastic editorial suggesting China should take up the yoke of international peacekeeper ("Peacemaker role open to China", July 28). It claimed Beijing was playing a lead role in the Lebanon crisis, simply because it protested at the death of a single Chinese UN peacekeeper.

If he had survived the bombing of the UN outpost on the Lebanese border, I'm sure Beijing would have remained silent.

Does the author of the editorial think Finland, Austria or Canada, which also lost citizens in the attack, should become spearheads of international diplomacy, too?

The following day's paper carried a bloodcurdling report on the harvesting of organs of Falun Gong members on the mainland ("Truth and lives", July 29). In the same issue there was an article about how migrant Chinese workers are swindled out of their wages by the authorities ("China's labour trap").

We have also learned through the pages of the South China Morning Post that the central government enthusiastically imposes curbs on the free flow of information and arrests and detains citizens indefinitely for voicing their opinions. It has also been known to use violence against entire communities, such as in Tibet.

Although Beijing has made some political concessions to its people over the years in the name of economic development, the state remains an oppressive instrument that answers to nobody and may well be guilty of crimes against humanity.

Does the author of the editorial seriously think that, given these realities, China is in a position to act as a role model for the world? I think not. The best idea would be for China to get its own house in order and leave the unenviable job of trying to keep world peace to the United Nations.

WILL HUNG, Hong Lok Yuen

The death of moderation

We all watch with horror the daily bombing and killing of Lebanese civilians in Israel's ill-fated attempt to wipe out Hezbollah, and the group's shelling of Israeli cities. The inevitable occurred on Sunday, when dozens of women and children were killed in an Israeli air raid on Qana.

What is at stake for Israel is clearly much more than the lives of the two captured soldiers - it is the last remnants of moderation and hope for peace. The escalation of the conflict has silenced the voices for peace in both Israel and the Arab world. With the country under attack, Israel's liberal Labour Party has no choice but to support its troops.

Previously moderate Arab governments have all changed their tone, and Hezbollah knows that the more civilians Israel kills, the more martyrs are made and the more support it will get.

As for Israel's argument that it is trying to force the Lebanese government to oust Hezbollah, it takes more thanchutzpah. It's like saying you're bombing occupied France to get the French to oust the Nazis.

Until recently, Lebanon was occupied by Syria. It continues to be occupied by Hezbollah in the south. The Lebanese prime minister has neither the confidence nor the ability to oust the group.

It must be obvious to the Israelis that Hezbollah cannot be dislodged by bombs when 20 years of occupation only served to strengthen it. It must be obvious to the Israelis that killing civilians is going to undermine moderate forces in the Arab world. After more than half a century of Middle East conflict, doesn't the government of Israel know that its actions only generate more hatred and more jihad fighters? Of course it does.

Taxing the poor will fund cushy jobs for friends

So may I venture the view that Israel is deliberately trying to accelerate Armageddon and the coming of the Messiah?

ZACK CULVERT, Wan Chai

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

End of Document

Conflict Polarizes the Mideast, Leaving Little Middle Ground

The New York Times

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: BACKLASH

Length: 1443 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Mona el-Naggar contributing reporting from Cairo for this article.

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria, Aug. 8

Body

Moderate reformers across the Arab world say American support for Israel's battle with **Hezbollah** has put them on the defensive, tarring them by association and boosting Islamist parties.

The very people whom the United States wanted to encourage to promote democracy from Bahrain to Casablanca instead feel trapped by a policy that they now ridicule more or less as "destroying the region in order to save it."

Indeed, many of those reformers who have been working for change in their own societies -- often isolated, harassed by state security, or marginalized to begin with -- say American policy either strangles nascent reform movements or props up repressive governments that remain Washington's best allies in the region.

"We are really afraid of this 'new Middle East,' " said Ali Abdulemam, a 28-year-old computer engineer who founded the most popular political Web site in Bahrain. He was referring to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's statement last month that the situation in Lebanon represented the birth pangs of a "new Middle East."

"They talk about how they will reorganize the region in a different way, but they never talk about the people," Mr. Abdulemam said. "They never mention what the people want. They are just giving more power to the systems that exist already."

His plight is shared by reformers across the Arab world.

Fawaziah al-Bakr, who promotes educational change and **women's** rights in Saudi Arabia, helped organize **women** to protest the Israeli attacks. "Nobody is talking about reform in Saudi Arabia," she said. "All we talk about is the war, what to do about the war. There is no question that the U.S. has lost morally because of the war. Even if you like the people and the culture of the United States, you can't defend it."

The statement by Ms. Rice -- during a fleeting stopover in Beirut last month -- is being juxtaposed with the mounting carnage to rally popular opposition against all things American.

In Lebanon, Israel continues bombing despite the fact that the violence could destabilize the government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, elected last year in a vote that the United States hailed as a democratic example for the Middle East. Iraq was the previous such example, reformers note bitterly.

Conflict Polarizes the Mideast, Leaving Little Middle Ground

In Bahrain, Mr. Abdulemam fears that a proposed new anti-terrorism law could severely curb the freewheeling discussions on BahrainOnline.org, his Web site, perhaps even shutting it down, because among other things the law bans attacking the Constitution. Recently, the government cut off access to Google Earth, he said, probably because too many citizens were zeroing in on royal palaces.

Members of Islamist political organizations, in particular, consider American actions a godsend, putting their own repressive governments under pressure and distancing their capitals from Washington, reformers say.

The Americans "wanted to tarnish the Islamic resistance and opposition movements, but in reality they only served them," said Sobhe Salih, a 53-year-old lawyer in the Muslim Brotherhood, which was swept into the Egyptian Parliament in an election last fall after capturing an unprecedented 20 percent of the seats. "They made them more appealing to the public, made them a beacon of hope for everyone who hates American policies."

Glance at any television screen -- they are everywhere -- and chances are that the screen will be showing mayhem in Lebanon, Baghdad or Gaza. It usually takes a minute or so to decipher which Arab city is burning. Popular satellite news channels like Al Jazeera say repeatedly that the carnage arrives via American policy and American weapons.

Before 2003, the hardest step for any Islamist movement was recruitment, noted Mohamed Salah, an expert on Islamic extremist movements who writes for the pan-Arab daily Al Hayat from Cairo. Moving someone from being merely devout to being an extremist took a long time. No longer, he said. Moderate Arab governments, which have pursued peace with Israel for nearly 30 years, have seen that policy undermined among their publics by Hezbollah's ability to strike at Israel.

"Recruitment has become the easiest stage because the people have already been psychologically predisposed against the Americans, the West and against Israel," Mr. Salah said.

Moderate reformers say they are driven to despair by what they see as inconsistencies in Washington's Middle East policy. For example, in Lebanon lives a black-turbaned Shiite cleric who runs a secretive militia close to Iran. His name is Sheik Hassan Nasrallah and Washington approves of Israel's bombing campaign to stamp out his organization, Hezbollah.

There is another black-turbaned Shiite cleric who runs a different secretive militia close to Iran. His name is Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, and he lives in Iraq. He is an American friend.

"In Iraq the same kind of group is an ally of the United States, while in Lebanon they are an enemy whom they are fighting," said Samir al-Qudah, a Jordanian civil engineer. "It has nothing to do with reform, but where America's interests lie."

The overwhelming conclusion drawn by Arabs is that Washington's interests lie with Israel, no matter what the cost.

"Those calling for democratic reform in Egypt have discovered that once Israeli interests are in conflict with political reform in the Middle East, then the United States will immediately favor Israel's interests," said Ibrahim Issa, the editor of the weekly Al Dustour, who faces a jail sentence on charges of insulting President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Reformers invariably add that a credible effort to solve the issue of Arab land occupied by Israel, which they believe is the taproot of extremism, does not even seem to be on Washington's radar.

Sheik Nasrallah is particularly adept at exploiting public anger at civilian deaths in Lebanon by talking about how fickle the United States can be as a friend.

"I want you never to forget that this is the U.S. administration, Lebanon's friend, ally and lover," he mocked in a speech on Thursday. He also issued a pointed warning to other Arab leaders that if they spend more time defending their thrones than the people of Lebanon, they might find themselves pushed off those thrones.

Conflict Polarizes the Mideast, Leaving Little Middle Ground

Reformers also worry that the chaos in Iraq has fueled public perception that a despot can at least keep violence and sectarian differences at bay. In Syria, war news drowned out dismay over the jailing of activists in a crackdown by the Syrian government this spring.

Omar Amiralay, a Syrian documentary filmmaker, was in a taxi recently when the radio broadcast a news bulletin about a suicide bombing in Baghdad that killed some 35 people.

"The Americans should just let Saddam out of jail for a week," he quoted the driver as saying, only half joking. The dictator would slay one million Iraqis and "everything would be peaceful again."

Mr. Amiralay is convinced that change will come only with an eruption from within, but people have no time to think about that now. "Uncertainty has become the order of the day," he said.

There is a general sense in the region that the Bush administration soured on pushing democracy because of the successes of Islamist parties in the most recent Egyptian and Palestinian elections -- the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas, an offshoot of the Brotherhood, in the Palestinian territories.

For the first time in a while, political analysts are again comparing governments like that of Mr. Mubarak of Egypt to that of the late Shah of Iran -- an isolated despot who ignored the broad wishes of the population while currying favor with the American administration. Some rulers are clearly nervous.

King Abdullah of Jordan initially criticized **Hezbollah** when the fighting erupted nearly a month ago, but in an interview with the BBC on Tuesday he was dismissive of American plans for a "new Middle East." The monarch said he could "no longer read the political map" of the region because of black clouds gathering from Somalia to Lebanon.

That kind of attitude may prove beneficial, reformers say, allowing more breathing space for public debate as leaders try to quiet public anger. But they doubt moderates will find much of a platform.

"There is no room on the street for a moderate like me," said Mr. Qudah, the civil engineer in Jordan. "We are all against Israel attacking Lebanon, but I am also against hitting cities in Israel where there are civilians. If I tried to say the things in public that I am telling you on the phone, I might be beaten. In a war like this, the extremists alone own the streets."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: The **Hezbollah** station was on at a restaurant in Damascus. Moderate voices are being drowned out by a rising tide of anti-American sentiment. (Photo by James Hill for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

A soldier cleaned portraits of Syria's leaders, past and present, in Damascus. War news has trumped worries over the recent jailing of activists. (Photo by James Hill for the New York Times)(pg. A10)

Load-Date: August 9, 2006

International: Israel's former minister guilty of sexual misconduct as government woes deepen

The Guardian - Final Edition

February 1, 2007 Thursday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 17

Length: 460 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem

Body

Israel's former justice minister Haim Ramon was convicted yesterday of sexual misconduct for forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier, the latest in a string of government scandals.

Ramon, who resigned from his post in August after he was charged, will be sentenced this month at Tel Aviv magistrates court and faces up to three years in jail.

It is one of several high-profile cases to have damaged the reputation of the government. The attorney general has said he has enough evidence to charge the president, Moshe Katsav, with rape and other sexual offences, and another high-profile politician, Tzahi Hanegbi, has been charged with fraud, bribery and perjury.

Ramon, 56, a senior figure in the Kadima party and a close ally of the prime minister, Ehud Olmert, held his head in his hands as the verdict, a unanimous decision by three judges, was read to the court.

"There are some lines that cannot be crossed," said Judge Hayuta Kochan. "This was not a kiss of affection. This has all the elements of sexual crime." The judge said the **female** soldier had suffered a "traumatic experience".

Ramon claimed the kiss, which happened at a defence ministry party on the first day of the war against **Hizbullah** last summer, was consensual, and that the soldier, 21, had been flirting with him.

Yesterday's conviction ends his political career and was apparently not expected by some in government, who were reportedly hoping to reinstate him as justice minister within hours of an acquittal.

Mr Olmert is expected to reshuffle his coalition cabinet to find a permanent replacement in the justice ministry and to shore up his position. The prime minister, the subject of another criminal investigation, is struggling in opinion polls and could face further criticism over his handling of the war in Lebanon last summer.

He may give a second cabinet seat to the hawkish Yisrael Beiteinu party led by Avigdor Lieberman, now a deputy prime minister, who has called for Israel's borders to be redrawn to exclude hundreds of thousands of Arab citizens. Political analysts say the reshuffle is unlikely to mean the replacement of the embattled defence minister, Amir Peretz. He is also faring badly in polls and is expected to lose his position as head of the Labour party, the junior partner in the coalition government, in internal elections this spring.

International: Israel 's former minister guilty of sexual misconduct as government woes deepen

In a separate development, it emerged yesterday the Israeli government may move part of the West Bank barrier deeper into Palestinian territory to surround two more settlements near Modiin Ilit, north of Jerusalem. If the barrier's route is altered to include Naaleh and Nili, where 1,500 Israelis live, it would leave some 20,000 Palestinians caught between the wall and the 1967 boundary with Israel.

guardian.co.uk/israel >=

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

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Mufti told to quit or leave

The Australian (Australia)

April 10, 2007 Tuesday

All-round First Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 509 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

MATP

THE Howard Government has intensified its pressure on Australia's most senior Islamic spiritual leader, Taj Din al-Hilali, demanding he consider leaving the country and step down from his position as mufti.

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer yesterday expressed outrage at Sheik Hilali's weekend visit to Tehran, during which he called on the Islamic world to unite behind the radical Iranian regime.

Muslim leaders from around Australia attacked the Egyptian-born cleric for becoming an "ongoing problem".

And Australian Federal Police are examining whether to involve state-based counter-terrorism agencies in their investigation of allegations that Sheik Hilali diverted Australian-raised charity funds to terrorism supporters in Lebanon last year.

The Australian revealed yesterday that Sheik Hilali had been quoted in the Iranian media as calling on Muslims worldwide to serve in Iran's "trenches" and not "kneel" to its enemies. It was the latest in a series of controversies that have dogged the mufti.

"The Australian community has lost patience with the sheik," Mr Andrews said.

"The sheik needs to say if he wishes to continue as a citizen of Australia or reside in an alternate country."

Mr Downer said Sheik Hilali had "become a completely discredited figure" in Australia and was causing embarrassment to this country.

"Sheik Hilali is damaging the standing of the Muslim community in Australia and beyond," he said. "And the sooner they find a more credible spokesman for the Islamic community than Sheik Hilali, the better."

