

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:16:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223446011

Documents (100)

1. In towns near Gaza, a sense of strength Israelis' big worry is officials' resolve

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

2. Countries pitch ceasefire; Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

3. <u>Israelis killing children at UN school in Gaza Just two militants among at least 34 people slaughtered</u>
INTERNATIONAL

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

4. Israel to open 'humanitarian corridor', school blast kills 30

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

5. How the children perish as Israel reopensgates of hell

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

6. Boat arrives in Gaza to protest blockade

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

7. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

8. UN appeal for truce in Gaza unheeded Aid groups express growing frustration with poor conditions

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

9. Family of 7 wiped out by an Israeli tank shell Death toll rises in fresh attacks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

10. Protesters slam Mubarak over Gaza killings

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

11. Flowers amid West Bank thorns Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

12. World datelines

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

13. Flowers amid West Bank thorns Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

14. Aid Groups Rebuke Israel Over Conditions in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

15. Israeli shelling kills dozens at UN school in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

16. Flowers amid West Bank thorns Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

17. Israel strikes at Lebanon rocket site

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

18. Israel Welcomes French - Egyptian Gaza Peace Initiative

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

19. ANTI- ISRAEL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN INDIA

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

20. KASHMIRIS PROTEST AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA STRIP

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

21. <u>BARELY SURVIVING VICTORIA WARD REPORTS FROM FRONT LINE IN ASSAULT ON GAZA</u> TERROR AS ISRAEL STORMS STRIP 100 CIVILIANS AMONG 500 DEAD

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

22. It's too easy just to blame Jews

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

23. Israeli forces encircle Gaza city with combined attacks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

24. Anger over official silence on Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

25. Their battlefield is not in our country

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

26. Attack is hidden from cameras



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

27. Will Israel never learn? Each bomb is a gift to its enemies

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

28. Protesters took the law into their own hands at war demo

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

29. Our readers | have their say

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

30. Tragic missteps; France, Egypt propose Gaza truce plan after Israeli mortar kills 30

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

31. Attack is hidden from cameras

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

32. Thousands protest Gaza war in Chicago

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

33. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

34. Bush plea . . . Shame on humanity . . . Mass murder

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

35. With a Grain of Salt: Merci for your impartiality

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

36. ... And Another Thing COMMENT & DEBATE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

37. UN reports offensive's toll on civilians rising

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

38. Standing Between Enemies

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

39. Massacre of innocents as UN school is shelled Obama breaks silence to express deep concern over civilian casualties UN had given co-ordinates to Israelis in bid to protect refugees from attack

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

40. <u>Feature - Disgrace of the silent treatment By refusing to condemn Israeli atrocities, intellectuals in the West</u> are complicit in its crimes, argues John Pilger

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

41. Palestinian home game historic, says FIFA

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

42. Clinton, Familiar With Pitfalls of Mideast Politics, May Face Early Test in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

43. Year of living dangerously

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

44. International: Gaza: Analysis: For as long as both sides think they can win, blood will continue to be spilt

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

45. The tragedy when a regime uses its citizens as tools of war COMMENT & DEBATE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

46. US 's chance to step between Israel and Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

47. Strike near UN school leaves 30 dead in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

48. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

49. Israeli - Palestinian PR occupies YouTube OPINION & ANALYSIS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

50. Thousands of reservists on move as Israel watches its back - GAZA INVASION

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

51. Feature - Palestine will be liberated

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

52. Dozens buried following attack on school



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

53. EDITORIAL: The Gaza games: The lessons of last eight years

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

54. KIDS AMONG 40 DEAD AS ISRAELIS BOMB SCHOOL Carnage as blitz goes on

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

55. KIDS AMONG 40 DEAD AS ISRAELIS BOMB SCHOOL CARNAGE AS BLITZ GOES ON

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

56. UN war crimes worry Concern at Israel actions

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

57. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

58. We're rooned and it's all that South African's fault

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

59. Covering Mideast protests fairly

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

60. Democracy and war Maybe someday Israel will get credit for freedoms it grants and that terrorists do not.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

61. Column: Unconditional support of Israel must change

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

62. How many more?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

63. chatroom

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

64. Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

65. Wherever I go, I hear the same tired Middle East comparisons Robert Fisk's World

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

66. International law is not a suicide pact

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

67. Clinton, friend to Israel, must now be broker, too

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

68. Lifeline smuggling tunnels destroyed in Gaza bombings

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

69. chatroom

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

70._THE Week THAT Was

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

71. A terrible beginning for 2009

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

72. TALKING POINT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

73. SA urged to use its influnce to bring Palestinians to table



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

74. Widows' grim plight

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

75. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

76. SA urged to use its influnce to bring Palestinians to table

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

77. Israeli government shows it has no respect for human dignity

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

78. International: Gaza: Voices from the frontline: 'It's a living hell and my children are petrified'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

79. Bloodshed that puts lasting peace in peril COMMENT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

80. Protesters decry invasion of Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

81. Old graves dug up to bury new dead in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

82. Israeli bombardment of Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

83. From Tel Aviv to Teheran, with love

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

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84. Children die in Israeli bombing near school in 'shocked' Gaza 'There is nowhere safe. Everyone is terrorised

and traumatised'
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

85. Government contortions, public anger

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

86. World unites in anger

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

87. 200 rally in Kitchener against Israeli bombs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

88. Comment & Debate: Israel has yet to learn the US lesson, that the war on terror was a failure: Americans now realise that aggression fuels extremism. This offers Obama the chance for a new Middle East policy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

89. International: Gaza Air Strikes: Profile: Ehud Barak: Soldier turned politician who spent his life fighting

<u>Arabs</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

90. 50/50

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

91. Residents scramble for safety 'No one is safe now,' as Gazans move from place to place, trying to guess

where next strikes will hit

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

92. Is Clinton, Israel 's ally, ready to be mediator?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

93. Soldier loses leg in mortar attack on western Negev base. We'll act in Gaza soon, Vilna'i vows

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

94. The Toll On The Children Of Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

95. Cease firing to find truth

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

96. We'll do it the smart way, says Clinton

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

97. Israel shells near UN school, kills at least 30 Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

98. China's Gaza role

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

99. Thousands join Hizbullah rally against Israel 's siege of Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

100. Muslims condemn attacks, worry about image

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009



In towns near Gaza, a sense of strength; Israelis' big worry is officials' resolve

The International Herald Tribune January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 654 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: BEERSHEBA, Israel

Body

The soldiers lingered, arms linked in a chain of khaki around the grave. The instructions were to disperse quickly after the ceremony because of the threat of rocket fire, but it was hard for them to leave. Many had just come from the fighting in Gaza.

The young staff sergeant they buried Wednesday in the military cemetery of Beersheba, in southern Israel, was the sixth soldier to have been killed in Gaza since the start of the 12-day-old Israeli campaign against *Hamas*.

Then the siren wailed. Everybody scattered, looking for shelter, aware that they had maybe half a minute before the rocket, or rockets, fired out of Gaza would land. Some crouched by walls. Others crammed into a small concrete-roofed structure nearby. One boom, then a second and a third.

The funeral was over.

The rockets hit open ground in and around Beersheba, causing some panic but no serious injury. But the knowledge that this city, the fourth largest in Israel and a half-hour drive east of the Gaza border, is now within Palestinian rocket range, underpinned the determination of the soldiers who were on their way back to the war.

"You did not fight for nothing," said the commander of the elite combat engineering unit in his eulogy for the fallen soldier, Alex Mashavisky, 21, who was killed in a firefight with <u>Hamas</u> militants Tuesday. "We went out to defend our home."

The Israeli offensive is, according to military officials, designed to break the military infrastructure of <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic group that governs Gaza, and to put an end to the incessant rocket fire. Starting with an intense aerial campaign and moving on to a ground operation, it has been brutal, with numerous civilian casualties on the Palestinian side.

Three Israeli civilians and another soldier have died in rocket attacks since the military offensive began on Dec. 27.

Israelis are not relishing what lies ahead if the offensive continues. That would involve taking on <u>Hamas</u> in its urban strongholds, moving further into the cities of Gaza and the alleyways of its crowded refugee camps. The body count would inevitably rise on both sides.

In towns near Gaza, a sense of strength Israelis' big worry is officials' resolve

But the majority in Israel remains staunchly supportive of this operation, considering it utterly justified. Those residents of the south who live under the threat of the rockets, and who have been under more intensive fire in recent weeks, only hope that Israeli leaders will not give in to international pressure and end the campaign too soon.

"Beersheba residents salute the soldiers," read a hand-made banner hanging outside an apartment building at the edge of town.

The soldiers have a special place in Israeli society and culture. Males and <u>females</u> are drafted at 18, and when there is a war, most families are somehow involved.

The front pages of popular newspapers here Wednesday displayed photographs of the recently fallen. Of the six in Gaza, three and possibly four were killed by so-called "friendly fire."

In Israel, a relatively small country, the rockets seem to go far and the war is very near. In the town of Sderot, the closest to the Gaza border, the sounds of battle were audible from the old commercial center Wednesday evening. When there were a series of sharp bangs, there was some confusion over whether they were Palestinian rockets falling on the Israeli side of the border fence or Israeli bombs on the far side.

Sderot has borne the brunt of the crudest, short-range rockets, known as Qassams, with thousands falling in or around the town over the past eight years. The usual anger here has turned into something else now. Not relief yet, but a sense of satisfaction and hope.

People are hanging Israeli flags outside their stores and flying them from cars.

Ilan Sinai said he was sorry for the soldiers who were dying, and also for the Palestinian civilians on the other side.

But, he said, "This is the first time the children in Sderot are not the soldiers, hiding from the Qassams."

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

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Countries pitch ceasefire; Gaza

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 650 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK and JASON KEYSER The Associated Press

Body

Israeli bombs fall near UN school

France and Egypt announced an initiative to stop the fighting in Gaza late Tuesday, hours after Israeli mortar shells exploded near a UN school sheltering hundreds of people displaced by the onslaught on *Hamas* militants.

At least 30 Palestinians died, staining streets with blood.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner released no details of the ceasefire plan, saying at the UN Security Council that the presidents of his country and Egypt were awaiting a response from Israel.

Israeli officials in Jerusalem declined immediate comment on the announcement, which came amid diplomatic efforts by the United States and other countries to resolve a conflict between Israel and the Islamic militants of *Hamas* that has seen 600 people killed in 11 days.

U.S. president-elect Barack Obama broke his silence on the crisis Tuesday, saying that "the loss of civilian life in Gaza and in Israel is a source of deep concern for me."

He declined to go further, reiterating his stance that the United States has only one president at a time.

Israel's military said its shelling at the school - the deadliest single episode since Israeli ground forces invaded Gaza on Saturday after a week of air bombardment - was a response to mortar fire from within the school and said *Hamas* militants were using civilians as cover.

Two residents of the area who spoke with The Associated Press by telephone said they saw a small group of militants firing mortar rounds from a street near the school, where 350 people had gathered to get away from the shelling. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Majed Hamdan, an AP photographer, rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks. At the hospital, he said, many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said.

"In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there wasn't enough space for the wounded."

Countries pitch ceasefire; Gaza

He said there appeared to be marks on the pavement of five separate explosions in area of the school.

An Israeli defence official said it appeared the military used 120-mm shells, among the largest mortar rounds.

UN officials demanded an investigation of the shelling. The carnage, which included 55 wounded, added to a surging civilian toll and drew mounting international pressure for Israel to end the offensive against *Hamas*.

At UN headquarters, Kouchner said Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy had proposed a plan for ending the fighting. He said it would bring together the main parties, including the Palestinian Authority, to take "all measures" to end the conflict, including the key issues of protecting Gaza's borders and reopening all crossings.

"We are awaiting the Israeli response and we harbour hope that it will be a positive one," Kouchner said.

Asked about Kouchner's statement, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's spokesman, Mark Regev, told AP: "We are holding off comments on that for the time being."

Israeli officials have said that any ceasefire agreement must prevent further rocket attacks by Gaza militants and put in place measures to prevent the smuggling of missile and other weapons into the small Palestinian territory.

Earlier at the UN, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called the Israeli bombardment of the group's facilities in Gaza "totally unacceptable." Israel's shells have fallen around three schools, including the girls school hit Tuesday, and a health centre for Palestinian refugees.

Ban added that it was "equally unacceptable" for militants to take actions that endanger Palestinian civilians.

Some 15,000 Palestinians have packed the UN's 23 Gaza schools because their homes were destroyed or to flee the violence. The UN provided the Israeli military with GPS co-ordinates for all of them.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

End of Document



Israelis killing children at UN school in Gaza; Just two militants among at least 34 people slaughtered INTERNATIONAL

Birmingham Post January 7, 2009 Wednesday 1ST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 17

Length: 649 words

Byline: ANDREW MARTIN

Body

International outrage grew over civilian deaths in Gaza last night as an Israeli bombardment killed at least 34,many of them children, near a United Nations school.

Hundreds of Palestinians had sought safety at the school after fleeing from a refugee camp.

It was the second deadly attack near a UN school in hours, and the worst since Israel sent ground forces into Gaza last weekend. Nearly 600 Palestinians, including dozens of civilians, have died.

Ignoring international calls for a ceasefire, Israeli soldiers edged closer to Gaza's population centres. A total of 58 Palestinians were killed in fighting yesterday with two confirmed as militants.

The civilian death toll has drawn international condemnation and raised concerns of a humanitarian disaster.

Many Gazans are without electricity or water, thousands have been displaced from their home sand residents say, with distribution disrupted, food supplies are thin. "There's nowhere safe in Gaza.

Everyone here is terrorised and traumatised,"

John Ging, the top UN official in Gaza, said after the first strike on the compound of a UN school killed three.

The second airstrike landed ten yards outside the school in the northern Gaza town of Jebaliya.

Dr Bassam Abu Warda, director of Kamal Radwan Hospital, said 34 were killed.

Majed Hamdan, a news photographer, said he reached the scene shortly after the attacks. He said many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said.

"In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there was not enough space for the wounded."

Israelis killing children at UN school in Gaza Just two militants among at least 34 people slaughtered INTERNATIONAL

UN officials say they provided location co-ordinates to Israel's army to ensure their buildings in Gaza were not targeted.

The army declined to comment but said <u>Hamas</u> often used schools, mosques and civilian areas for cover.

The international Red Cross said an ambulance post was hit as well, injuring a medical worker.

Ten Israelis have died since the operation began, including a soldier shot yesterday "I am appealing to political leaders here and in the region and the world to get their act together and stop this," Mr Ging said, speaking at Gaza's largest hospital. "They are responsible for these deaths."

United Nations staff estimate 15,000 people have fled to 23 UN-run schools turned-refuges. UN food aid has been halted in the northern Gaza Strip because officials fear residents would risk their lives to reach distribution centres.

Israel says it will not stop the assault until its southern towns are freed of the threat of Palestinian rocket fire and it receives international guarantees that <u>Hamas</u>, a militant group backed by Iran and Syria, will not restock its weapons stockpile.

Israeli defence minister Ehud Barak said: "The battle is bitter but unavoidable.

We set out on this operation in order to deal <u>Hamas</u> a heavy blow and to alter living conditions in the south of the country and to block smuggling into the Gaza Strip."