Mr Downer questioned whether Sheik Hilali's support for Iran meant he also supported their backing of terrorist attacks by organisations such as **Hezbollah** in the Middle East.

Australia's top **female** Muslim leader, Aziza Abdel-Halim,

Mufti told to quit or leave

Continued -- Page 2

From Page 1

blamed the "hopeless" Australian National Imams Council for its decision two weeks ago to allow Sheik Hilali to stay in his position as mufti for another three months.

She said his reported comments in Iran were "tactless" and threatened to further divide Muslim Australia from mainstream society.

Haset Sali, a lawyer for the Federation of Islamic Councils who was on the board that appointed Sheik Hilali as mufti 18 years ago, said he had "placed himself and the community in an untenable position and certainly he does not represent the thinking of the overwhelming majority".

"If the man has any sort of dignity he will bow out now," he told the ABC's 7.30 Report last night.

It was revealed last week that Sheik Hilali had handed out \$US38,000 (\$46,000) of Australian-raised charity funds in Lebanon last year, of which he gave \$US10,000 to a political leader with links to al-Qa'ida and **Hezbollah**.

The money, raised by the Sydney-based Lebanese Muslim Association and other Islamic bodies, is the subject of an AFP investigation.

Senior Muslim leader Ameer Ali said Sheik Hilali was becoming an "ongoing problem" for the community and would best serve his people by leaving his spiritual post as mufti.

Load-Date: April 9, 2007

End of Document

World of contrast; 2006 in pictures

The Advertiser (Australia)
December 25, 2006 Monday
State Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 20

Length: 476 words

Byline: RUSSELL MILLARD, PICTURE EDITOR

Body

FROM the serenity of the christening of Australia's "little prince" in Denmark to the abhorrent destruction and death of war, 2006 again saw the struggle of humanity to cope with the contrasting environment around it.

The Middle East remained in turmoil with no end in sight to the bloodshed in Iraq. While former despot Saddam Hussein in November was sentenced to death for his crimes against humanity, the Iraqi people still live in fear of those willing to end their lives and take others with them.

The instability in the region was amplified by the continuing stand-off between the West and Iran over its nuclear enrichment program which climaxed with the United Nations Security Council imposing sanctions on Iran this month.

In Lebanon, Israel in July launched a month-long campaign against Hezbollah fighters, who had kidnapped two Israeli soldiers.

The year, however, started off with celebration around the globe as "little Aussie prince" Christian Valdemar Henri John was christened in Denmark on January 21. He is the son of Crown Prince Frederick and Australian-born Crown Princess Mary. All hope the joy of the birth of the royal couple's second child in May can highlight a year of more peace, promise and prosperity.

JANUARY 21: The Christening of Christian Valdemar Henri John in Copenhagen, son of Denmark's Australian-born Crown Princess Mary and Prince Frederick. Prince Christian was three months-old.

MARCH 2: British glam-rocker Gary Glitter, 62, arrives at a people's court near Ho Chi Minh City, in Vietnam, to face charges of child molestation. After a day in court, he was sentenced to three years in jail.

MARCH 15: The tallest women in Asia, China's Yao Defen, who stands 2.36m, dwarfs a friend outside her home in Shu Cha, in Anhui province, in China's east.

MAY 5: An immigrant crawls on to the beach in the Spanish-held Canary Islands, after arriving in a makeshift boat from Africa en-route to Europe. The flood of refugees has led to the European Union exerting pressure on Mauritania to clamp down on the number of people making trips of up to 800km to safety.

World of contrast 2006 in pictures

JULY 13: U.S. President George W. Bush hands back a crying baby in Germany just before he met new German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

JULY 13: An Israeli soldier stands behind a mobile artillery unit firing from the Zaura area across the Lebanese frontier during the month-long conflict with **Hezbollah** fighters.

NOVEMBER 5: Former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein after he was found guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death.

NOVEMBER 20: Former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko lies in a hospital bed in Britain after being poisoned with polonium-210. He died on November 23, leading to political tensions between Britain and Russia amid allegations Litvinenko was killed to silence his criticism of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Investigations continue.

Load-Date: December 24, 2006

End of Document

Olmert's popularity sinks to new lows: Just 2% of Israelis trust PM; new election wanted

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

March 9, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 447 words

Byline: Agence France-Presse

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's political fortunes crashed to new lows on Thursday, with opinion polls showing just two per cent of Israelis trust him and most want new elections.

The surveys dealt a new blow to the prime minister, who has seen his ratings tumble on the heels of the inconclusive war in Lebanon and a series of scandals involving him and senior members of his cabinet.

"This is unprecedented in the history of the country," said Akiva Eldar, a political analyst with the liberal Haaretz daily.

Israelis placed the 61-year-old prime minister, who formally took office in May last year, at the bottom of the pile of nine politicians when asked whom they thought trustworthy, with just two per cent.

The survey, published by the mass-selling Yediot Aharonot, came on the heels of another that showed that 57 percent of Israelis want early elections and 72 per cent do not think Olmert should continue to serve as prime minister.

The polls mark a dizzying fall for a man voters elected to office in March at the head of the newly formed centrist Kadima, Israel's first new political party that won the first election it contested.

At the time, Olmert was listed by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world and praised as probably the best politician of all previous Israeli premiers.

Kadima's ratings are now well behind those of the main opposition party, the right-wing Likud, and the premier is receiving scathing commentaries in the local press on a near daily basis.

Olmert has watched his fortunes slide following Israel's war in Lebanon last summer, which failed to achieve its main objectives of freeing two captured soldiers and stopping Hezbollah rocket fire.

His ratings have taken a further pounding amid a series of investigations in which he is suspected of shady real estate deals, abuse of influence, and unlawful political appointments. No charges have been filed in any of the inquiries.

Olmert's popularity sinks to new lows: Just 2% of Israelis trust PM ; new election wanted

"Olmert-led Israel is in utter disarray," Haaretz wrote in a typical commentary of the past several months.

"There is no policy, no responsibility and no decision-making.

"There are no morals, no norms and there is no respect for the law. ... Olmert's Israel is behaving like an ostrich: It does not see, it does not hear and it does not do."

Olmert's political fortunes are likely to be determined within weeks when a governmental commission issues its report on last year's war on Hezbollah, which the premier has been roundly criticized for launching without enough reflection and preparation.

A critical report could very likely finish off the prime minister, while a neutral one could provide him with a reprieve, analysts say.

Graphic

Photo: Reuters; Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert attends a meeting with women who excel in various fields, ahead of International Women's Day, in Jerusalem on Wednesday. ;

Load-Date: March 9, 2007

Young Christian leader grieved

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

November 24, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 499 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese bid farewell to an assassinated Christian politician Pierre Gemayel on Thursday, turning his funeral into a powerful show of anger against Hezbollah and other Syrian allies in Lebanon.

The sprawling funeral reinvigorated supporters of the U.S.-backed government in a showdown that threatened to split the small Mideast country along sectarian lines.

"The second Independence Uprising was launched today for change and it will not stop," Gemayel's father, former president Amin Gemayel, told the crowd in Beirut's downtown, speaking from behind a panel of bulletproof glass.

"I pledge to you that we will soon take steps so that your efforts will not go in vain."

The throng applauded as the coffin of Pierre Gemayel, wrapped in the flag of his Phalange party - white with a green cedar emblem - was carried past the square to nearby St. George's Cathedral, where the packed congregation sang hymns.

The 34-year-old Gemayel's wife wept in the church, leaning on his mother's shoulder.

The head of the Maronite Church, Nasrallah Cardinal Sfeir, urged unity to save the country, addressing the congregation of family and dignitaries, including France's foreign minister and the Arab League secretary general.

The country's top Shiite politician, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a top Hezbollah ally, also attended in an attempt to show national unity.

But in the wake of Gemayel's slaying, Lebanon is polarized to a degree not seen since the 1975-1990 civil war - sharply divided between anti-Syrian Christians and Sunni Muslims and pro-Syrian Shiites. Many fear Thursday's funeral could be the first round of demonstrations that could bring the political crisis into the streets.

In Martyrs' Square, the crowd of men, women and children waved red-white-and- green Lebanese flags and posters of Gemayel with the slogans "We want to live" and "Awaiting justice."

Police estimated some 800,000 people participated in the rally and funeral.

The square was the scene of mass anti-Syrian rallies in last year's "Cedar Revolution," which helped end Damascus' domination of Lebanon. But in contrast to those protests, which were often festive, Thursday's funeral rally was charged with anger - at Damascus and its allies in Lebanon.

Young Christian leader grieved

"They will not take away our determination to live ... and to be free," Walid Jumblatt, the Druse political leader and senior anti-Syrian figure who has accused Damascus of the assassination, told the crowd.

Many in the crowd burned pictures of Syria's president and Lebanon's pro- Syrian leaders.

One man carried a large banner with the pictures of Lebanon's assassinated leaders and the words: "Syria's killing regime. Enough!"

Several of the politicians speaking in the square vowed the next step would be the removal of President Emile Lahoud, a staunch Syria supporter.

Lahoud was at the Baabda presidential palace, where heavy security measures were taken amid fears that protesters would later march there to attempt to force the president to resign.

Load-Date: January 8, 2007

Assassination inflames tensions in shaken Lebanon

The International Herald Tribune

November 23, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1207 words

Byline: Michael Slackman

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Nada Bakri and Katherine Zoepf contributed reporting from Beirut, and Julia Preston from the United Nations. Christine Hauser contributed from New York.

*

Thousands of mourners paid their respects Wednesday to the family of Pierre Gemayel, the Lebanese cabinet minister and strong opponent of Syrian influence in Lebanon whose assassination Tuesday jolted a nation paralyzed by political conflict.

Dressed mostly in black, thousands of people lined up to embrace or shake the hands of members of Gemayel's family in his hometown of Bikfeiya. Sympathizers waving the white and green flags of the Phalange party, founded by Gemayel's grandfather, walked behind the coffin as it was carried through the streets. Women on balconies above them threw rice on the procession. Television images showed mourners sobbing over his closed coffin after it was set in place for viewing.

On Wednesday, the first day of mourning for Gemayel, 34, was Lebanon's Independence Day, but celebrations were canceled. The funeral will be Thursday.

The killing of Gemayel, the scion of a prominent Maronite Christian family, inflamed tensions between the anti-Syria coalition trying to hold its government together and the Syrian-allied opposition, led by Hezbollah, an Iranian-supported Shiite group. Hezbollah has threatened street protests if it is not given more power.

Lebanese radio reported that shots were also fired Tuesday into the Beirut office of Michel Pharaon, a Greek Catholic member of the governing coalition and minister for parliamentary affairs.

The Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, vowed in a televised speech Tuesday that his government would hold firm. "I pledge to you that your blood will not go in vain," Siniora said. "We will not let the murderers control the fate of Lebanon and the future of its children."

In truth, his government may be on life support. Last week, six pro-Syria ministers aligned with Hezbollah resigned after a failed effort to gain greater control over the government. A seventh minister had resigned earlier in an unrelated conflict.

Assassination inflames tensions in shaken Lebanon

With Gemayel's death, there may now be too few ministers to pass any measures, and it appears that if the government were to lose one more minister it would automatically collapse.

The prime minister's political allies in the so-called March 14 coalition a pro-Western group of Sunni Muslims, Druze and Christians blamed Syria for the killing.

"We believe the hand of Syria is all over the place," Saad Hariri, son of the assassinated former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, said Tuesday, shortly after Gemayel was pronounced dead.

On Wednesday, the Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, said he expected more bloodshed. "It seems the Syrian regime will continue with the assassinations," he said at a news conference, according to a report by Reuters. "I expect more assassinations but no matter what they do, we are here and we will be victorious."

Officials in Damascus and Syria's allies in Lebanon condemned the killing.

Gemayel, the industry minister, was the fifth anti-Syria figure to be killed since Hariri's assassination rocked Lebanon in February 2005. Gemayel's killing reverberated far beyond Lebanon. Condemnations poured in from Britain, Germany, Italy, France, the European Union, Jordan, Egypt and the United States. President George W. Bush suggested in a statement that the assassination was part of a plan by Syria, Iran and its allies to "foment instability and violence" in Lebanon.

The United States is heavily invested in the survival of Siniora's government, which has offered Washington a chance however faded to thwart the spread of Iranian influence in the region. The killing also is likely to complicate any American effort to enlist Syria's help to stabilize Iraq.

The United States withdrew its ambassador from Damascus after Hariri was assassinated and suspicion fell heavily on Syria. Now the White House is under pressure domestically and abroad to engage with Syria and Iran to quell the violence in Iraq.

But the suspicion that Syria is behind the efforts to destabilize Lebanon will make it nearly impossible for Washington to send a full ambassador back to Damascus without appearing to have abandoned the Siniora government.

At the same time, any allegation of Syria's involvement is likely to antagonize Syrian officials and make them even more reluctant to back off of a military, political and economic alliance with Iran.

For a time, after the initial occupation of Iraq and the assassination of Hariri, Syria's ruling elite felt threatened, vulnerable and isolated. Syria was humiliated when it was forced, after the Hariri killing, to withdraw its military forces from Lebanon.

But in recent days, Syria has found its strategic stature in the Middle East bolstered by the surge of violence in Iraq, and the suggestion that Washington might soon ask for its help. While it has denied any role in any of the Lebanon violence, it has not denied its desire to reinsert itself as the primary force in Lebanon.

In the complex and shadowy world of Lebanon's long-warring factions, conspiracy theories can cut both ways. Syrian officials and their Lebanese allies said the only beneficiaries of Gemayel's death were anti-Syria forces. They also argued that the newly inflamed environment would make it impossible for Hezbollah to follow through anytime soon with its promised protests.

The UN Security Council, spurred by Gemayel's killing, approved a proposal by Secretary General Kofi Annan for the creation of an international tribunal to try those accused of Hariri's assassination. The tribunal still has one major hurdle to clear before it can go to work: It must be approved by the government of Lebanon, which is deeply divided over its existence. Moreover, no one has yet been charged in Hariri's death.

While young, Gemayel was a third-generation politician from a family that founded a far-right, nationalist party called Phalange. The party fielded the largest militia during Lebanon's civil war and sought to unite Christians

Assassination inflames tensions in shaken Lebanon

against all other groups. The party today is very small, yet Gemayel stood as a potent symbol to a portion of Lebanon's Christian community that is frightened and angered by its loss of primacy in Lebanon's political arena.