The army says it has dealt a harsh blow to <u>Hamas</u>, killing 130 militants in the past two days and greatly reducing the rocket fire. At least 15 rockets were fired yesterday and one landed in the town of Gadera, about 25 miles from the Gaza border, lightly wounding a three-month-old baby, police said. At the outset of the fighting, militants launched dozens of rockets each day.

In Geneva, the international Red Cross said Gaza was in a "full-blown" human itarian crisis.

Its head of operations, Pierre Kraehenbuehl, said the few remaining power supplies could collapse at any moment.

Israeli leaders say there is no humanitarian crisis and that they have allowed the delivery of vital supplies.

I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor MAJED HAMDAN

Graphic

Palestinians carry a wounded boy to Shifa hospital in Gaza City

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

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Israel to open 'humanitarian corridor', school blast kills 30

The New Zealand Herald January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 1748 words

Body

Israel says it has agreed to set up a "humanitarian corridor" to ship vital supplies to the people of the Gaza Strip.

The office of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert says in a statement that the humanitarian corridor idea came from the UN Security Council, and he accepted it.

The announcement comes after Israeli mortar shells exploded near a UN school in Gaza sheltering hundreds of people displaced by Israel's onslaught against <u>Hamas</u> militants, killing at least 30 Palestinians, tearing bodies apart and staining streets with blood.

Israel's military said its shelling was a response to mortar fire from within the school, pressing its assertion that *Hamas* militants are using civilians as cover.

Two residents of the area who spoke by telephone said they saw a handful of militants firing mortar shells from a street near the school.

Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak proposed a plan for ending the fighting, including a call for an immediate ceasefire between Palestinian militants and Israel.

Today's carnage added to a surging civilian toll that has drawn increasingly urgent calls for a halt to Israel's offensive against *Hamas*. Diplomatic efforts, however, have failed to end the bloodshed.

However Israel said early today it would suspend attacks in specified areas of Gaza to allow the people to get supplies, with the goal of preventing "a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip".

Israel insists it has allowed enough supplies into the territory during 11 days of conflict, but the UN says there is already a humanitarian crisis there because of shortages of food, fuel and medicine.

The violence that engulfed the UN girls' school in the crowded Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza was the deadliest single episode since Israel sent ground forces into Gaza on Saturday.

Israel's troops and tanks pushed into Gaza after a week of intensive bombardment from warplanes in an offensive that has killed nearly 600 Palestinians, around half of them civilians, according to UN and Palestinian officials. The offensive was triggered by militant rocket fire on southern Israel. Four Israelis have been killed in continued rocket strikes since the offensive began on December 27.

The three mortar shells that crashed down on the perimeter of the UN school struck at mid-afternoon, when many people in the densely populated camp were out and about.

Many of those who took shelter in the school apparently had stepped outside to get some air, thinking an area around a school was safe.

Images recorded by a cameraman from AP Television News showed crowds fleeing the scene, pavements smeared with blood and battered bodies of the dead being carried off by medics and horrified bystanders. A youth who limped away from the scene was helped along by several others.

World powers that tried but failed to get a truce in place before Israel sent in its ground forces warned of the potential for higher civilian casualties if the fighting moved onto Gaza's streets, and Gaza's main hospital has been overwhelmed with wounded innocents. Mortar fire, in particular, is far less accurate than the laser-guided bombs Israel has used throughout the campaign.

The UN agency that runs the school along with other programs for Palestinian refugees said two other UN schools in Gaza were struck by Israeli fire since Monday night and demanded an investigation. In one the first incident, an airstrike on the Asma Elementary School in Gaza City killed three men who were among more than 400 people taking refuge in the building. In the other, an artillery shell landed inside an empty boys school in Jebaliya.

"There's nowhere safe in Gaza. Everyone here is terrorised and traumatized," said John Ging, head of Gaza operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

The episode is certain to add to the urgency of truce efforts by leaders from Europe and the Middle East.

"I sincerely hope that for the sake of those who have died that it will not have been in vain, that it will spur everybody into more immediate action to get this cease-fire agreed and just stop horrific violence," Ging said.

A military statement said it received intelligence that the dead included <u>Hamas</u> operatives, including members of a rocket launching cell. It identified two of them as Imad Abu Askar and Hassan Abu Askar.

Two residents who spoke to an AP reporter by phone said the two brothers were known to be low-level <u>Hamas</u> militants. They said a group of militants - one of them said four - were firing mortar shells from near the school.

An Israeli shell targeted the men, but missed and they fled, the witnesses said, refusing to allow their names to be published because they feared for their safety. Then another three shells landed nearby, exploding among civilians, they said.

Palestinian militants have frequently fired from residential areas in the past.

Ging said the UN agency's staff work to prevent militants from entering the 23 schools it is using to shelter 15,000 people.

"Unfortunately tonight's incident is just another example of how <u>Hamas</u> operate," said Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev.

"This is not the first time they have exploited a UN facility. This is not the first time that they have deliberately used innocent civilians as human shields."

Among the dead were many children whose parents wailed in grief at a hospital filled with dead and wounded. Fifty-five were wounded in the attack, the UN said.

Dr Bassam Abu Warda, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, said 36 people were killed, while the United Nations confirmed 30 deaths.

Footage broadcast on <u>Hamas</u>' Al Aqsa TV showed gruesome scenes at a hospital. At first, medics carried in at least five younger boys who were laid out on the hospital floor. It was not clear whether they were still alive.

Other medics then started unloading bodies of older men who had been stacked up in the back of an ambulance, three high, and were dragged without stretchers. One man's legs had been turned into bloody stumps that dragged on the ground as he was pulled from the ambulance.

In later scenes, the emergency room was packed, with all beds occupied and barely a patch of ground where there was not a body or a doctor standing. In other rooms, there were blood stains on the floor and other bodies lying there, with medics running to each of them to check their pulses.

"I saw a lot of women and children wheeled in," said Fares Ghanem, a hospital official.

"A lot of the wounded were missing limbs and a lot of the dead were in pieces."

Majed Hamdan, an AP photographer, rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks. At the hospital, he said, many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said.

"In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there wasn't enough space for the wounded."

He said there appeared to be marks on the pavement of five separate explosions in area of the school.

An Israeli defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to make the information public, said it appeared that the military used 120mm shells, among the largest mortar rounds.

UN officials say they provided their location coordinates to Israel's army to ensure that their buildings in Gaza are not targeted.

Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Avi Benayahu, responding to questions about the incident, said the conflict would have many difficult moments.

"This is a difficult operation, it's almost war and in war there are difficult pictures on both sides, on our side there are difficult pictures as well," he said on Israel's Channel 10 television.

Israeli TV news broadcasts gave most of their attention to continued rocket fire on southern Israel. One of the two dozen rockets fired from Gaza on Tuesday wounded an Israeli infant.

There seemed to be little preoccupation in Israel with the deadly scene at the school.

In the past, however, Israeli ground offensives have been cut short when an errant shell or missile hit a civilian centre, killing and wounding <u>women</u> and children, leading to an international outcry that forced Israel to stand down.

In 1996, an invasion of southern Lebanon to quell militant rocket fire at northern Israel was aborted after an artillery shell hit a camp of villagers next to a UN post, killing about 100 people.

In November 2006, Israeli forces withdrew from northern Gaza after a shell hit a house, killing 18 members of a family, including eight children, setting off a world outcry. Rocket fire at Israel resumed immediately.

Seven Israeli soldiers have been killed since the ground operation began, including four killed Monday in a two separate friendly fire incidents. Higher tolls among soldiers could also sap support for the offensive.

Venezuela, meanwhile, said yesterday it was expelling the Israeli ambassador and all embassy personnel in response to Israel's onslaught on Gaza. President Hugo Chavez had criticized the Israeli offensive the day it began.

Israel to open 'humanitarian corridor', school blast kills 30

Despite international criticism over civilian deaths and calls for a cease-fire, Israeli tanks rumbled closer to the towns of Khan Younis and Dir el Balah in south and central Gaza but were still several miles outside, witnesses said. Israel already has encircled Gaza City, the area's biggest city.

A total of 71 Palestinians were killed yesterday - with just two confirmed as militants, health officials in Gaza said.

Israel says it won't stop the assault until its southern towns are freed of the threat of Palestinian rocket fire and it receives international guarantees that <u>Hamas</u>, a militant group backed by Iran and Syria, will not restock its weapons stockpile.

Both sides yesterday issued their own battlefield videos of the conflict. Israeli television showed night shots of Israeli forces moving through buildings.

<u>Hamas</u>, meanwhile, gave Al-Jazeera TV footage of explosions and what appeared to be an Israeli soldier in a tank being shot by a sniper.

A high-level European Union delegation met with President Shimon Peres yesterday in a futile bid to end the violence.

Commissioner Benita Ferraro-Waldner acknowledged Israel's right to self-defence, but said its response was disproportionate.

"We have come to Israel in order to advance the initiative for a humanitarian cease-fire and I will tell you, Mr President, that you have a serious problem with international advocacy, and that Israel's image is being destroyed," she said, according to a statement from Peres' office.

- AP

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

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How the children perish as Israel reopensgates of hell

Evening Herald (Ireland)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Middle East

Length: 675 words

Body

So once again, Israel has opened the gates of hell to the Palestinians. Forty civilian refugees dead in a United Nations school, three more in another. Not bad for a night's work in Gaza by the army that believes in "purity of arms". But why should we be surprised?

Have we forgotten the 17,500 dead -- almost all civilians, most of them children and <u>women</u> -- in Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon; the 1,700 Palestinian civilian dead in the Sabra-Chatila massacre; the 1996 Qana massacre of 106 Lebanese civilian refugees, more than half of them children, at a UN base; the massacre of the Marwahin refugees who were ordered from their homes by the Israelis in 2006 then slaughtered by an Israeli helicopter crew; the 1,000 dead of that same 2006 bombardment and Lebanese invasion, almost all of them civilians?

What is amazing is that so many western leaders, so many presidents and prime ministers and, I fear, so many editors and journalists, bought the old lie; that Israelis take such great care to avoid civilian casualties.

"Israel makes every possible effort to avoid civilian casualties," yet another Israeli ambassador said only hours before the Gaza massacre.

And every president and prime minister who repeated this mendacity as an excuse to avoid a ceasefire has the blood of last night's butchery on their hands.

Had George Bush the courage to demand an immediate ceasefire 48 hours earlier, those 40 civilians, the old and the *women* and children, would be alive.

What happened was not just shameful. It was a disgrace. Would war crime be too strong a description' For that is what we would call this atrocity if it had been committed by *Hamas*. So a war crime, I'm afraid, it was.

After covering so many mass murders by the armies of the Middle East -- by Syrian troops, by Iraqi troops, by Iraqi troops, by Israeli troops -- I suppose cynicism should be my reaction.

Terror

But Israel claims it is fighting our war against "international terror".

How the children perish as Israel reopensgates of hell

The Israelis claim they are fighting in Gaza for us, for our western ideals, for our security, for our safety, by our standards. And so we are also complicit in the savagery now being visited upon Gaza.

I've reported the excuses the Israeli army has served up in the past for these outrages.

Since they may well be reheated in the coming hours, here are some of them: that the Palestinians killed their own refugees, that the Palestinians dug up bodies from cemeteries and planted them in the ruins, that ultimately the Palestinians are to blame because they supported an armed faction, or because armed Palestinians deliberately used the innocent refugees as cover.

I write the following without the slightest doubt: we'll hear all these scandalous fabrications again.

We'll have the <u>Hamas</u>-to-blame lie -- heaven knows, there is enough to blame them for without adding this crime -- and we may well have the bodies-from-the-cemetery lie and we'll almost certainly have the <u>Hamas</u>-was-in-the-UN-school lie and we will very definitely have the anti-Semitism lie.

ceasefire

And our leaders will huff and puff and remind the world that *Hamas* originally broke the ceasefire. It didn't.

Israel broke it, first on 4 November when its bombardment killed six Palestinians in Gaza and again on 17 November when another bombardment killed four more Palestinians.

Yes, Israelis deserve security. Twenty Israelis dead in 10 years around Gaza is a grim figure indeed.

But 600 Palestinians dead in just over a week, thousands over the years since 1948 -- when the Israeli massacre at Deir Yassin helped to kick-start the flight of Palestinians from that part of Palestine that was to become Israel -- is on a quite different scale.

This recalls not a normal Middle East bloodletting but an atrocity on the level of the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

And of course, when an Arab bestirs himself with unrestrained fury and takes out his incendiary, blind anger on the west, we will say it has nothing to do with us.

Why do they hate us, we will ask'

But let us not say we do not know the answer.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

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Boat arrives in Gaza to protest blockade

Daily News Egypt
October 30, 2008 Thursday

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Length: 659 words

Body

GAZA CITY: A boat carrying 27 international activists sailed into the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, braving stormy seas and defying an Israeli naval blockade to bring attention to Israeli sanctions on the *Hamas*-controlled territory. Israel had threatened to block the boat. But navy ships did not interfere, and the boat sailed unhindered into a Gaza harbor, where it was greeted by *Hamas* policemen and a small group of Palestinian activists. In the West Bank, Palestinians said Israeli troops shot and killed a 67-year-old farmer during a nighttime raid. The 20-meter yacht Dignity took off from the nearby island of Cyprus on Tuesday with a shipment of humanitarian supplies. The passengers included Mairead Corrigan Maguire, who won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for her work with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. "The government of Israel cannot cut off Gaza forever. We will come again and again," Maguire said.

The activists - who also include Italians, Israelis, Palestinians and Americans - are scheduled to remain in Gaza for four days. Maguire was wounded at an April 2007 demonstration against Israel's West Bank security barrier when a rubber bullet fired by police hit her in the leg. The Dignity was chartered by the US-based Free Gaza group, which sailed two similar boats into Gaza in August. Israel let those boats through, saying at the time that ignoring them would deny the protesters the publicity they were seeking. Israel initially said it would not allow this one to dock, but Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said the decision was changed late Tuesday. He would not comment further.Israel imposed a blockade of Gaza after the Islamic group *Hamas* violently seized control of the territory in June 2007, and later tightened the sanctions because of daily rocket fire from Gaza at Israeli towns. Egypt has also kept its border crossing with the territory closed. Israel and Hamas are currently observing a truce, and the flow of goods into Gaza has slightly increased. But Palestinians say the easing of the sanctions has done little to alleviate the shortages of key goods in Gaza. Israeli activist Gideon Spiro said he joined the boat to express his opposition to his government policy toward Gaza. "It is collective punishment against people who did not do anything wrong, especially children, women, elderly people, and I think that's not the way to handle it and that's why I'm here," he said. Jamal Khoudary, one of the Palestinian organizers of the protest, said the boat would take 10 Gazans back to Cyprus, including students and patients needing medical care. Israel and Egypt control who enters and leaves Gaza, and it was not immediately clear whether the boat would be permitted to sail. He said plans were under way for more boats and for a flight into Gaza to break the air blockade."We are not going to give details, but preparations are under way," he said. In the West Bank early Wednesday, Israeli troops killed a 67-year-old farmer in a nighttime raid, Palestinians said. Taher Abahreh, 40, of the West Bank town of Yamoun, said his father, Muhammad Abahreh, was near a small enclosure outside the town guarding his livestock when he was shot.