"He is not powerful in himself," said Elie Fawaz, a Lebanese political analyst. "But his uncle was president, his father was president, his grandfather founded the Phalange. He's a symbol of all that history much more than he is a power on the streets. This is a great blow to Lebanese Christians in general."

While there was anger in the streets, there was also anxiety. The city slowed down, as it might before a storm. Shops closed early in downtown Beirut; the army began patrolling the streets.

On the campus of the American University of Beirut, hundreds of students gathered near the main gate, discussing the news in hushed tones. Ali Hamadeh, 18, a first-year civil engineering student, voiced the fears of many students in describing his anxieties about the future.

"We think it may lead to another civil war," Hamadeh said. "It's a disaster for Lebanon, on the level of the Hariri assassination. The people will go to the streets and at the very least the government will change."

Load-Date: November 23, 2006

End of Document

TIME'S UP FOR MUFTI

The Australian (Australia)

April 10, 2007 Tuesday

All-round First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Leader; Pg. 7

Length: 488 words

Body

MATP

Sheik Hilali has overstepped the mark again

THE fate of the Mufti of Australia, Sheik Taj Din al-Hilali, has surely been sealed by his latest foray into foreign affairs. As The Australian reported yesterday, the mufti was in Tehran last week, where he was quoted by the Islamic republic's newsagency urging Muslims to unite behind Iran, which was then holding 15 British personnel hostage. His comments were immediately seized on by the delighted Iranians for use in anti-Western propaganda. Sheik Hilali was billed as a celebrity by the Iranian media and quoted as calling on the Islamic world to "stand in the trenches" with Iran.

The mufti's comments come just months after his appearance on Egyptian television, in which he abused descendants of the First Fleet for arriving in Australia "in chains", and after his controversial Arabic-language sermon comparing immodestly dressed women to "uncovered meat". Some in the Muslim community insist the mufti has no influence over Australian Muslims, and that his views must be seen as those of just one man. While it is true his influence is greatest among the Lebanese Sunnis in Sydney's western suburbs, he cannot be ignored. Sheik Hilali carries the respected title of Mufti of Australia and New Zealand, and is seen abroad as an Australian Muslim of some spiritual and political influence.

It is by virtue of holding such a position that Sheik Hilali is invited to speak at world forums and on international television, where -- although clearly considered something of an oddity -- his views are given additional currency as representing those of Australian Muslims.

The position of mufti was created by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, a group that steadfastly refuses to deal with Sheik Hilali. Cowardly to the end, AFIC passed responsibility for the mufti's fate to a new group, the Australian National Imams Council. The council intends to rule in June whether the sheik can call himself mufti. For his part, the sheik shows no sign of giving up the title, which suggests it is surely worth something.

Australia is a robust democracy, and it can handle the mufti and his offensive point of view, provided it is his alone. But Australia's Muslim leaders -- the Imams Council and AFIC -- must move, and soon, to make it clear the views of the incumbent are not those of the wider Muslim community. Then he should be removed from the post. Meanwhile, the Australian Federal Police are investigating the mufti's recent trip to the Middle East, where he distributed about \$70,000 in cash intended for victims of the Israel-Hezbollah war. The Australian revealed last month that a slice of the money -- about \$US10,000 (\$12,250) -- went to an Islamic radio station run by a Hezbollah supporter. The

TIME'S UP FOR MUFTI

mufti will want to be sure none of the money went directly to terrorist groups and their supporters, because that would constitute a serious federal criminal offence.

Load-Date: April 9, 2007

End of Document

Don't be fooled by the fanatics: Islam's liberals are on the march

The Times (London)

August 5, 2006, Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 852 words

Byline: Irshad Manji

Body

IT IS EASY to believe that the Muslim world has only bad news to offer. But easy doesn't mean accurate; in truth, there's much good news to report.

First, allow me to confess the obvious: we Muslims play the role of villain quite well, thanks. Last month, a group of terrorists -evidently Islamist militants - blew commuter trains to shards in India. The next day, Hezbollah kidnapped and killed Israeli soldiers, touching off the latest round of bombs and bullets.

But I expect the worst from religious extremists; moderate Muslims disappoint me more. We call for a "proportionate response" from Israel. Yet when we diminish or ignore Hezbollah's crimes, we engage in a disproportionate response of our own. It has attacked Israel from southern Lebanon and Gaza, the very areas that the Jewish state had unilaterally evacuated. If Islam is another word for peace, what is unIslamic about opposing such bald aggression?

Moreover, Hezbollah deliberately endangers the lives of Muslim and Christian civilians. Its fighters set up shop in the middle of busy residential districts, so that any retaliation against them must involve hitting innocents. What makes Muslims moderate when we wink at this cruel calculus?

So given our hostility-turned-hypocrisy, how can I say there is good news? Brace yourselves: during the week that India and Israel were reminded of Islamist brutality, liberal Muslims made progress in reclaiming our faith, both in the East and in the West.

Let's start in the East. For almost three decades, Pakistan has followed a set of laws called Hudood, after hudd or penalties prescribed by God, that determine punishment in cases of rape and adultery. Under these laws, more than 4,600 Pakistani women have been thrown in prison for offences that include adultery. By contrast, virtually all men accused of rape go free.

The Hudood ordinances are being seriously challenged at last. Thanks to a vocal, but religiously respectful, campaign by civil society groups, the influential Council for Islamic Ideology recently recommended reform. That move allowed President Musharraf to begin releasing some of the 1,300 women who were in jail awaiting trial.

Even Muslim clerics in Pakistan now hint that the Hudood laws are not divinely created. The politics behind them tells us so. In 1977, a US-backed coup installed General Zia al-Haq as president. To cement his grip, the strongman surrounded himself with sycophantic mullahs who referred to him as "Commander of the Faithful", a term reserved for the successors of Prophet Muhammad. To curry favour among village leaders, Zia mixed a

Don't be fooled by the fanatics: Islam's liberals are on the march

selective reading of the Koran with tribal customs. Stoning became a legal punishment for adultery, while a rape had to be witnessed by four men before an offender could be charged. But suppose a rape doesn't have the benefit of so many male eyes or male voices willing to testify? Then the woman involved would be accused of adultery and she could be jailed, lashed or stoned. The injustices that followed have slandered not only women, but Islam itself.

As more and more Muslims in Pakistan recognise that these laws emanate from human beings, they acknowledge that the duty to rethink them also rests in their hands, not God's. Muslims believe that Allah is perfect. We are learning to appreciate that Allah's interpreters are not.

The liberal reformation of Islam picked up more speed in Denmark, the country that sparked worldwide riots after one of its newspapers published cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. In Copenhagen I joined other "Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow" to debate how Islam and the West can enrich each other. Allow me to divulge some of their more shocking statements:

Man from the Netherlands: "We, as Muslims, need to look in the mirror instead of blaming everybody else!"

Woman from Germany: "I don't have an identity crisis. I'm Western and Muslim and grateful to be both."

Imam from Britain: "The minute a woman becomes a mufti (Islamic judge), I will be the first to study at her feet."

One delegate tested the young clerics by asking: "Is Islam the only way to salvation?" A Danish imam gripped the microphone: "The short answer," he said, "is no." A British imam disputed that response and an Italian took the middle road.

Remarkably, they never accused each other of being evil or insincere. For the first time in my life, I heard the message that in Islam, unity does not have to mean uniformity.

The conference organisers were emboldened to do something utterly unthinkable: welcome Flemming Rose, the editor of Jyllands-Posten and publisher of the reviled cartoons. Rose confided that the reception we gave him was more civil than anything he had experienced from secular groups.

A liberal reformation of Islam will involve at least two features: the empowerment of women in the Islamic world, and the willingness of Muslims in the West to exercise their freedom of conscience. In one week, both got a promising boost. We will need to remember that as God's soldiers continue to grab the spotlight.

Irshad Manji is author of *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Wake-Up Call for Honesty and Change*

Load-Date: August 5, 2006

Second sex scandal deals blow to Olmert: Former justice minister guilty of assault on female soldier

Ottawa Citizen

February 1, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 775 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, The Ottawa Citizen

Dateline: TEL AVIV

Body

TEL AVIV - Israel was rocked by a sex scandal again yesterday when former justice minister Haim Ramon was found guilty of indecent assault against a 20-year-old **female** soldier.

Three judges unanimously found the 56-year-old lawyer and member of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's ruling Kadima party had lied to the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court when he denied "placing his lips on her lips and inserting his tongue in her mouth," repeatedly, and against the complainant's will when the two met, for the first time, in his office.

The incident took place moments before the Israeli cabinet voted to go to war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon last summer.

The judges found the testimony of the woman, who was only known in court as H, regarding the kisses was "authentic, coherent, credible and reliable."

"This was not a kiss of affection," the court said. "This has all the elements of a sexual crime."

The conviction was another staggering blow to Mr. Olmert's coalition government, which has been reeling for months after severe public condemnation of its handling of the war against **Hezbollah** in Lebanon.

As well, the prime minister faces at least two criminal investigations into financial misconduct, his finance minister is under investigation for abusing his position for financial gain and another former minister has been charged with fraud, bribery and perjury.

Last week, Israel's president, Moshe Katsav, 61, was charged with sex crimes including rape that involved several **women** less than half his age, as well as separate charges relating to fraud and obstruction of justice.

Public outrage over the war in Lebanon, in which Mr. Olmert failed in his stated objective to win the release of two soldiers kidnapped by **Hezbollah**, and over the rising tide of sexual and financial misbehaviour by the country's political leadership, has had a devastating effect on the prime minister's popularity. Recent polls have found more than two-thirds of Israelis want Mr. Olmert to resign.

Second sex scandal deals blow to Olmert: Former justice minister guilty of assault on female soldier

A survey published two days ago by the popular Ynetnews website painted an even more damning picture. It revealed only three per cent of the electorate wanted Mr. Olmert returned as prime minister in the next election.

"These are the lowest figures for an Israeli prime minister in the 30 years that I have been doing this," said pollster Rafi Smith, who conducted the Ynet poll.

Ruth Ben-Israel, 76, a retired professor emeritus of law at Tel Aviv University, said she was "not only disappointed, but ashamed" of politicians who only thought of themselves and their positions.

"They are corrupted and not just sexually," the internationally respected expert on social justice said. "Once in office they think that they are nearly Gods and forget their ideals. It is all about power and interests.

"Israel of today is not the Israel that my husband and I helped create. It is not the Israel we dreamed of."

Hours before his conviction, friends of Mr. Ramon had confidently predicted in the media that the divorced politician would be found not guilty for what was described as "a misunderstanding" over a "French kiss," and that he intended to resume the position as Mr. Olmert's justice minister, from which he resigned when charges were brought against him six months ago.

Instead, Mr. Ramon faces up to three years in jail when the court pronounces a sentence Feb. 21.

When Mr. Ramon's conviction was announced in court, his young girlfriend hugged him supportively.

Through his lawyers, Mr. Ramon indicated he intended to appeal his conviction.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Mr. Olmert, who had been a close ally of Mr. Ramon, had "phoned him to console him over the verdict."

During the trial, Mr. Ramon testified it was the young woman, and not he, who started the contact by flirting, and that their kisses were consensual. While he had enjoyed the kisses, he might have behaved better, he said.

"It's true, I wasn't behaving like a minister," he said, explaining to the judges that "I'm very open and informal. I play soccer with my drivers. I speak frankly and curse openly."

Arye Eldad, who represents one of the religious parties in the Knesset -- Israel's parliament -- described Mr. Ramon's conviction as "another nail in the coffin of the ... most corrupt government Israel has ever had," and demanded new elections.

But Mr. Ramon still had the support of at least one Knesset member. Yuval Steinitz, of the right-wing Likud party, said the trial proved the legal definition of sexual harassment should be weakened.

"It cannot be that a misunderstanding between a man and a woman that causes immense discomfort to one of them should end in conviction," Mr. Steinitz said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Gil Cohen Magen, Reuters; Haim Ramon, right, a former Israeli justice minister, and his girlfriend, Vered Sharon-Rivlin, leave court in Tel Aviv yesterday after Mr. Ramon was convicted of sexual misconduct against a **female** soldier, one of several recent scandals that have cast shadows on Israeli leaders. ;

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Second sex scandal deals blow to Olmert: Former justice minister guilty of assault on female soldier

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When the blind lead the blind

Hindustan Times

December 30, 2006 Saturday 12:23 PM EST

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Length: 839 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, Dec 30 -- While on his whirlwind of an America tour in September this year, General Mush let this one slip - "He [Hamid Karzai] knows that the drug trade is financing the Taliban. But he is turning a blind eye. He is like an ostrich with his head buried in the sand."

If one were to use that antiquated three-fingers-pointing-back cliché, much the same can be said for Pervez himself. The Pakistani President had his head buried in history textbooks for far too long; like historians and Bombay filmmakers worth their sort, he wanted his offering to be different. And as a result of these proverbial blind eyes, Balochistan along with many a southern province of Afghanistan was in the line of fire through much of 2006. The year, more than any one or thing, has resolutely belonged to the Ostrich.

Toe-deep in Iraq

As is the tradition on December 31, philanthropic prize giving is an expected ritual. Due to the fact that only one nomination was received in the given category, the Most-Sand-In-The-Nose-As-a-Result-Of-The-Head-Being-Buried-Most-Deep Award has predictably gone to George W. Bush.

The nomination did shock some bookies, who had considered his neck (i.e. an over-indulged American intelligence network) long enough to provide a panoramic view of the world. Confounding such expectations, Dubya seemed to have been taken by genuine surprise when Kim Jong tested his bomb, when Mullah Omar made good use of that still-functional one eye and especially when the rest of his herd was given a "thumpin" in the US mid-term elections. The Texan cowboy, in all his wisdom, had forgotten to check the Iraqi desert for quicksand. Worse still, he had forgotten that despite being winged, he is unfortunately flightless.

Run like a woman, kick like a man

The Jewish view of this handicapped bird has been far from favourable. After having observed that the female ostrich often leaves her thick-shelled eggs unattended, the Book of Job had chastised the feathered specie for being a bad parent. Such historic disregard propelled Ehud Olmert to take on Hasan Nasrallah and his gang of ostriches in July this year. And as is perhaps true for most civilisational issues, the Arabs view the vertebrate-in-question rather differently. Up until it became extinct, the Arabian Ostrich was loved across the Middle East for the wealth it promised and the elegance it exhibited. Reverence and conscientious abandonment, however, are not the only factors that render the Hezbollah akin to the camel-like creature.