Boat arrives in Gaza to protest blockade

Troops were unsuccessfully trying to treat his father when he arrived about an hour after neighbors called him and reported hearing gunfire, he said. The Israeli military said the man opened fire at the soldiers before he was killed. The military said troops found a shotgun on his body and ammunition nearby. Abahreh said his father would not have confronted troops. Palestinian security officials confirmed Abahreh's account. One of Muhammad Abahreh's other sons was a Fatah-allied militant who was killed by Israeli troops two years ago.

The Western-backed Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, leads a moderate government in the West Bank. But the territory remains under overall Israeli control, and Israeli forces carry out nightly patrols and raids targeting militants.

Load-Date: October 30, 2008

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LETTERS

The Herald (Glasgow)

January 12, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 2507 words

Body

Why it is vital that SPT continues to be well resourced

THE Herald's editorial (January 10) about the financial troubles of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) were right to recognise the importance of the work being done by SPT, even though its scope has been reduced in recent years. The running of the Glasgow subway is clearly vital, and so too is the contracting of bus services to fill the gaps left by commercial operators, but most important is the planning and representational role of SPT.

SPT is made up mainly of representatives of local authorities in west central Scotland. It looks at the public-transport needs, consults, prepares plans to meet the future needs and makes united representation to get the necessary resources.

To do this effectively, SPT must maintain a staff with the professional and technical expertise to be able to provide advice independent of individual local authority interests and of Transport Scotland. Without that unity and expertise, in the recent past, the Larkhall line would not have been delivered, the Glasgow Airport rail link would not have been agreed by the Scottish Government and the Crossrail project would be dead.

Glasgow and the towns of west central Scotland are interdependent and must sort out their aims before going to Edinburgh. If we do not speak with a common voice, we have no chance of getting a fair share of the cake. In transport terms, SPT has represented a united west of Scotland with sound plans for future transport needs. We must ensure that SPT retains the resources to keep doing it.

Walter MacLellan, Vice-chair, Strathclyde Transport Authority 1999-2003, 31 Nursery Street, Glasgow.

No designer babies

AS A lifelong science-fiction fan, I find "slippery slope" fantasies about new technologies as entertaining as anyone. Pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD), however, will simply not lead to the creation of offspring "destined to be top of the class, excel in sport and have hair, eyes and other physical characteristics that fit his or her parents' wishlist", still less to any sort of a "superrace" (Embryo selection critics fear "slippery slope", January 9).

LETTERS

The technique merely allows prospective parents to make an informed choice about which in vitro embryos to implant. If they do not already possess the genes for blue eyes, long legs, perfect pitch or whatever, then they will not be able to pass this on to their children via this technique.

Children born from PGD are not "designer babies" because, quite simply, there is no designing involved, only choice from what nature already provides.

Dr Colin Gavaghan, Lecturer in medical law and ethics, University of Glasgow.

Testing times

GREG Dempster (Letters, January 9) asks: "What's the point of testing children at the end of primary school?"

The job of primary schools is to prepare children for secondary school, principally by teaching them to read, write and count. It is clearly in the interests both of the children and of the society which pays for primary education to establish that this has been achieved. Dr lan Johnston, Orbister, Old Bridge of Urr, Castle Douglas.

Litter wardens won't save Scotland's hills

ROSEMARY Goring's proposal for a congestion charge for access to Scotland's popular hills is wrong in both principle and in practice (Comment, June 6).

Our hard-won Outdoor Access legislation is the envy of many. Charging for access would not only run counter to the principles of the legislation but would create a dangerous precedent for private landowners to further restrict access. We have enough difficulties already with some unscrupulous landowners. Let's not make it any worse.

How practical is it to issue Munrobagging passports? Would one have to declare a desire to become a Munrobagger and then register and wait for a passport to be issued? How many checkpoints would be needed to "guard" a mountain such as Ben Nevis, with its many possible access points? Once issued with a litter bag, would one then not be allowed off the mountain until it was certified as filled with other people's rubbish?

I share Rosemary Goring's love of the Scottish hills and strongly wish to limit any damage caused by visitors. But I don't see the need for an army of litter wardens.

Generally, when off the heavily used tourist paths, there is remarkably little litter. Yes, Snowdon has been desecrated and Ben Nevis needs some attention, but we are not going to win this battle by restricting people from enjoying a walk on a well-known mountain.

Far more people climb the Ben for simple enjoyment than to rush up it in some sweat-soaked frenzy. If we charge these people for the right to climb a mountain or to gain access to wild land, how do we expect them to react when we ask for funds to enhance our national parks?

Dave Windle, 30 Hillview Road, Cults, Aberdeen.

Words are also weapons in Gaza conflict

US SECRETARY of State Condoleezza Rice told the UN Security Council that <u>Hamas</u> is a "terrorist organisation" which came to power in Gaza "in a military coup? 18 months ago". That is a lie.

<u>Hamas</u> won a majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority's legislature in elections judged free and fair by EU observers in January. That makes Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> the democratically-elected Palestinian Prime Minister.

<u>Hamas</u> are involved in terrorism but remain the elected government, just as President Bush and Ehud Olmert remain the elected heads of their governments despite their involvement in war crimes killing civilians.

Sanctions imposed on the entire Palestinian authority by the US, EU, Israel, Russia, China and Arab dictatorships to force *Hamas* out of office led to civil war between *Hamas* and Fatah. These governments even vetoed a coalition

LETTERS

government formed by <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah in June 2007. Then the US, Israel and Egypt organised an attempted military coup against <u>Hamas</u> by Fatah forces armed, trained and funded by them. This coup attempt succeeded in the West Bank but was defeated in Gaza.

The situation is similar to the one in Nicaragua in the 1980s and 1990s when the Reagan and Bush Sr administrations denounced the Sandinistas, who overthrew the dictator Somoza before winning fair elections, as "terrorists" while sanctioning Nicaragua and funding a campaign of rape, murder, torture and bombings by Contra "freedom fighters". Fatah's leadership are as corrupt as Somoza was.

The toll of the latest attempt to overthrow the elected Palestinian government by sanctions and force includes 101 children dead and 1000 wounded, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and UN aid workers are being shot by Israeli forces along with ambulance crews, but no doubt we'll hear it is entirely *Hamas*'s fault and nothing to do with the Israeli forces that killed them.

Duncan McFarlane, Beanshields, Braidwood, Carluke, Lanarkshire.

THE testimony of John Watson of Amnesty International (January 10), accusing Israel of using Palestinian civilians as a human shield, is patently dubious.

In his haste to accuse Israel, he has clearly confused and neglected the self-incriminating evidence supplied by <u>Hamas</u> itself. For the open-minded observer who is prepared to doubt some of the reports emerging from Gaza, modern digital technology has enabled the world to view <u>Hamas</u>, on an Arab TV station, admitting to using Palestinian <u>women</u> and children as a human shield (an upload entitled "<u>Hamas</u> admits it uses human shields"; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTuAUE9ycs). What clearer evidence is required?

M Green, 103 Ayr Road, Newton Mearns, Glasgow.

Images of Burns gloss over a hard life

WHAT did Robert Burns look like? asked The Herald on January 9. Back on January 20, 1990, in the old Weekender section of the then Glasgow Herald, Murray Ritchie had a full-page article on this very matter.

There were printed five alleged likenesses of Burns, of which it was said that he himself most liked the silhouette by Miers done in Edinburgh in 1787. There is also a convincing miniature by Alexander Reid painted toward the end of his life.

A Dumfries worthy, Jock Brodie, who as a boy had run errands for Jean Armour when she and Burns lived in Bank Vennel, recalled of Burns: "Rob was a lang lingle (lithe) fallah wi' a loot (stoop) an' his een gied thru' ye like gemlits. His broos were gey aften doon, an' he looked like ane that cared mair for ither folk than he did for his sel and his ain."

It seems that he was therefore tall rather than short, somewhat unkempt and had a somewhat prominent nose, and probably wore the flat hat which he wears in the Peter Taylor portrait of 1786.

Murray Ritchie makes the point in his article that Burns belonged to the last generation to know nothing of the camera, and there are calotypes of his sons taken as early as the 1840s.

It seems clear that the Nasmyth portrait is fanciful and flattering. Burns himself was a man of the soil and hard physical work; a man who suffered from ill-health, stress and poverty and who ended up dying of endocarditis. He would not have looked other than a lowland Scot whose life was one of toil and effort. And yet from this man poured forth writing of brilliance and perception which can move, enrich and enlighten us still.

Rev David A Keddie, 21 Ilay Road, Bearsden, Glasgow.

LETTERS

WITH reference to the Kay portrait possibly of Burns, Michael Donnelly (Letters, January 10) throws an interesting alternative into the mix with his suggestion of William Skiving. It would be interesting to see him take this argument further.

However, I fail to see how he shows that Kay "was a particular fan of Burns". Perhaps he should write a piece debating with the fascinating essay written by Sheila Szatkowski in the recently published, Fickle Man: Robert Burns in the 21st Century.

Gerry Carruthers, Department of Scottish Literature, University of Glasgow.

Animal testing futile

ANNE Johnstone (Medical benefits justify Scots primate research, January 8) has been misinformed.

I am very sorry that Ms Johnstone's father has Parkinson's disease and I hope that he may benefit from deep brain stimulation (DBS), the brain surgery to which she alludes.

However, DBS was actually pioneered in human patients, not monkeys, as lobbyists for animal testing dishonestly claim.

In fact, virtually everything we know about Parkinson's disease, in common with most diseases, has been learned by studying human patients and their tissues, not animals.

As Dr John Xuereb, director of the Cambridge Brain Bank, acknowledges: "Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases occur in humans and it is in human tissue that we will find the answers to these diseases."

Kathy Archibald, Director, Safer Medicines Campaign, PO Box 62720, London.

Reduced factory output is no surprise, but we could put production capacity to better use ANENT Ian McConnell's back-page article (Business, January 10), is it so surprising that UK manufacturing output is plummeting, even if we ignore the effects of the recent major banking crisis?

Major-expense items such as cars and vans, using modern paints and lubricants, and with reliable engines and electronics, now last much longer, break down far less frequently and are more economical than even 20 years ago.

Likewise, the lifespans of large domestic equipment such as fridges, washing machines and boilers have greatly lengthened. "Built-in obsolescence" has long been frowned on. The position with industrial equipment and machinetools may well be similar. While the received wisdom is that, in the "good old days", things were built to last, it is in fact modern goods that tend to last longer and don't need frequent replacing.

Even where newer models or pieces of equipment offer better energy consumption and are less polluting the most energy-efficient practice in overall environmental terms is generally to continue keeping the original model going for as long as possible rather than replacing it early.

Many - not all, of course - of us have far more clothes, accessories and general household items than necessary, and could survive quite satisfactorily with fewer things being produced. We may be entering, if not a post-manufacturing era, then an era of greatly reduced production.

Our excess manufacturing capacity needs to move away from "things" to the long-overdue infrastructure developments with 100-year-plus lifespans (unlike the fatuous Millennium Dome), such as replacing our Victorian underground pipework systems, ensuring adequate flood prevention measures and UK-controlled energy and water supplies, constructing aesthetically appealing buildings insulated to world-class standards, and providing decent, properly integrated transport links.

LETTERS

John Birkett, 12 Horseleys Park, St Andrews.

I WAS delighted to learn that Gordon Brown plans on increasing spending in England and Wales on apprentices this year to GBP1bn and increasing the number of apprentices to 35,000.

In Scotland the construction sector recruited almost 5000 apprentices in 2007 but this year we will be fortunate to recruit half that number. Thirdand fourth-year apprentices face the prospect of failing to complete their training with little support available to employers to take them on.

Industry bodies such as ourselves are doing what we can to match apprentices to employers, but as the current funding arrangements make it more attractive to take on a new start than offer a redundant apprentice a chance to complete their training, this is proving an uphill struggle.

There are a lot of good things still happening, such as the recent launch of the Construction Skills Academy. The aim is to produce 800 apprentices a year in Scotland alone. The 2014 Commonwealth Games are an opportunity to use homegrown talent to deliver a range of projects and showcase to the world the quality of our construction industry, which is the foundation of Scotland's economy.

Michael Levack, Chief Executive, Scottish Building Federation, Crichton House, 4 Crichton's Close, Edinburgh.

I HAVE yet to understand what benefit the recent reduction in the rate of VAT has brought about. It appears to have been badly thoughtout and quite ineffectual.

Assuming that stimulating the economy was the inspiration and VAT is a credible tool, I suggest that the GBP12.5bn giveaway would be better targeted than spread thin.

The collapse in housing construction will inevitably lead to an enlarged black economy as people make a living one way or another. However, if the government were to abandon VAT chargeable on house extensions, the effect could be dramatic and speedy. Such a financial advantage might persuade the cautious to proceed, and mortgages are relatively cheap.

As demand rises, it follows that legitimate contractors would be able to compete, leading to the re-employment of tax-paying tradesmen and stimulating the supply chain.

Perhaps the above suggestion would prove more beneficial to the country than a small discount on products most likely made in a far-off land.

T M M Gilchrist, Oakwood, Oakwood Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow.

Graphic

PEAKY: Ben Nevis needs help but charging is not the answer. Picture: Colin Mearns

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



UN appeal for truce in Gaza unheeded; Aid groups express growing frustration with poor conditions

The International Herald Tribune
January 10, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1358 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Reporting was contributed by Neil MacFarquhar from the United Nations; Rachel Donadio from Rome; Isabel Kershner and Steven Erlanger from Jerusalem; Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza; and Alan Cowell from Paris.

*

As the fighting in Gaza entered its 14th day unchecked Friday, the Israeli military said its forces attacked more than 50 targets in Gaza overnight despite a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for "an immediate, durable and fully respected cease-fire."

Israeli warplanes attacked rocket-launching sites and missile-manufacturing facilities, the military said. One Israeli airstrike destroyed a five-story building, killing at least seven people, <u>Hamas</u> security officials told The Associated Press. Officials from <u>Hamas</u> also dismissed the cease-fire call, although one official said the UN resolution was being studied.

The developments came as international aid groups lashed out at Israel, saying that access to civilians in need was poor, relief workers were being hurt and killed and Israel was woefully neglecting its obligations to Palestinians who were trapped, some among rotting corpses, in a nightmarish landscape of deprivation.

On Thursday, the United Nations declared a suspension of its aid operations after one of its drivers was killed and two others were wounded, despite driving UN-flagged vehicles and coordinating their movements with the Israeli military. The United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki Moon, called a second time for an investigation by Israel of the more than 40 deaths near a United Nations school from Israeli tank fire on Tuesday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, based in Geneva, reported finding what it called shocking scenes, including four emaciated children next to the corpses of their mothers, on Wednesday. In a rare and sharply critical statement, it said it believed that "the Israeli military failed to meet its obligation under international humanitarian law to care for and evacuate the wounded."

Israeli officials said that they were examining all the allegations, that they did not aim at civilians and that they were not certain that the source of fire that killed or wounded the United Nations drivers was Israeli.