When the blind lead the blind

When hiding from predators, ostriches are known to lay their head and neck flat on the ground, holding their wings close. Aided by the dry heat of their habitat, they appear as nothing more than nondescript lumps, quite easily mistaken for rocks. This was precisely the tact used by the Shia militia when Lebanon was attacked. Well accustomed to their terrain, the Hezbollah took recourse to guerrilla warfare, often taking refuge in the houses of a willing civilian populace.

It seems evident that the Israelis had only taken note of the fact that ostriches usually run when threatened, not noticing the few instances when they retaliate with the help of eviscerating Katyusha kicks. Like many a wild animal, Olmert was left licking some serious wounds.

The ostrich's swan song?

These streaks of violence and recorded incidents of people being attacked and killed have led much of the Western world to classify Hezbollah-like ostriches as 'dangerous animals'. Respective populations have, as a result, been unharmed this past year but persistent fear has consequently led to an all-inclusive phobia. Otherwise peaceful attributes have now been forgotten and satanic caricatures have been drawn. All of which has helped distract from the fact that the most lethal of all ostriches is still holding steadfast to his anger. And true to his genes, is outrunning numerous human athletes.

As the chase to hunt him down continues, a certain member of his fraternity is taking forth his seemingly apocalyptic plans. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who for much of the year kept his head buried, denying that the holocaust had ever occurred, would have quite literally wanted to dive into the Doha sand this December. After having watched female birds sing and dance at the Asian Games, the famously austere and somewhat short Ahmadinejad was looked down upon by taller ostriches of his clan.

There is, however, one fact that the likes of Ahmadinejad (and in particular, his American counterpart) should wisen up to in the next year. Even though the ostrich is most famous for hiding its head in the sand at the first sight of danger, no such instances have ever been recorded. Much like the myths propagated by the aforementioned memoir writer, this fiction was made famous by a Roman called Pliny the Elder. The truth of the matter is that if an ostrich has his head buried in the sand for long, suffocation and death are unfortunate inevitabilities.

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Load-Date: January 1, 2007

At War, at Home, Again

The New York Times

August 6, 2006 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 6; Column 1; Magazine; Pg. 62; Lives

Length: 777 words

Byline: By Jessica Apple

Jessica Apple is a fiction writer living in Tel Aviv.

Body

Since the start of the new fighting between Hezbollah and Israel, a helicopter has been circling my neighborhood in Tel Aviv -- about 70 miles south of where Hezbollah missiles began falling on July 12. When I first noticed the helicopter, I associated it with the sound of the old ride-on lawn mower my great-grandfather used to cut his grass in Houston. For a moment, I went there, to the quiet suburb where I grew up, and smelled the freshly cut grass, and my grandmother's challah baking in the oven. And I recalled the two things my grandmother taught me best: to be Jewish, and to be afraid. She should be proud. I am excelling in both.

The more this fighting continues, the longer the hours of helicopter commotion, the more I have thought about the decade I lived in central Jerusalem, where amid suicide bombings and an Intifada, I became a mother. My first son, Tom, was born in Jerusalem on Oct. 3, 2000, five days after the al-Aqsa Intifada began. I was in a lovely delivery room in Hadassah's Mount Scopus hospital, with large windows overlooking Jerusalem. I don't remember the spectacular view. I remember 17 hours of labor, and I remember seeing a helicopter and wishing I could swish it away like a fly. Four days later, when Tom and I were released from the hospital, Israeli soldiers were ambushed by Hezbollah guerrillas near the Lebanese border, and three were taken hostage.

And then, in the early years of that Intifada, I became a hostage myself. I was a new mother in Jerusalem, my husband studied long hours at Hebrew University and I was afraid to leave my apartment because suicide bombings in my neighborhood felt as frequent as the mail delivery. A cup of coffee in the cafe down the street carried a risk of death. So I stayed home as much as possible, took care of baby Tom, watched the news, listened to the sirens and felt the vibrations of the helicopters overhead.

My second son, Guy, did not want to be outdone by his older brother. Tom came into the world during a Palestinian uprising, and Guy appeared (five weeks before his due date) on March 16, 2003, as America prepared to launch its attack on Iraq. Once again in Mount Scopus hospital, I shivered in my bathrobe as maintenance workers began to seal the hallway windows with duct tape and plastic sheets, in case of an Iraqi retaliatory chemical attack. A what? I was the mother of a 2-year-old and a premature newborn. I had postpartum hormones and was in no way prepared for the hospital's loudspeaker announcement saying that all the women in the maternity wing must have someone deliver their gas masks, immediately. My husband said it was ridiculous, unnecessary panic. I wept, so at midnight he brought me a gas mask. I wept to the nurses, what about the baby? We don't have a gas mask for the baby. I was embarrassing my husband. "Yihey beseder," he said, using the

At War, at Home, Again

Hebrew expression for "It'll be O.K." A nurse agreed. She offered me tea and told me the hospital was equipped with protective tents for infants.

Like any mother, I never stop wanting to protect my children. I've done what I can to be safe and comfortable here, but it requires more than fastening seat belts and locking doors. I've tried to avoid public venues that might attract suicide bombers. Following the advice of my octogenarian neighbor, who has lived through all of Israel's wars, a week ago I packed a bag for the bomb shelter, where, if need be, we will go. Because I don't know how to pack for war, I imagined I was packing for a flight. I put crayons, card games and sweet snacks into my bag. And in the back of my mind I heard the voice of my grandmother calling from her Palm Beach retirement home: "What does Israel have that Florida doesn't? Florida has plenty of Jews."

But I don't want Palm Beach. I want to stay where I am. The news reports in Israel, which detail the daily violence here and in Lebanon, say that residents of the country's central region should stay close to home and be alert. So I've been here, at home, alert. And so have my sons. They do what small children do: Guy sings a song in Hebrew, which translates, "What a happy day today is for me, a day of surprises." Tom practices counting, higher and higher.

At another time, Tom's questions might irritate me: What's one more than a hundred? What's one more than a thousand? But now when he asks the questions about numbers, I don't lose my patience; I associate. I think of the increasing numbers of innocent dead on both sides of this conflict. "What's one more than that?" he says. "And one more after that?" I try to explain infinity. "But tell me," he says, "when does it stop?"

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Drawing (Drawing by Bob Hambly)

Load-Date: August 6, 2006

Aid worker tells of refugees' desperate plight

Aberdeen Press and Journal

August 2, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 5

Length: 819 words

Body

A brave Scottish charity worker has travelled to Lebanon, the centre of the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. Here Habib Malik tells MORAG LINDSAY about a country plunged into crisis

He has seen first-hand the suffering caused by earthquakes, famines and the Boxing Day tsunami - but north-east aid worker Habib Malik now understands human nature can be a far more destructive force.

The Aberdeen-based Scottish organiser for the charity Islamic Relief spoke to the Press and Journal yesterday from the Lebanese capital Beirut, where he is overseeing the delivery of aid to people caught in the crossfire between Israel and Hezbollah.

It is Mr Malik's first visit to a manmade disaster after a series of mercy missions to the natural catastrophes in south-east Asia, Kashmir and Sudan.

"I've seen desperation after the tsunami and the earthquake in Kashmir, but here it's different," he said. "People are angry, frustrated, hostile and aggressive and they are giving up hope that this will be over any time soon."

The father-of-six called upon people to set aside their opinions about Middle East politics and face up to the human cost of the disaster unfolding before them.

"This isn't a political issue, this is a humanitarian crisis," he said. "Families have lost everything, people are starving, there is no baby milk, towns are deserted, the country is running out of petrol. There are planes going overhead every five or 10 minutes and each one could be carrying more rockets and bombs."

Mr Malik, 39, is expecting aid from Islamic Relief to arrive in Beirut today. The charity has launched an appeal so it can supply food, water, blankets, mattresses and medicine for those worst affected by the fighting. A donation of £20 will buy a food parcel to feed a family of four for 10 days.

When the three lorries arrive from Syria, Mr Malik and colleagues will have to unload everything and pile it on to pick-up vans for the dangerous journey to southern Lebanon.

Lorry drivers refuse to go any further south than Beirut, but some local drivers are prepared to take their pick-up trucks into the danger zone - for exorbitant payments.

Only one single-track road remains open between Beirut and the besieged cities of Sidon, Tyre and Nabatiya in the south, where Islamic Relief hopes to target aid. If any of its bridges are bombed, Mr Malik fears it too will be impassable and those who have stayed behind to face the Israeli attacks will be cut off.

Aid worker tells of refugees' desperate plight

The taxi driver who took Mr Malik and his colleagues from the Syrian city of Damascus even refused to travel beyond the town of Tripoli in the north of Lebanon. The journey from Damascus to Beirut normally takes two hours by land, but the Islamic Relief workers had to take a 10-hour detour to find a border checkpoint that had not been bombed. There, they spent three hours getting clearance to enter Lebanon. Mr Malik said he was struck by how few people were trying to cross from his side of the border, while Lebanese citizens were clamouring to flee their homeland.

Tempers were flaring in the unforgiving heat and Mr Malik watched scuffles and fights breaking out all around him.

"The women seem especially impatient. Normally Lebanese women are calm, gentle kind of people but when they see their children crying and traumatised because there is no food, and fighting going on all around them, it is human instinct to try and defend them."

Half the population in the major city of Tyre has fled, and Nabatiya - once a beautiful, civilised town with modern office blocks and flats and a vibrant commercial centre - was deserted when he visited.

Schools in Beirut have been turned into makeshift shelters to accommodate some of the estimated 800,000 people who have been displaced.

Most refugees have been wearing the same clothes since they arrived and are desperate for hand-outs from the few charities working in Lebanon.

Some people are using their entire wages for July to hire a pick-up and send it back for some of their possessions. The less fortunate could not go back even if they wanted to because their homes have been destroyed.

Few believe an end to the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah is in sight. Mr Malik saw for himself the damage at the United Nations building in Beirut, which was stormed by angry protesters at the weekend, and fears for the future security of the region now that people are losing all hope.

Many of the desperate people Mr Malik spoke to in Damascus said they were returning because they would rather risk being killed on their own land than die as refugees in a strange country.

"At first people were thinking of this as a conflict. They said they thought they could stick it out because it would only last a day or two. Now they regard it as a war and they are mentally preparing for the fact that this is not going to finish any time soon."

To donate to Islamic Relief's Middle East appeal, visit www.islamic-relief.com

Load-Date: August 3, 2006

Even in death, mothers hugged children

The Irish Times

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1

Length: 465 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Qana

Body

Hands and feet protruding from the earth told civil defence workers where to dig for at least 54 Lebanese civilians who died here in an Israeli bombing early yesterday.

The rescuers wore rubber gloves and dug with their hands. A piece of flowered cloth would emerge, then a torso. The corpses - almost all of them women and children - were lined up on the ground beside the collapsed building, then covered with grimy sheets and towels retrieved from the ruin where they had been sleeping when the Israeli air force struck.

One body led to another. Even in death, mothers hugged their children.

"I saw women in foetal positions, protecting their bodies, thinking the wall would protect them, but the opposite happened; the wall collapsed on them," said Naim Rakka, a civil defence worker.

The bodies of children were distressing: a little girl with an angelic face, her mouth overflowing with earth; small boys carried out by their spindly limbs, bruised purple from the weight of the concrete.

Close to one-third of this town, 10km (6 miles) from Tyre, has been flattened in nearly three weeks of Israeli bombardment, and the dead and wounded had to be carried hundreds of metres to ambulances on stretchers because roads were blocked by debris. There are other bodies lying in the wreckage of Qana. Its deserted streets reek of decomposing flesh. Israeli aircraft continued to bomb the area throughout the rescue operation and prime minister Ehud Olmert said that Israel was "in no hurry to reach a ceasefire".

This is the second time in 10 years that Qana, where Jesus Christ is said to have turned water into wine, has been the site of a massacre.

On April 18th 1996, the Israeli army bombarded the headquarters of the UN Fijian battalion, slaughtering 105 civilians who were sheltering there. Yesterday's atrocity, the worst since hostilities started on July 12th, occurred about a kilometre from the graves and monument of the 1996 victims, which has become a place of pilgrimage for Muslims around the world.

The US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, cancelled a trip from Jerusalem to Beirut after the Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, demanded an immediate, unconditional ceasefire.

"There is no room for discussion on this sad day," Mr Siniora said, calling the Israelis "war criminals".

Even in death, mothers hugged children

Israel claimed that Hizbullah fired rockets from near the shelter and promised an investigation.

The victims of the bombing had sheltered in the basement for 10 days, sending two young men out for food.

One of the food searchers, Fares Attiya, said there were 63 people living in the shelter, including 34 children.

The Lebanese health ministry said that 700 Lebanese had been killed in nearly three weeks of war, and more than 2,000 wounded.

In Israel, 18 civilians and 33 soldiers have been killed.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

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THE CHANGING FACE OF IRAN

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

August 19, 2006 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 23

Length: 3592 words

Byline: Paul McGeough

Body

The mullahs rule the streets but behind closed doors Iran's well-heeled take on pot and pass the bootleg vodka. Paul McGeough looks at an authoritarian state at war with itself.

ON A sultry afternoon at the crossroads of life in Tehran, a mother in her 40s wistfully recalls the excitement of the revolution - how almost three decades ago she ran into the streets of the capital as raw people power knocked the despised Shah of Iran from his gilded throne. "Today, our children attack some of us for being so stupid," says the woman, grinding the end of her cigarette into a glass ashtray.

She's a little ashamed a few friends try to save face with their children - denying they had even been in the streets. She hesitates over another cigarette. And then she makes a pained admission: "I went to the Shah's grave in Cairo and I told him it was all a big mistake."

In Tehran worlds collide - stock images of ayatollahs and turbans are not the whole story. By nature, Iranians are pleasure-seekers, forever exploring the void between what the state declares lawful and what they can get away with. Young women in particular find themselves at an extraordinary fork in the revolution's road.

Some offer to put their lives on the line. Hundreds dress as suicide bombers for stage-managed parades that provide a backdrop for the rhetorical salvos in Tehran's war with the world. Masked and menacing, they hitch their bomber's vests as they turn to Lebanon and Palestine. They raise a fist defiantly at the enemy: Washington.