UN appeal for truce in Gaza unheeded Aid groups express growing frustration with poor conditions

"We do our utmost to avoid hitting civilians, and many times we don't fire because we see civilians nearby," said Major Avital Leibovich, chief army spokeswoman for the foreign news media. "We are holding meetings with UN officials to try to work out a mechanism so that their work can go forward."

She said the army had learned of the Red Cross allegations in a media report, and that the committee had not yet presented the evidence of what she called "these very serious allegations" to the army.

Anne-Sophie Bonefeld, a spokeswoman for the International Committee of the Red Cross, said Thursday that when the children and others were rescued in Gaza on Wednesday, workers had to leave behind a number of bodies. On Thursday, she said, 100 civilians were rescued from the same Gaza City neighborhood. They were not wounded, but they were weakened because of being without food or water for two days.

At the United Nations itself, 14 nations approved the Security Council resolution urging a cease-fire, with the United States abstaining. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the United States abstained from voting on the resolution, which left unclear how a cease-fire would be enforced, because it wanted to see whether mediation efforts undertaken by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt succeed. The United States did not veto the resolution because Washington supports its overall goals, she said.

The resolution called for a cease-fire that would lead to the "full withdrawal" of Israeli forces from Gaza, the passage of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians and an end to the trafficking of arms and ammunition into the territory.

Some Arab ambassadors expressed disappointment that the measure did not specifically call for a lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and some Western ambassadors acknowledged a long history of UN resolutions that led nowhere. "We are all very conscious that peace is made on the ground, while resolutions are written in the United Nations," said David Miliband, the British foreign secretary.

The Gaza authorities said that the death toll passed 750, with <u>women</u> and children making up about 40 percent of the dead. Israel held its fire for three hours Thursday afternoon, the second day in a row, to allow in aid. It was during that pause that local ambulance crews and the Red Crescent found dozens of bodies under a collapsed building. Three Israeli soldiers were killed in combat; seven other soldiers have died during the military campaign, which is aimed at stopping *Hamas* rocket fire, and three civilians have been killed by rockets.

More rockets flew into Israel and, for the first time since the operation against <u>Hamas</u> began, three Katyusha rockets were shot from Lebanon into northern Israel on Thursday. Hezbollah, which fought a war with Israel in 2006 that included thousands of rockets, said it was not responsible.

But attention was increasingly focused on the growing humanitarian crisis and on the increasing anger abroad.

Israel condemned a high-ranking Vatican official for comparing Gaza to "a concentration camp."

"Look at the conditions in Gaza: more and more, it resembles a big concentration camp," Cardinal Renato Martino, the head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said in an interview published Wednesday in Il Sussidiaro.

He defended his comments in the center-left Italian daily La Repubblica on Thursday. While noting that <u>Hamas</u> rockets into Israel were "certainly not sugared almonds," he called the situation in Gaza "horrific."

Israel sharply condemned the cardinal's use of World War II imagery. "We are astounded that a spiritual dignitary would have such words that are so far removed from truth and dignity," said Yigal Palmor, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

John Holmes, a United Nations emergency relief coordinator, said in New York that the three-hour daily pause in the fighting permitted by Israel in Gaza was insufficient. He said the Gaza authorities counted 758 fatalities, among them 257 children and 56 <u>women</u>. The injured totaled 3,100. Of these, 1,080 were children and about were 465 <u>women</u>.

UN appeal for truce in Gaza unheeded Aid groups express growing frustration with poor conditions

Holmes added that the Gaza authorities reported that 20,000 were displaced but that conditions prevented officials from helping them properly. "The continuing violence is making humanitarian aid increasingly difficult and almost impossible," he said.

Antoine Grand, head of Red Cross operations in Gaza, said his group's workers came under Israeli fire on Thursday. He said a convoy of two trucks, one clearly marked as Red Cross and the other from the Ministry of Health, was taking medical equipment to the southern city of Khan Yunis, followed by 13 ambulances heading to the Egyptian border.

He said the convoy's movement was "fully coordinated with Israel. I did it myself." It was during the three-hour lull, at 3:30 p.m., he said, when they stopped in front of the checkpoint that the Red Cross vehicle was shot at from a tank.

Israeli officials said they were investigating.

The Jerusalem Post's Web site quoted an Israeli medical worker as saying that the killing of the United Nations driver that contributed to the suspension of aid delivery was the work of a *Hamas* sniper.

John Ging, who heads United Nations relief operations in Gaza, said by telephone that he was unaware of any information suggesting that the driver had been shot by *Hamas*.

"If they have evidence, let them present it," he said, adding that in none of the events of the past few days - the attacks on the school or the trucks - was there any evidence of cross-fire.

He visited the school after the shelling.

"I want an exhaustive investigation to establish all the facts," he said by telephone. "In the school, they say two of those killed were militants. But that means 41 were civilians. That is wholly and totally a very serious matter regarding duty of care and appropriate use of force. But I can't pass judgment without the facts."

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



Family of 7 wiped out by an Israeli tank shell; Death toll rises in fresh attacks

London Lite
January 5, 2009 Monday

1ST Edition

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Section: Pg. 7

Length: 248 words

Byline: ROBERT MENDICK

Body

A FAMILY of seven was reported killed today while a further three Palestinian children died after being hit by an Israeli tank shell as fighting continued to rage in Gaza.

The rising death toll among Palestinian civilians since the launch of the Israeli ground invasion will add to diplomatic pressure for a ceasefire.

Israel stepped up its offensive against *Hamas* militants today with reports of tanks rolling into the south of Gaza.

Overnight, Israeli forces launched around 30 air strikes amid claims that Gaza has been effectively split into three.

French president Nicolas Sarkozy is expected in Jerusalem today to attempt to negotiate a "humanitarian" truce.

Palestinian medical officials claimed that seven members of a single family had been killed in one attack on the Beach refugee camp on the outskirts of Gaza City.

It followed a separate reported shelling that killed three children and their mother in the Zeitoun neighbourhood.

The unconfirmed death toll in Gaza has now topped 500 since Israel began its offensive.

Palestinians claim 87 children have died in the fighting, according to the Jerusalem Post. No foreign reporters have managed to enter Gaza, making it difficult to verify the claims.

One Israeli soldier has been killed while a further five were wounded early this morning in fighting with <u>Hamas</u> gunmen in northern Gaza. Thirty Israeli soldiers have been injured since the ground invasion began on Saturday and four Israeli civilians have been killed in rocket attacks..

Graphic

Grief-stricken: *female* Israeli troops mourn a fallen comrade

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Protesters slam Mubarak over Gaza killings

Pretoria News Weekend (South Africa)

January 10, 2009

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 445 words

Byline: Jacques Breytenbach

Body

Close to 2 000 people protested outside the Egyptian embassy yesterday against Israel's two-week ground and air offensive on *Hamas* in the Gaza strip.

Organised by the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC), the protest was against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's seemingly placid stance towards the "massacre of innocent civilians in Gaza".

Posters bearing the face of Mubarak were set alight and trampled on.

The PSC handed over a memorandum addressed to Mubarak to the embassy, urging him to help the Palestinians suffering in Gaza.

Melissa Hoole, spokesperson for the PSC, said what was happening in Gaza did not resemble a war, but something more towards a "massacre".

"Like the rain falling on us, bombs are raining down on our brothers and sisters in Gaza. How can it be a war if the fifth strongest military power in the world, which has the backing of the United States, fights defenceless civilians?

"It is not a war, it is a massacre. The blood of the people that have died in Gaza is on Mubarak's hands," she said.

Over 600 Palestinians have been killed while a further 3 000 have been injured since Israel began its offensive on *Hamas*.