Another army of women is bandaged and bruised. There is no regime choreography, but they wear their wounds with much the same badge-of-honour determination.

Numbering thousands, they emerge from the waiting rooms of Tehran's plastic surgeons and rush to their favourite coffee shops to show off a new symbol of Western decadence in Iran: their reshaped noses.

Both armies are a product of a propaganda war that intensifies as Iran flaunts its nuclear ambition and flexes its muscles as an emerging regional power, a status brought on by the US-led defeat of enemies that previously hemmed in Tehran: to the west, Saddam Hussein; to the east, the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The suicide squads are easily identified as a regime creation. But the obsession that has made Tehran one of the nose-job capitals of the world - by some estimates up to 100,000 procedures are done each year - is a surprising byproduct of a propaganda campaign that emanates from distant California.

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A battery of pirate satellite TV stations run by Iranian exiles in Beverly Hills and the San Fernando Valley bombards their homeland with anti-regime propaganda. Despite claims by the pirates that their calls to action have instigated spontaneous street protests in Tehran, Iranians from all walks of life - the regime, academia, the media and in the streets - tend to dismiss their rallying as the out-of-touch ravings of "armchair" counter-revolutionaries. And while many young Iranians tune in, a good portion of them ignore the propaganda. Instead, they lap up the entertainment that comes through the ether.

The Tehran regime has only limited success in jamming the signals from Los Angeles and, despite several campaigns, it has failed to shut down a thriving black market in satellite dishes. This week it had police teams back on the rooftops in the capital and in three of the provinces, ripping out dishes in a futile attempt to control the flow of information.

That it worries so much is revealing because many young Iranians are believed to have opted out of all politics and propaganda. Instead, they immerse themselves in a make-believe world of Hollywood films and MTV.

The cosmetic surgery craze is a surprise amid the straitlaced fervour of the mullahs. But Bahareh Ahmade, a 22-year-old student, proudly tells the Herald that her new nose was designed from a very up-to-the-minute magazine tear-out of the singer Michael Jackson's nose. Bailed up on the curb in leafy north Tehran, she says: "My life is a bubble - I have absolutely no interest in politics. I study and I worry about getting a job; I hang out in coffee shops, I swim in the pool or go to parties with my friends." Does she watch satellite TV? "Just the movies and the entertainment," she says.

The award-winning Iranian filmmaker Mehrdad Oskoueï was so perplexed that he made a film on the nose phenomenon - *Noses Iranian Style*. He asks: "Is this a whole lost generation? In the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, young Iranians lost whole limbs and parts of their faces for their country; now they line up five-abreast in operating theatres to give up a part of their faces. What has happened to their values? How did they become so distracted from real issues in such a short span of time?"

The fixation of young women, in particular, with westernising the only visible feature on their well-covered bodies has come to symbolise the thinning ranks of foot soldiers in a gloomy internal review of the Iranian reformist movement's failure to win and hold sufficient political power or to demonstrate that it is possible to change the grinding reality of life under the successors of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Herald's observations of life in Tehran confirm a foreign diplomat's snapshot of the state of play 27 years after the overthrow of the shah: "The mullahs have firm control. The top end of business relies on corrupt government deals and permits, so they're not too upset; professionals and the middle class who have not joined the brain drain stay indoors and get smashed on homemade vodka; and the poor masses are too hungry and too desperate to think of reform or revolt."

Even amid such despondency, maintaining state control still requires a campaign of intimidation. Journalists, lawyers and intellectuals are regularly rounded up and jailed on spurious charges. And street protests by women, by bus drivers and by minority Sufis have been busted in a harsh new police crackdown.

Exact figures are not available. But hundreds are said to be under detention without trial. And thousands more are harassed in a constant bid by the regime to wear down the will of would-be reformists, often threatening them with the loss of their jobs or cancelling their access to university studies.

UPHEAVAL in the region is creating a new balance of power. Shiite and Persian Iran is on one side. The US-backed Israelis are on the other. And fretting between them are all the Sunni-dominated Arab regimes who see their influence being eroded.

Previously isolated, Tehran is back in the business of attempting to export its Islamic revolution to the Muslim - and mainly Arab - masses of the region. It has its hand up the back of the Shiite leadership in Baghdad and the militias who own the chaotic streets of liberated Iraq. It is drawing in the new Afghan government. It still counts on Syria as

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its ambassador in the Arab world, and it sees Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Occupied Territories as its proxy pincers on Israel.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, US President George Bush locked Iran into his "axis of evil" depiction of the global threat faced by Washington. Top US officials, Bush included, have left open the option of military strikes as a response to Tehran's refusal to bow to Western demands to curb its uranium-enrichment program. But despite all its rhetoric, Team Bush seems for now, at least, to be opting for diplomacy over forced regime change.

The evidence that Tehran funds, supplies and guides Hezbollah in Lebanon appears to be much stronger than the Americans' fabricated weapons of mass destruction case for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. But despite his insistence on getting to "root causes", Bush subcontracted the war against the Iran-sponsored Hezbollah to the Israeli Defence Forces, who failed to deliver on the promises they made as they went to war in July.

And, uncharacteristically, Bush sits on his hands while European, Russian and Chinese diplomats make painful efforts to defuse the nuclear crisis. That issue comes to a head again at the UN Security Council in 12 days.

AT FIRST glance, it seems anything goes beneath the perpetual pollution haze that blankets Tehran. A visitor loses count of the shiny BMW and Lexus cars on jammed freeways. Giant billboards shriek Western indulgence - Pierre Cardin, Calvin Klein, Versace...

There are glitzy shopping strips and coffee shops. The florists' displays are exquisite. Monsoon restaurant, on the north's Ghandi Street, is so expensive it doesn't bother with a menu in Farsi.

Despite a state ban on alcohol, bootleggers do home deliveries of imported or home-brewed beers, wines and spirits. Party hosts offer pot to their guests as readily as they dispense their preferred analgesic - a local, paint-stripper-like variant of vodka. "Is it Danish?" the Herald asks a host who produced the distinctive aluminium flask in which Danzka Vodka is marketed. He replies: "The bottle is!"

But that's well-heeled North Tehran, where the bandaged noses of young women are like beacons of indifference in the pavement crowds and where pharmacists report a run on nose bandages by those who can't afford the surgery - but who want to look hip.

Across the city, the state does its billboards, featuring revered ayatollahs and the pitiable martyrs of the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran War. The wall of a downtown high rise is given over to a huge depiction of the US flag - hung vertically, it has skulls for stars and each red stripe is the trajectory of a falling bomb marked: "Made in the USA."

Then there is the poverty of southern Tehran and the sprawling hinterland, powder kegs of resentment over economic hardship that are capable of erupting at any time.

Despite Iran's huge oil reserves, imported petrol is in short supply and becoming more expensive - there's talk of rationing. Inflation and unemployment are rampant. Meat and housing are priced beyond the means of most families who, on average, earn a quarter of what they were getting under the ousted shah. Prostitution and drug abuse are said to be widespread.

But Saddam's Baghdad it is not. In Tehran, regime control is a sophisticated blend of a crude but velveted glove that warns dissidents not to step beyond the bounds of what is tolerated.

Euphemistically referred to as "red lines", the bounds are delineated for the many by the hammer-fist treatment of the few who are prepared to speak out. Iranians are allowed to express raw opinion, but to have it published domestically can be fatal. Just to be interviewed by a foreign correspondent can lead to charges and time in the notorious Evin Prison.

IN THE midst of all this stands the mercurial new Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose popularity is soaring in this time of twin crises - nuclear energy and Lebanon. Exploring Ahmadinejad's diatribes against Israel, a city lawyer takes time to consider whether his President is serious or merely indulging in crude diplomatic sport

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when he calls for Israel to be "wiped from the map". "He's not a stupid man, is he?" the Herald ventures. There was a pause before this reply: "We can't be sure."

But Amir Mohebian, a writer who claims to be a friend of the Iranian President, tells another reporter: "Wipe Israel off the map? Really? Israel has atomic warheads. Maybe we make irrational statements, but we're not mad by saying things like that, we know the US runs to help Israel - and that's expensive, we think."

Ahmadinejad is rated as the most fundamentalist president since the 1979 revolution. But he is also a deft populist - recently he blocked a police effort to codify women's dress.

But even he can overstep the mark. Before this year's World Cup football tournament in which Iran was knocked out early, he declared that the ban on women attending public sporting events should be lifted. He was overruled by the mullahs.

Promising justice, an end to endemic corruption and to put Iran's huge oil income "on the people's tables", Ahmadinejad came to power on a landslide vote last year. He holds onto that support with targeted cash handouts in the provinces and in his appeals to Iranian nationalism through his hectoring of Washington over Iran's right to go nuclear.

But the presidency is just one spoke in an Orwellian wheel in which the will of the people, the voice of the parliament and that of the executive are subservient to "divine" rule by a deeply corrupt and conservative clerical elite headed by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Khomeini's successor as the Supreme Leader of the Revolution.

Dissent is allowed but rigidly controlled. Support for reformist elements, like the Iran Participation party of the former president Mohammed Khatami, waxes and wanes according to the whim of an unelected religious leadership that retains all real political power for itself.

In what became known as the Tehran Spring, the reformists won control of Iran's elected parliament in 1997, but that did not mean control of the country - virtually every reform bill they passed in the following seven years was rejected or watered down by the overarching authority of the clergy.

The reformists lost credibility because, despite all the religious strictures, they acquiesced rather than confront the ayatollahs. There had to be a showdown, but they didn't bring it on.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi underscores the impotence of the reformists during the Tehran Spring when she says: "[When I was arrested in that period] the president said he was very sorry - he couldn't help. Now it's not much different, but the President doesn't apologise any more."

The reformists' hands were tied, too, because the religious authorities reserve the right to vet the Islamic and revolutionary credentials of all would-be parliamentary candidates.

Before the 2004 elections more than 3000 reformist candidates, including 87 sitting MPs, were disqualified by the religious authorities. Even the brother of then president Khatami and the granddaughter of Ayatollah Khomeini had no protection - they were swatted like flies. "Resignation and hopelessness forced many to stay away from the polls," says Tehran politics professor Hermidas Bavand.

Bavand admits to being one who turned his back on the reformists because of their submission to the will of the Supreme Leader. "People became indifferent and as a result of their non-participation, the hardliners emasculated the reformist movement," Bavand tells the Herald.

As the reformists attempt to pick up the pieces, they are confronted by a new hurdle - the nuclear and Lebanon crises have become the dominant prisms in all internal debate. Tehran's handling of both draws huge public support in a country where historic US interference has embedded a ferocious anger in the political psyche.

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There is the possibility that Iran's overt support for Hezbollah in Lebanon could backfire: "Many Iranians don't see a vital interest for Iran in Lebanon, but we are paying a very high price [because] these military operations could become a kind of solution for Israel and the US [to regional problems]. The scenario is frightening," Bavand says.

But this week Ahmadinejad was triumphant. On the stump at Arbadil, in Iran's north-east, he taunted Washington on the failure by Israel to achieve its combat objectives: "God's promises have come true. On one side, [the] corrupt powers of the criminal US and Britain and the Zionists with modern bombs and planes. And on the other side is a group of pious youths relying on God."

Despite being on the back foot, the reformist movement does have a star player. But Shirin Ebadi defends the nuclear program, saying it is those in control of nuclear power who constitute a security threat, not the energy program itself.

She argues in a recent paper that the nuclear program is rooted in Washington's 1970s encouragement of the Shah of Iran to go nuclear: "[In power, the Iranian] reformists supported the program but wanted it to be in compliance with Iran's international obligations. But instead of backing Iran's fledgling democratic movement, which would have led to nuclear transparency, the US undercut it by demonising Iran."

Criticism of the nuclear program or the Supreme Leader is not tolerated. And any who dare to question Tehran's support for Hezbollah are pounced upon as "Zionists" by publications speaking for the regime.

Mohammad Atrianfar, publisher of the reformist newspaper Shargh, dared to publish an unsigned criticism and in an interview he tells an American reporter: "Officially, Iran is not aware of what Hezbollah does. [But] logically and unofficially, Iran is always aware. The reason is clear, because of all that Iran has done for Hezbollah. Hezbollah is Iran in Lebanon - when Iran looks at Hezbollah, it sees Iran."

Dubbed "the face of resistance", the journalist Akbar Gangi was jailed for six years after he publicly linked a series of dissident killings to senior figures in the regime. When he was released from Evin Prison this year, he was so gaunt after a three-month hunger strike that friends did not recognise him.

Gangi remains defiant, but he has fled to the US, from where he still attempts to co-ordinate protests against the regime.

ACROSS the city from Bobby Sands Street, 51 pairs of shoes at the door to a fourth-floor apartment suggest unusual activity. There are no banners or posters in the street, but the furtive coming and going of foreign TV and press crews confirm something is afoot.

By the standards set by the Irish Republican Army hunger striker, this assembly is small beer. But under the menacing eye of the Iranian security services the assembly is a small sign of courage in the face of such deep despondency about the political commitment of young Iranians.

The shoes' owners - student, political and women's rights activists - have responded to a call by Gangi for reformists in Iran and exiles around the world to pressure the regime with a three-day hunger-strike.

This is the third day and the air in the closed apartment is pungent. In the semi-darkness, Abdullah Momeni, 29, a student activist, says that none of the Tehran media shows an interest because the protest is too hot to handle. He has done 45 days in solitary and is awaiting the outcome of an appeal against a five-year jail sentence for his protest activities.

As his comrades loll on pillows and watch videos, they allow themselves only sweet tea and water. Meanwhile, pleased as Momeni is just to have a gang around him, he makes clear that it's not enough. "We have to show to human rights groups outside Iran that our efforts to win the release of political prisoners have hit a dead end."

Momeni's explanation for the small turnout goes to fear of the regime - but it also turns on young Tehran's plastic surgery obsession. "Young people became frustrated by the performance of the reformists in power. When they looked at their first few years, they could see that the fundamentalists and extremists were in control.

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"The risk in joining a protest is huge, so they opt out and worry instead about the shape of their noses and the colour of their eye lenses. Anyone who protests gets kicked out of university and suspended from other community activities. You get threatened or you get sent to prison."

ISA SAHARKHIZ has been a prominent journalist in Tehran for 20 years. But, his lawyers say, in the coming days he will become an inmate of Evin because he dared to question the nature of what Iran likes to call its system of guided democracy.

Under the reformist rule of Khatami, the fortysomething Saharkhiz was the government overseer of the domestic press, but it was his subsequent writing and publishing that were his undoing.

"What am I guilty of? I printed articles against the state, Islam, the constitution, the revolutionary guard and, for good measure, the clergy," he says during an interview. "When I defended Gangi they closed my newspaper."

The Iranian reality, Saharkhiz says, is that there is no reality: "Genuine debate is impossible. Editors no longer tell the truth - they all live a lie. Key reformists are arrested; student offices are closed and activists jailed; people are not allowed to assemble; even political parties are not allowed to have annual conferences. And independent-minded clerics are barred from the mosques."

Like others who spoke to the Herald, Saharkhiz is hoping the regime will collide with its own economic failure. Inflation is getting worse, jobs are harder to find, and the brain-drain and the flight of capital will continue in such a lethal combination that even soaring oil prices cannot save the regime, he says. He doesn't have a timeline, but he makes a blunt prediction: "It will be the poor, not the intelligentsia, who will revolt."

But for now the tea leaves that Tehran analysts and political players read are Lebanese - not Iranian. The regime seems emboldened by what it perceives as the success of a more confrontational foreign policy - especially its sponsorship of Hezbollah. They predict that the outcome in Lebanon - a stalemate that allows Hezbollah to claim victory as Israelis resort to infighting over what went wrong - will fire the regime's urge to crack down even more tightly on domestic dissent.

The film director Oskouei - frustrated that most of his work is banned in Iran - describes how, so far, he has sidestepped the authorities.

"Every day in the forest, the deer wakes up and runs to escape from the lion. The lion wakes up to chase the deer - it's an everyday activity and the one that runs faster is successful.

"I am the deer - this is my life."

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Sign of her success ... a young woman in the north of Tehran wears a nose bandage after plastic surgery. The bandages are a status symbol for the city's young elite. Photo: Aslon Arfa Yearning for more ... hunger strikers want foreigners to see their quest for political freedom. Photo: Aslon Arfa Drive for reform ... Shirin Ebadi. Photo: AFP/Hassan Ammar

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Our star pupil is fighting for Isreal

Western Daily Press

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

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Byline: Tom Morgan tc.morgan@bepp.co.uk

Body

Why former West public school prefect shunned the academic life to fire rockets at Hezbollah A YOUNG woman fighting Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon has been revealed as a former star pupil at one of the West's top private schools.

Former Clifton College prefect Abigail Amit shocked family and friends by snubbing a place at university to become a soldier in the Israeli army.

The 24-year-old had been firing rockets at Lebanese insurgents until yesterday's ceasefire.

Despite controversy surrounding Israel's actions, Ms Amit's father told the Western Daily Press he was "immensely proud" of his daughter's role in the conflict.

Speaking from an Israeli onion field, Ms Amit said: "People are dying there and that troubles me. But it goes both ways. We only shoot at them when they shoot at us."

Ms Amit left £23,000-a-year Clifton College in 2000 with top A-level grades in history and biology. She went travelling in Kenya and had intended to spend her gap year on an Israeli kibbutz before studying for a degree in physiotherapy at Aberdeen University.

But during her time in Israel she was persuaded to join the country's army. After two years of national service she was called up to fight for her adopted country.

She said: "I came here when I was 20 on a gap year before university and loved it so much I decided to stay. I spent two years in the army, I volunteered to do it. It's part of what being an Israeli is all about.

"I spoke to my parents when this all started. They're pretending to be really calm but I know they're not. I speak to them from here on my mobile.

"When I first said I was moving to Israel for good they asked me to think again. They weren't supportive of the idea. My friends were in shock, too.

"If I had stayed in Britain, I would probably be on holiday now."

The dangers faced by women fighting in the war was highlighted by the death of 26-year-old Keren Tendler when an Israeli helicopter was shot down.

Our star pupil is fighting for Isreal

Ms Amit, who was born in Scotland, added: "There aren't that many women serving up on the front. You have to be quite fit to do it. Last night, I was woken at 4.30am to be ready to fire." She is attached to a three-person missile firing artillery unit and was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal in April.

In three months, she plans to attend college in Israel to study politics and government.

Ms Amit studied at Clifton College for four years. She was made a 'praeposter' - a prefect - at the top Bristol school, which counts Monty Python star John Cleese among its former students.

Ms Amit's father, who is a senior member of Britain's Jewish community but prefers not to reveal his identity, added: "She made lots of friends in Bristol. It will probably be quite a surprise for them to know what she is up to now."

Both parents and Ms Amit's sister said they were racked with worry over her daughter's involvement in the war that has now claimed the lives of more than 100 Israeli soldiers.

They also worry about revealing their names or where they live in the current climate of heightened tension in Britain.

Load-Date: October 29, 2006

Time for Muslim community to move on; OUR VIEW The Sun-Herald

The Sun Herald (Sydney, Australia)

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First Edition

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Body

IF EVER a man only opened his mouth to change feet, that man is Sheik Taj el-Din al Hilaly, the controversial Muslim cleric sacked last week by the peak Islamic body that in 1989 appointed him mufti of Australia.

In a time of desperate need for an Islamic leader dedicated to espousing what unites Muslim and non-Muslim Australians, rather than what divides them, al Hilaly was the supposed voice of his people.

Yet no one could have been less suited for the position.

The sheik became notorious for pronouncements that might have been shrugged off as patently silly had they not been made by a person of considerable influence.

Infamously, he likened scantily clad women to uncovered meat, defended the September 11 terrorists and claimed Muslims had more right to be in Australia than Europeans, all the while insisting his mission was to promote "peace, security and harmony".

He was recently quoted as urging Australian Muslims to "stand in the trenches with the Islamic Republic of Iran". And his latest outburst included declaring himself more Australian than John Howard, who he described as an "almost Saddam Hussein-like dictator".

In the wake of each dizzy dictum, the sheik's apologists have insisted something vital was lost in translation; that what he meant to say was, in fact, the complete opposite of what he said.

Little wonder he has been labelled "a joke" by the Prime Minister and "an embarrassment" by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, while Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd has called for a review of the sheik's Australian citizenship.

A further shadow has been cast over the sheik's standing by allegations that he gave financial aid to supporters of terrorist groups. The Australian Federal Police is investigating claims that on a visit to Lebanon last year the sheik gave charity funds - donated to the Lebanese Muslim Association to help victims of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict - to supporters of al-Qaeda and Hezbollah.

Despite all the obfuscating by the sheik and other Australian Muslim leaders, the accumulation of issues reflects a man and a community in crisis.

Time for Muslim community to move on OUR VIEW The Sun-Herald

Last week The Sun-Herald reported that the sheik had been sacked by the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC). The newly formed Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) voted to make the position redundant and replace it with a committee of clerics, and plans to meet this week to decide whether to terminate a three-month period of grace it offered al Hilaly.

From now on, since al Hilaly represents no one but himself, his rants should be denied the oxygen of publicity he seems to crave.

For the committee of clerics, the challenge is to present a new voice of Muslim Australia, speaking with unity and clarity, and to commit to healing a Muslim community rent by disunity and mistrust. Until this happens, the perception of that community will continue to suffer.

Responsibility for election comment in this issue is taken by Simon Dulhunty, 201 Sussex Street, Sydney, 2000.

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Section: WORLD; Doom & Gloom; Pg. 10

Length: 520 words

Body

MATP

ISRAEL MAKES BOMB FIND CLAIM

THE Israeli Army today said it had uncovered four bombs on the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon and accused **Hezbollah** guerillas of planting the explosives in recent days.

If confirmed, it would mark a violation of a UN-brokered ceasefire by **Hezbollah** and indicate a failure by international peacekeepers to prevent new attacks on Israel.

Lt-Col Guy Hazoot, the operations officer of Israel's northern division, said an Israeli patrol today discovered and detonated all of the explosives, which were hidden in containers that looked like boulders.

BRIT POULTRY'S BIRD FLU BANS

RUSSIA and Japan have banned British poultry imports as Britain today pressed ahead with a cull of 160,000 turkeys after the nation's first outbreak of a deadly strain of bird flu in farmed poultry.

Workers wearing protective suits, gloves and masks loaded the turkeys into crates to be gassed following the discovery of the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of avian flu on a farm at Holton in eastern England run by Europe's largest turkey producer, Bernard Matthews.

Farm workers were offered anti-viral drugs and restrictions were imposed on the way birds are housed or moved in a wide area surrounding the farm.

GANGS BLAMED FOR BASQUE BLAST

A homemade bomb that ripped through a train station in Spain's Basque region yesterday appears to have been the work of Basque independence street gangs, rather than armed separatists ETA.

The explosion in Lutzana, which blew out doors and windows but injured no one, came from a device doused with petrol commonly used by street gangs, Basque police said in a statement.

The blast followed the arrest on Sunday of 18 members of Basque independence gangs Jarrai, Haika and Segi.

NITSCHKE IN DEATH DRUG JOURNEY

DOOM & GLOOM

AUSTRALIAN voluntary euthanasia advocate Philip Nitschke is organising return trips to Mexico for New Zealanders who want to buy suicide drugs.

Nitschke plans to meet eight New Zealanders in the US next month before escorting them to Mexico, where the life-ending drug Nembutal can be bought legally.

New Zealand's Customs department said if the drug was found on people entering the country it would be seized as with other "restricted or prohibited" goods.

SIX SHOT DEAD IN RESTAURANT

THREE men and three women were found shot dead in a Chinese restaurant in northern Germany overnight.

Police said the six dead, who are all believed to be of Asian origin, had been tied up and left in different rooms of the restaurant in Sittensen, a town of 10,000 near the northern port of Hamburg.

Police spokesman Thomas Teuber said a member of the restaurant staff had suffered serious gunshot wounds and was fighting for his life in hospital.

Police said the motive for the murders was unclear.

MOTOR BOAT CAPSIZES, 63 DROWN

MORE than 60 people were drowned off southwest Cameroon at the weekend when a motor boat crowded with passengers and cargo capsized on its way to Nigeria, witnesses and survivors said today.

Fon Achobang, a local reporter, said he and his colleagues saw 63 bodies being buried yesterday after the accident, which occurred 20km west of the coastal town of Limbe.

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World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

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Body

Afghanistan

KABUL -- President Hamid Karzai acknowledged for the first time Friday he has met with Taliban militants in attempts to bring peace to Afghanistan, which is struggling to quell a rising insurgency. Karzai's assertion -- immediately rejected as false by a Taliban spokesman -- came as a suicide car bomber killed four people and wounded four others in Kabul, and militants overran a district in the volatile southeast.

Canada

ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland -- Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans is investigating whether a helicopter interfered with the controversial annual seal hunt in the northern Gulf of St. Lawrence, officials said Friday.

France

PARIS -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said in an interview with French television Friday that an Israeli soldier captured in Gaza who has been held by Palestinian militants for 10 months will soon be released. Separately, an official of the Islamic militant group Hezbollah was quoted by a newspaper Friday as saying two other Israeli soldiers held by Hezbollah in Lebanon since last summer are being treated "humanely."

ARGENTEUIL -- The leader of the French far-right paid a surprise visit Friday to a rough suburb home to the veiled and robed immigrants he has blamed for the country's problems, calling the bemused residents legitimate children of France.

Japan

YOKOHAMA -- Greeted by cheers from a small group of anti-whaling supporters, a Greenpeace boat docked in Japan on Friday, ending a weeklong standoff with Japanese authorities who had effectively barred their entry into port.

Kenya

NAIROBI -- Ethiopian and Somali forces may have committed war crimes during four days of heavy artillery shelling against an Islamic insurgency in the Somali capital and foreign donors could be complicit, a European Union conflict expert said in an e-mail obtained by The Associated Press.

World datelines

NAIROBI -- Rwanda's first post-genocide leader walked free from prison Friday after a surprise presidential pardon of his convictions that included inciting ethnic tension. Pasteur Bizimungu was freed after serving two years of a 15-year term as an act of clemency by President Paul Kagame to build national unity, an official said.

Pakistan

ISLAMABAD -- In a bold challenge to the government, a firebrand cleric said Friday he had formed an Islamic court to enforce a Taliban-style vice campaign in the Pakistani capital, threatening suicide attacks if authorities try to stop him.

Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN -- Some 400 illegal migrants have been intercepted entering the U.S. Virgin Islands over the past six months, officials say.

Solomon Islands

GIZO -- An international relief operation for Solomon Islands tsunami survivors picked up its pace Friday, as reports of dysentery added urgency to the effort.

Switzerland

GENEVA -- The U.N.'s top human rights official called Friday for the Sudanese government to carry out an impartial investigation into allegations its soldiers took part in the rape of women in Darfur last December.

Thailand

BANGKOK -- Two more videos mocking Thailand's revered king have appeared on YouTube, leading to a pledge from the government Friday to keep its block on the popular video-sharing Web site.

Vietnam

HANOI -- Vietnamese police blocked dissidents' wives from attending a tea at the U.S. ambassador's house, creating a scene that he feared "was at risk of spiraling out of control," the diplomat said Friday.

Zimbabwe

HARARE -- Zimbabwe police said Friday they have opened a murder investigation into the death of an independent journalist, and a lawyer for another reporter arrested under sweeping media laws said he was assaulted and tortured in custody.

Load-Date: April 7, 2007

Israel's president is subject of sexual harassment case

The International Herald Tribune

August 23, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 593 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Israeli police confiscated a computer and documents at the official residence of President Moshe Katsav and plan to question him as part of an investigation into sexual harassment allegations, the police said Tuesday.

Katsav's position is largely ceremonial and any legal proceedings against him would not directly threaten the government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The case comes at a time, however, when several senior government figures have been involved in legal or political controversies.

In addition, many Israelis have been sharply critical of the country's political and military leadership over the handling the recent fighting in Lebanon.

The case involving Katsav surfaced almost two months ago when a woman who previously worked for him told an Israeli newspaper that he had sexually harassed her. Later, a second woman made similar allegations. Neither woman has been identified.

Katsav wrote to the attorney general, saying one of the women had demanded money from him before she went public with her accusation.

The attorney general, Menachem Mazuz, ordered an investigation last month, but the case was overshadowed by the recent fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

The police said that they entered the president's official residence on Monday night, taking the computer and documents.

The authorities are searching for communication between Katsav and his accusers, according to Israel Radio.

Katsav has denied any wrongdoing, and his office said Tuesday that the president was fully cooperating with the investigation. No charges have been filed, but if they are, it would almost certainly force Katsav from office.

Justice Minister Haim Ramon resigned Sunday after he was charged with forcibly kissing a female soldier last month.

Israel 's president is subject of sexual harassment case

In other matters that have attracted attention, the state comptroller has been investigating the sale by Olmert of his Jerusalem home two years ago, and the purchase of a new one nearby. Critics contend he received an above-market price for his old home, and paid a below-market rate for his new one.

Also, the army's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, has faced criticism after a newspaper revealed that he spoke to his bank and sold mutual fund shares several hours after **Hezbollah** staged its cross-border raid on July 12, precipitating the fighting.

Katsav was selected as president in 2000, after his predecessor, Ezer Weizman, resigned during a corruption scandal. Weizman quit after it was revealed that during the 1980s, when he was a member of Parliament and a government minister, he received hundreds of thousands of dollars from a French businessman with interests in Israel.

In the West Bank, an Israeli military court charged the speaker of the Palestinian Parliament, Aziz Dweik, a Hamas member, with belonging to an illegal organization, The Associated Press reported.

Israel considers Hamas a terrorist organization and membership in the group is banned under Israeli law. After Palestinian militants, including Hamas, seized an Israeli soldier on June 25, Israel began arresting Palestinian legislators and cabinet members belonging to Hamas.

Dweik, who was arrested Aug. 6, is the most senior figure charged so far.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military shot and killed three militants from the Islamic Jihad faction when they approached the Gaza Strip's perimeter fence, according to the Israeli military and Palestinian security officials.

Also, the military surrounded a house east of Gaza City and arrested five wanted militants, including two members of Hamas, the military added.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006

Our star pupil is fighting for Israel

Western Daily Press

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 507 words

Byline: Tom Morgan tc.morgan@bepp.co.uk

Body

Why former West public school prefect shunned the academic life to fire rockets at Hezbollah A YOUNG woman fighting Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon has been revealed as a former star pupil at one of the West's top private schools.

Former Clifton College prefect Abigail Amit shocked family and friends by snubbing a place at university to become a soldier in the Israeli army.

The 24-year-old had been firing rockets at Lebanese insurgents until yesterday's ceasefire.

Despite controversy surrounding Israel's actions, Ms Amit's father told the Western Daily Press he was "immensely proud" of his daughter's role in the conflict.

Speaking from an Israeli onion field, Ms Amit said: "People are dying there and that troubles me. But it goes both ways. We only shoot at them when they shoot at us."

Ms Amit left £23,000-a-year Clifton College in 2000 with top A-level grades in history and biology. She went travelling in Kenya and had intended to spend her gap year on an Israeli kibbutz before studying for a degree in physiotherapy at Aberdeen University.

But during her time in Israel she was persuaded to join the country's army. After two years of national service she was called up to fight for her adopted country.

She said: "I came here when I was 20 on a gap year before university and loved it so much I decided to stay. I spent two years in the army, I volunteered to do it. It's part of what being an Israeli is all about.

"I spoke to my parents when this all started. They're pretending to be really calm but I know they're not. I speak to them from here on my mobile.

"When I first said I was moving to Israel for good they asked me to think again. They weren't supportive of the idea. My friends were in shock, too.

"If I had stayed in Britain, I would probably be on holiday now."

The dangers faced by women fighting in the war was highlighted by the death of 26-year-old Keren Tendler when an Israeli helicopter was shot down.

Our star pupil is fighting for Israel

Ms Amit, who was born in Scotland, added: "There aren't that many women serving up on the front. You have to be quite fit to do it. Last night, I was woken at 4.30am to be ready to fire." She is attached to a three-person missile firing artillery unit and was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal in April.

In three months, she plans to attend college in Israel to study politics and government.

Ms Amit studied at Clifton College for four years. She was made a 'praeposter' - a prefect - at the top Bristol school, which counts Monty Python star John Cleese among its former students.

Ms Amit's father, who is a senior member of Britain's Jewish community but prefers not to reveal his identity, added: "She made lots of friends in Bristol. It will probably be quite a surprise for them to know what she is up to now."

Both parents and Ms Amit's sister said they were racked with worry over her daughter's involvement in the war that has now claimed the lives of more than 100 Israeli soldiers.

They also worry about revealing their names or where they live in the current climate of heightened tension in Britain.

Load-Date: August 17, 2006

Marching for Jewish solidarity

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

August 5, 2006 Saturday

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Distribution: LARGO TIMES; CLEARWATER TIMES; NORTH PINELLAS TIMES

Section: LARGO TIMES; Pg. 3

Length: 515 words

Byline: EILEEN SCHULTE

Body

On an evening 24 days ago, when Bonnie Friedman's and Debbie Sokolov's plane landed at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, the first rockets had already been fired.

The women had no idea what was going on.

"We turned on our cell phones and they were ringing off the hook with relatives saying 'come home,' " Friedman said.

The war between Israel and Hezbollah had begun.

But the two women from the Jewish Federation of Pinellas County were not about to abandon their mission trip. They pushed on, hoping to help.

"Our first briefing was with Shimon Peres," Sokolov said of Israel's prime minister from 1984 to 1986.

The women also met with other Israeli officials who requested the group's help in moving children from the hard hit northern regions of the country. Most of them were living in bomb shelters.

"We said yes, we will give you a million dollars," Friedman said. "Luckily, we had a computer and sent the message back to our federation. The money was coming in before we left the country."

At some point during the humanitarian trip, Sokolov's husband, Dr. Mark Sokolov, joined her in Jerusalem.

One day, the couple paused at the Jaffa Gate, one of the entrances to the Old City, when a suicide bomber appeared out of nowhere. Military personnel captured him before the explosives were detonated.

The Sokolovs were shaken, but "our guide said it's just another day in Israel," Debbie Sokolov said.

Although Sokolov's parents were calling daily, begging her to return to the United States, she and her husband stood fast.

"They (the Israeli people) don't have the luxury of leaving," she said.

"If they can live there, we can stay a few extra days. We wanted to show our solidarity with them."

Marching for Jewish solidarity

Both Sokolov and Friedman will attend a march and rally to promote solidarity on Sunday afternoon in Clearwater.

To Rabbi David Weizman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Shalom, it was no surprise the Israeli-Hezbollah war continued through Tisha B'Av, which was celebrated Wednesday.

It's a Jewish holiday ancient religious leaders set aside for mourning.

"It marks the destruction of the temple," he said. "(And it commemorates) the exile of our people from the homeland."

Throughout history, tragic historical events have occurred on or near this date in the Jewish calendar.

On this day in 1190, the Jews of York, England, were murdered; Arabs attacked the Jews of Palestine in 1929; and in 1942, the Nazis deported the Jews of Warsaw to Treblinka.

Of the latest conflict, Weizman admits he's concerned.

"It's weighing heavily on my mind and heart," he said.

"We really feel it's about the survival of Israel. We're worried about the future. We don't want to live from one ceasefire to the next."

Eileen Schulte can be reached at (727) 445-4153 or schulte@sptimes.com.

IF YOU GO

A march to demonstrate solidarity with Israel will begin at 2 p.m. at Congregation Beth Shalom at 1325 S Belcher Road in Clearwater. Participants will walk about seven-tenths of a mile north to Temple B'nai Israel at 1685 S Belcher Road in Clearwater. At the temple, there will be a rally at 3 p.m. featuring speaker Raanan Gissin.

Graphic

TIMES PHOTOS, KATHLEEN FLYNN (2)

Load-Date: August 5, 2006

World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

February 7, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 582 words

Byline: Compiled from Deseret Morning News wire services

Body

Bolivia

LA PAZ -- More than 20,000 miners from across Bolivia marched into the capital Tuesday, tossing sticks of dynamite that sent booming explosions echoing through the streets in a protest of President Evo Morales' plans for a steep hike in mining taxes.

Britain

WOKINGHAM -- A suspected letter bomb exploded at an outsourcing company Tuesday at the start of the work day, officials said, injuring two employees in the second attack of its kind this week.

Canada

NEW WESTMINSTER, British Columbia -- A pig farmer accused in the deaths of women from a gritty Vancouver neighborhood told an undercover police officer he wanted to kill 75 but planned to take a break after one more slaying made it "an even 50," according to a jail cell video shown at his trial Tuesday.

China

BEIJING -- China will spend more to research global warming but lacks the money and technology to significantly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are worsening the problem, a government official said Tuesday.

Denmark

COPENHAGEN -- A Cold War-era Soviet-built submarine that was being towed to a museum in Thailand took on water and sank off northwestern Denmark, Danish officials and the vessel's Thai owner said Tuesday.

Germany

BERLIN -- A German appellate court in Stuttgart proposed a \$19,500 fine Tuesday against a 70-year-old man who fatally beat an escaped golden eagle with his walking stick after it attacked his dachshund.

Israel

JERUSALEM -- Police took up positions throughout Jerusalem's Old City on Tuesday as Israeli archaeologists began digging near a site holy to both Jews and Muslims amid protests and threats from Palestinians.

World datelines

Lebanon

BEIRUT -- The Hezbollah guerrilla group denied Tuesday that four bombs uncovered by the Israeli army on the volatile border were new, saying they were planted before this summer's war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Mexico

ACAPULCO -- More than a dozen armed assailants staged and videotaped simultaneous attacks against two offices of the state attorney general in Acapulco on Tuesday, killing at least seven people in this Pacific resort plagued by drug violence.

North Korea

The U.S. and Japan have not discussed providing energy aid to North Korea ahead of talks aimed at getting the isolated communist nation to abandon its nuclear program, officials from the two countries said Tuesday.

Pakistan

ISLAMABAD -- A suicide bomber armed with pistols and grenades killed himself and at least one other person after a shootout with security guards at Islamabad's international airport on Tuesday night, in what the police described as a thwarted but brazen terrorist attack.

Poland

WARSAW -- A day after they forced out Poland's respected minister of defense, the identical twins who run Poland, Lech and Jaroslaw Kaczynski, president and prime minister respectively, face accusations they have packed the government with inexperienced loyalists -- and damaged the country's international standing.

Russia

MOSCOW -- Cellist-conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, 79, has been hospitalized for an unspecified reason, and his manager said Tuesday "it does not look good."

Thailand

BANGKOK -- The Thai government agreed Tuesday to reopen Bangkok's old Don Muang airport for international and domestic flights amid growing problems at the scandal-ridden new Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Turkey

ANKARA -- Workers rescued a 15-year-old boy early Tuesday who was alive 36 hours after the collapse of an apartment building that left five people dead in southeastern Turkey, the governor's office announced.

Load-Date: February 7, 2007

Briefs

Philadelphia Daily News
January 25, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 12

Length: 572 words

Body

Angry Israeli president

rejects calls to resign

JERUSALEM- Shaking with fury, Israeli President Moshe Katsav rebuffed growing calls for his resignation yesterday, saying accusations that he had committed rape and other crimes were "poisonous, horrible lies."

Katsav asked parliament to suspend him from office while he fought to clear his name. But momentum was building for lawmakers to open unprecedented impeachment proceedings against the president, and top officials urged Katsav to stop clinging to office and let the nation heal.

The presidency, a mainly ceremonial post, was traditionally filled by national heroes who were expected to serve as the moral light of the country. Accusations that Katsav used his position to force himself on female employees have infuriated Israelis.

A day after Beirut violence,

U.S. offers \$220M for arms

PARIS - The United States will offer nearly \$770 million - a tripling of aid - to help the fragile democratic government in Lebanon, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said here yesterday.

The donation, which must be approved by Congress, would include \$220 million in military aid for the beleaguered Western-backed government of Prime Minister Fuad Saniora.

Meanwhile, Lebanon remained tense yesterday, a day after Hezbollah-led protesters clashed with government supporters across the country, killing three. What had been planned as a peaceful work-stoppage turned into the worst violence since Shiite Hezbollah militants and their allies launched a campaign two months ago to oust the government.

Russia delivers missiles to Iran; they'll defend nuke facilities

Briefs

TEHRAN, Iran - Iranian officials said yesterday that they have taken delivery of advanced Russian air-defense missile systems - weapons intended, according to a Russian news agency, to defend Tehran's major nuclear facilities.

Announcement of the delivery of the Tor-M1 mobile missile launchers came as Iran launched three days of military maneuvers, its first since the U.N. Security Council approved sanctions against Iran on Dec. 23.

"We have had constructive defense transactions with Russia and we purchased Tor-M1 missiles that were recently delivered to us," the official Web site of Iranian state television quoted Minister of Defense Mostafa Mohammad Najjar as saying.

According to Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency, the 29 weapons were delivered before the U.N. ban went into effect and were expected to be used to protect major installations such the nuclear facilities at Isfahan, Bushehr, Tehran and in eastern Iran.

Bitten by shark, Aussie says it

almost swallowed him whole

SYDNEY, Australia - A diver who was almost swallowed alive by a 10-foot-long shark said yesterday that a lead-lined weight vest kept the animal from biting him in half and a chisel used for gathering shellfish allowed him to fend off the fish.

Eric Nerhus, 41, described Tuesday's terrifying attack by a shark, believed to be a great white, off the fishing town of Eden, about 250 miles south of Sydney.

The shark grabbed Nerhus by the head in about 25 feet of water and "half my body was in its mouth," Nerhus told Australian television's Nine Network.

He said that after about two minutes he managed to escape the shark's jaws after jabbing at its eye with a chisel he used to chip abalone from rocks.

He was helped into his boat by his son and rushed to a hospital where he was being treated for severe cuts to his head, torso and left arm.

Associated Press

Load-Date: January 25, 2007

Israel suspends air attacks in wake of strike killing 56

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

July 31, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 14

Length: 496 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM (AP) -- Israel suspended air attacks on south Lebanon for 48 hours in the face of widespread outrage over an air strike Sunday that killed at least 56 Lebanese, almost all of them women and children, when it levelled a building where they had taken shelter.

The announcement -- made by a State Department spokesman with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Jerusalem -- appeared to reflect American pressure on Israel to make some concession after the strike.

In addition to suspending air attacks, Israel will also allow the opening of corridors for 24 hours for Lebanese civilians who want to leave south Lebanon for the north and would maintain land, sea and air corridors for humanitarian assistance, officials said.

Israeli government officials confirmed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed to an immediate 48-hour halt in air strikes on Lebanon around midnight Sunday while the military concludes its inquiry into the attack on the south Lebanese village of Qana.

The officials left open the possibility that Israel might hit targets to stop imminent attacks, and that the suspension could last less than 48 hours if the military completes its inquiry before then.

Lebanon said the Israeli suspension was inadequate.

"There is no ceasefire and there is no cessation of hostilities," Lebanese special envoy Nouhad Mahoud told reporters at the United Nations late Sunday. "We are looking for something much more than that."

The bloodshed in Lebanon prompted Rice to cut short her Mideast mission and intensified world demands on Washington to back an immediate end to the fighting.

A three-storey house on the outskirts of Qana was levelled when a missile crashed into it at 1 a.m., local time. Red Cross officials said 56 were killed and police said 34 children and 12 adult women were among the dead. It was worst single strike since Israel's campaign in Lebanon began on July 12 when Hezbollah militants crossed the border into Israel and abducted two soldiers.

Israel suspends air attacks in wake of strike killing 56

The attack in Qana brought Lebanon's death toll to more than 510 and pushed American peace efforts to a crucial juncture, as fury at the United States flared in Lebanon.

The Beirut government said it would no longer negotiate over a U.S. peace package without an unconditional ceasefire.

In Qana, workers pulled dirt-covered bodies of young boys and girls -- dressed in the shorts and T-shirts they had been sleeping in -- out of the mangled wreckage of the building. Bodies were carried in blankets.

Israel apologized for the deaths but blamed Hezbollah guerrillas, saying they had fired rockets into northern Israel from near the building.

Rice called the Qana bombing "awful" and said she wanted "a ceasefire as soon as possible." It appeared to be her first real call for a quick end to the bloodshed.

U.S. President George W. Bush repeated his call for a "sustainable peace" in the Middle East and said: America mourns the loss of innocent life, those tragic occasions when innocent people are killed."

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; People hold a candlelit vigil in Paris in memory of at least 56 people -- more than half of them children -- who were killed Sunday in an Israeli airstrike in the southern Lebanese village of Qana.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Our star pupil is fighting for Isreal

Western Daily Press

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 507 words

Byline: Tom Morgan tc.morgan@bepp.co.uk

Body

Why former West public school prefect shunned the academic life to fire rockets at Hezbollah A YOUNG woman fighting Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon has been revealed as a former star pupil at one of the West's top private schools.

Former Clifton College prefect Abigail Amit shocked family and friends by snubbing a place at university to become a soldier in the Israeli army.

The 24-year-old had been firing rockets at Lebanese insurgents until yesterday's ceasefire.

Despite controversy surrounding Israel's actions, Ms Amit's father told the Western Daily Press he was "immensely proud" of his daughter's role in the conflict.

Speaking from an Israeli onion field, Ms Amit said: "People are dying there and that troubles me. But it goes both ways. We only shoot at them when they shoot at us."

Ms Amit left £23,000-a-year Clifton College in 2000 with top A-level grades in history and biology. She went travelling in Kenya and had intended to spend her gap year on an Israeli kibbutz before studying for a degree in physiotherapy at Aberdeen University.

But during her time in Israel she was persuaded to join the country's army. After two years of national service she was called up to fight for her adopted country.

She said: "I came here when I was 20 on a gap year before university and loved it so much I decided to stay. I spent two years in the army, I volunteered to do it. It's part of what being an Israeli is all about.

"I spoke to my parents when this all started. They're pretending to be really calm but I know they're not. I speak to them from here on my mobile.

"When I first said I was moving to Israel for good they asked me to think again. They weren't supportive of the idea. My friends were in shock, too.

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The dangers faced by women fighting in the war was highlighted by the death of 26-year-old Keren Tendler when an Israeli helicopter was shot down.

Our star pupil is fighting for Isreal

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Both parents and Ms Amit's sister said they were racked with worry over her daughter's involvement in the war that has now claimed the lives of more than 100 Israeli soldiers.

They also worry about revealing their names or where they live in the current climate of heightened tension in Britain.

Load-Date: August 16, 2006

Letters - The west has got Iran all wrong

Irish News

September 14, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 26

Length: 599 words

Body

Much has been printed and spoken recently about Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology, its refusal to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency requirements and its confrontation with the United Nations and the European Union.

The media even speculated about Iran's involvement with Hezbollah, especially in the provision of weapons and now with the financing of the reconstruction of south Lebanon.

Through all this coverage, nobody asked why Iran would spend billions of pounds of the Iranian people's money developing nuclear technology and enriching uranium when the country has the second largest oil and gas reserves in the world.

Not to mention the dangers of developing nuclear technology in a country that has earthquakes.

Nobody has asked why Iran would spend millions bankrolling the rebuilding of south Lebanon through Hezbollah when 80 per cent of its own people live below the poverty line.

The clerical regime's increasing belligerence fanning the flames of conflict elsewhere in the Middle East seeks to divert attention from its development of nuclear weapons and interference in Iraq.

The current crises in Palestine and Lebanon allow the mullahs in Iran to represent themselves as advocates of the rights of Arab people while at the same time inflicting suppression, intimidation and unimaginable cruelty on the Iranian people.

Exactly one year ago when Ahmadinejad became president the Iranian resistance predicted that by bringing to power a member of the Revolutionary Guard, the religious regime had declared war on the Iranian people and the international community.

This has sadly proved to be true with domestic repression reaching new heights.

In August alone 10 people were executed, two women sentenced to be stoned to death, 64,000 women were stopped and harassed in the streets for being 'mal-veiled' and only recently the Iranian regime has begun the removal of TV satellite dishes from homes.

Pictures released showed the cruelty inflicted on a child and reflect only what is done by this regime in public.

Imagine what this regime does in its prisons to political prisoners.

Letters - The west has got Iran all wrong

The ruling regime in Iran has nothing to do with Islam and its teachings about compassion, equality and human rights.

If it had abuse of its own citizens would be unheard of.

But the religious regime uses a backward fundamentalist ideology and abuses Islam for political ends.

For the last 20 years the West has sought to appease the ruling regime, using the excuse that they wanted to work with the moderates within the regime.

These moderates do not exist.

As long as the international community ignores the reality of life under Islamic fundamentalism and seeks to appease and negotiate with non-existent moderates, brutality will thrive.

As long as the international community ignores the regime's interference and aggression in countries like Iraq, the stage is set for further crisis in the Middle East.

As Paulo Freire said: "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."

The Iranian resistance through Maryam Rajavi and the National Council of Resistance of Iran are the only credible opposition to this regime with massive support both inside and outside Iran.

They have led a long cultural and political challenge to Islamic fundamentalism.

There should be no foreign intervention in Iran and there should be no continued appeasement of the fundamentalists.

The Iranian people should have the right to self-determination through their own resistance.

UNA GILLESPIE, Iranian Human Rights Solidarity Group, Belfast.

Load-Date: September 14, 2006

Israeli Police Investigating Sex Case Take Items From President's Home

The New York Times
August 23, 2006 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 533 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Aug. 22

Body

The Israeli police have confiscated a computer and documents from the official residence of President Moshe Katsav and plan to question him as part of an investigation into sexual harassment accusations, the police said Tuesday.

Mr. Katsav's position is largely ceremonial, and any legal proceedings against him would not directly threaten the government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

But the case comes at a time when several senior government figures have been involved in legal or political controversies. In addition, many Israelis have been sharply critical of the country's political and military leadership over the handling of the recent fighting in Lebanon.

The case involving Mr. Katsav surfaced almost two months ago when a woman who previously worked for him told an Israeli newspaper that he had sexually harassed her. Later, a second woman made similar allegations. Neither woman has been identified.

Mr. Katsav wrote to the attorney general, saying one of the women had demanded money from him before she made her accusation publicly.

The attorney general, Menachem Mazuz, ordered an investigation last month, but the case was overshadowed by the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

The police said they entered the president's official residence on Monday night, taking the computer and documents. The authorities are searching for communications between Mr. Katsav and his accusers, according to Israel radio.

Police investigators will return to Mr. Katsav's residence on Wednesday to question him, according to a police spokesman, Micky Rosenfeld.

Mr. Katsav has denied any wrongdoing, and his office said Tuesday that he was fully cooperating with the investigation.

No charges have been filed, but if they are, Mr. Katsav is expected to resign.

Israeli Police Investigating Sex Case Take Items From President's Home

Israel's justice minister, Haim Ramon, resigned Sunday after he was charged with forcibly kissing a **female** soldier last month.

In other recent controversies, the state comptroller has been investigating the circumstances surrounding Mr. Olmert's sale of his Jerusalem home two years ago, and the purchase of a new one nearby. Critics contend that he received an above-market price for the sale of his old home and that he paid below the market rate for his new one.

Also, the army's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, has faced a storm of criticism after a newspaper disclosed that he spoke to his bank and sold mutual fund shares several hours after **Hezbollah** staged its cross-border raid on July 12, precipitating the fighting in Lebanon.

Mr. Katsav was appointed to his post in 2000, after his predecessor, Ezer Weizman, resigned amid a corruption scandal. Mr. Weizman quit after it was disclosed that during the 1980's, when he was a member of parliament and a government minister, he received hundreds of thousands of dollars from a French businessman with interests in Israel.

In other developments Tuesday, an Israeli military court in the West Bank charged the speaker of the Palestinian parliament, Aziz Dweik, a Hamas member, with belonging to an illegal organization, The Associated Press reported.

Israel considers Hamas a terrorist organization, and membership in the group is banned under Israeli law.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: President Moshe Katsav of Israel has been accused of sexual harassment by two **women**. (Photo by Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images, 2005)

Load-Date: August 23, 2006

Our star pupil is fighting for Israel

Western Daily Press

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 507 words

Byline: Tom Morgan tc.morgan@bepp.co.uk

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She said: "I came here when I was 20 on a gap year before university and loved it so much I decided to stay. I spent two years in the army, I volunteered to do it. It's part of what being an Israeli is all about.

"I spoke to my parents when this all started. They're pretending to be really calm but I know they're not. I speak to them from here on my mobile.

"When I first said I was moving to Israel for good they asked me to think again. They weren't supportive of the idea. My friends were in shock, too.

"If I had stayed in Britain, I would probably be on holiday now."

The dangers faced by women fighting in the war was highlighted by the death of 26-year-old Keren Tendler when an Israeli helicopter was shot down.

Our star pupil is fighting for Israel

Ms Amit, who was born in Scotland, added: "There aren't that many women serving up on the front. You have to be quite fit to do it. Last night, I was woken at 4.30am to be ready to fire." She is attached to a three-person missile firing artillery unit and was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal in April.

In three months, she plans to attend college in Israel to study politics and government.

Ms Amit studied at Clifton College for four years. She was made a 'praeposter' - a prefect - at the top Bristol school, which counts Monty Python star John Cleese among its former students.

Ms Amit's father, who is a senior member of Britain's Jewish community but prefers not to reveal his identity, added: "She made lots of friends in Bristol. It will probably be quite a surprise for them to know what she is up to now."

Both parents and Ms Amit's sister said they were racked with worry over her daughter's involvement in the war that has now claimed the lives of more than 100 Israeli soldiers.

They also worry about revealing their names or where they live in the current climate of heightened tension in Britain.

Load-Date: October 29, 2006

Dozens die in Iraqi holy day violence as provincial al-Qaida leader captured

Yorkshire Post

January 31, 2007

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Body

Shia worshippers in three Iraqi cities suffered bombings and ambushes yesterday, as at least 39 people died during the climax of ceremonies marking Ashura, the holiest day in the Shia calendar. In apparent retaliation mortar shells slammed into predominantly Sunni neighbourhoods in Baghdad hours later, killing at least five people and wounding 20. Tens of thousands of Shia Muslims converged on the holy city of Karbala under tight security, beating their chests and heads to mark the seventh-century death of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson. The entire city was sealed off and pilgrims were searched at numerous checkpoints.

All vehicles including bi-cycles were banned, a day after the Iraqi army said it had foiled a plot by a messianic Shia group to storm the nearby city of Najaf. The bloodiest attack yesterday occurred when a suicide bomber blew himself up among a crowd of worshippers entering a Shia mosque, killing 19 people and wounding 54 in Mandali, a predominantly Shia city north-east of Baghdad. To the north a bomb in a rubbish bin exploded as scores of Shias, most of them Kurds, were performing rituals in Khanaqin, a majority Kurdish city also near the Iranian border. At least 13 people were killed and 39 were wounded. The two bombings happened on the edge of Diyala province, not far from Baqouba, where fighting has raged for weeks between Sunni insurgents, Shia militiamen and US-Iraqi troops. Gunmen in two cars also opened fire on a yellow minibus carrying Shia pilgrims in the capital, killing at least seven people and wounding seven others. In ceremonies to mark Ashura in Pakistan, an explosion next to a pre-dawn procession provoked an outburst of shooting that left two Sunni Muslims dead in the western town of Hangu. In Beirut the leader of Lebanon's main Shia party Hezbollah, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, used the occasion to rebuke US President George Bush. "The ones who fomented chaos in Lebanon, who destroyed Lebanon, who killed women and children, old and young, in Lebanon, are George Bush and (Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice, who ordered the Zionists to launch the war on Lebanon," Sheikh Nasrallah said, referring to the conflict last July and August that began after Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers on the border. Sheikh Nasrallah was responding to a statement from President Bush when he deplored last week's riots in Lebanon and said those responsible for chaos "must be called to account". Ashura ceremonies in Saudi Arabia and Iran also took place in an atmosphere of tension. In Bahrain, which with Iraq is one of two Arab countries with a Shia majority, about 15,000 people marched through the capital Manama before dawn. A spokesman for the ceremony said hundreds of Shias from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates had taken part. n Iraqi security forces captured a provincial leader of al-Qaida in Iraq yesterday during an operation north of Baghdad, which also left two of his followers dead and dozens held. Government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq in the province of Salahuddin was captured with his deputy in the town of Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad. He refused to name the man, adding that 59 others, including a Libyan citizen, had been captured in the operation. In June al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed in a US airstrike on his hideout.

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

Dozens die in Iraqi holy day violence as provincial al-Qaida leader captured

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