The PSC demanded in its memorandum that Mubarak open the Rafah crossing immediately and permanently, facilitate the movement of medical personnel, medical supplies and food into Gaza and that he recognise the democratic will of the Palestinian people and *Hamas* as the elected authority of the Palestinian people.

The PSC also called for the release of all those detained by the Egyptian security forces for protesting against Israel.

Twelve-year-old Mohammed Azhar Ismail said the killing of children his age in Gaza had to stop.

"I hope they are watching and seeing for themselves what terrorists they are.

Protesters slam Mubarak over Gaza killings

"They should ask themselves how they would feel if they were killed in the way they are killing us. Children do not deserve to die in this war... (they) have never done anything to deserve this," he said.

Mosar Tar, who drove from Johannesburg to take part, said what was happening in Israel, was genocide.

"This is not a war, it is a massacre of innocent people.

"Their (Palestinians) only crime is that they do not align themselves with America's policies and Israel's beliefs," he said.

Saleha Dawood said she could not sleep because of the atrocities in Gaza.

"It is traumatic to see <u>women</u> and children being killed in the manner that they are. I lie awake at night thinking of the pain that they must be going through," she said.

Humanitarian relief organisation Gift of the Givers has an-nounced preparations to send aid the embattled Gaza Strip.

The organisation would deliver medical supplies, food, water and blankets, it said.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



Flowers amid West Bank thorns; Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

The International Herald Tribune December 24, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1329 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner and Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: BETHLEHEM, West Bank

Body

They are lining up once again by the hundreds, candle in hand - Spaniards, Russians, Sri Lankans - to descend into the ancient grotto where tradition says Jesus was born. Outside in Manger Square, a municipal tree shines with decorations and telephone wires bear glittery stars in seasonal spirit.

It might seem obvious that in the days leading up to Christmas, this city, which lives in the hearts of Christians worldwide, would become a tourist magnet. But only six years ago the Church of the Nativity was the site of a five-week standoff between Israeli troops and armed Palestinian militants. Even today, to get into Bethlehem requires passing through an Israeli checkpoint under the shadow of the enormous Israeli separation wall.

Yet there are more tourists in Bethlehem this year than at any time in a decade, and their presence signals something beyond the Christmas spirit: life for West Bank Palestinians, oppressive and challenging though it remains, seems to be making substantial, if fragile, improvement.

Israeli and Palestinian officials each report economic growth for the occupied areas of 4 to 5 percent and a drop in the unemployment rate of at least three percentage points. The Israelis report that in 2008 wages here are up more than 20 percent and trade by 35 percent. The improved climate has nearly doubled the number of tourists in Bethlehem and increased them by half in Jericho.

It is not just tourists. The Bethlehem Small Enterprise Center, financed with German aid, has been open for eight months and busy, helping printers improve their software and olive wood craftsmen their marketing.

"It has been the best year since 1999," noted Victor Batarseh, mayor of Bethlehem. "Our hotels are full, whereas three years ago there was almost nobody. Unemployment is below 20 percent. But we are still under occupation."

And all this in a year when the global economy has been sinking at an alarming rate.

Politically, as the mayor notes, there is little real change. A year of negotiations with Israel is drawing to a close without an agreement on Palestinian statehood.

The president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, whose term ends Jan. 9, has said he will call new elections in the coming months. *Hamas* says it will name a competing president if he does not step down Jan. 9, raising concerns of further instability. Israel has its own elections in February, adding to the uncertainty.

Flowers amid West Bank thorns Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

For the Palestinian Authority, the balance between heralding achievements and keeping up criticism of Israeli policies is delicate - especially with the conservative Israeli opposition leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, leading in polls for the elections, advocating emphasis on an "economic peace."

The Palestinians say that a sound economy alone will not bring peace, that the conflict requires a political solution.

Still, Palestinian forces are guarding major West Bank cities, Israeli troops have stepped back - although they continue nighttime raids on those suspected of being militants - and Israel says it is about to significantly ease some restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank, a prerequisite for further economic growth.

A senior Israeli official in the northern West Bank said that 4,000 Israeli Arab citizens were driving in to shop in the area every weekend and that 115 new stores had opened in Tulkarm in the past four months.

In addition, the government of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has secured \$1.7 billion in international aid this year, allowing it to resume the payment of salaries to tens of thousands of government employees.

Even in Nablus, a volatile city of 200,000 that has been subject to a particularly suffocating Israeli security regime, the atmosphere is beginning to change. A gleaming mall owned by the municipality, under construction since 1999, finally opened this year.

Ahmed Ayed, 22, manages a <u>women</u>'s clothing store there. Sporting long hair and a goatee, he said the outlet, the sixth in Nablus of a chain owned by his father, opened half a year ago; a seventh has since opened nearby.

Ziad Anabtawi, chairman of the Anabtawi Group, which includes import, distribution and investment companies, has recently expanded into the production of premium Palestinian olive oil with an eye abroad. He says the Palestinian economy is much healthier today than it was in the 1990s, when it was based on laborers working in Israel, their entry dependent on Israeli good will. Today, it involves large Palestinian investment companies and bankers.

Old Town in Nablus was until recently a danger zone where Palestinian gunmen frequently clashed with Israeli forces. On a recent afternoon, groups of <u>women</u> relaxed, smoking and sharing picnics at a historic bathhouse, the Shefa Hammam.

The manager, Muhammad Amer, said the 700-year-old hammam had been hit by Israeli rockets and raided seven times by troops looking for wanted militants during the second intifada, from 2000 to 2005. It was renovated and reopened two years ago.

A bastion of Fatah, Abbas's movement, Nablus has also become a stronghold of <u>Hamas</u>, its main rival. A list widely associated with the Islamic group swept local council elections here in 2005, winning 13 council seats out of 15.

After the <u>Hamas</u> takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Fatah vigilantes roamed Nablus torching offices and institutions associated with the rival group.

Set on ending the chaos, the Palestinian Authority began a law-and-order campaign there a few months later, deploying hundreds of extra police officers. Israel went along with an amnesty program for wanted men loyal to Abbas.

But prosperity, businesspeople there say, depends on Israel's removing the major checkpoints in place since 2002, when at the height of the Palestinian uprising the Israeli Army invaded the cities of the West Bank and set them up, a step it said was necessary to prevent the movement of suicide bombers.

For six years, Palestinians have not been able to drive private cars in or out of Nablus without special permission. The Israeli military says that is about to change. Within a few weeks the army is planning to allow Palestinians from the northern West Bank districts of Nablus and Jenin to drive to the south in their own cars, without special permits and with only random inspections.

Flowers amid West Bank thorns Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

"We as a command are willing to take more risks as hostile terrorist activity goes down," said Colonel Benny Shik, a senior Israeli military official in the West Bank.

Mayor Adly Yaish of Nablus said he had heard about the proposed changes and called them "a good start."

The way ahead, though, is dotted with pitfalls. The Israeli military emphasizes that all changes can be reversed. And the Israeli measures to suppress <u>Hamas</u> can sometimes be clumsy and counterproductive. Anabtawi and Yaish have each spent time in Israeli detention in the past year on suspicion of having financial links with <u>Hamas</u>. Israeli judges ordered them released.

In the West Bank, <u>Hamas</u> is currently subdued, with its armed men deep underground, its political leaders in Israeli jails and those representatives still at large in the local authorities diligently playing by Palestinian Authority rules.

The governor of Bethlehem, Salah Tamari, a Palestinian activist and coexistence advocate for decades, said *Hamas* was weakening in the West Bank as people saw how hard life was under its rule in the Gaza Strip. What he really worried about was a future with Israel, despite his years of Israeli friendships. In his office, the curtains to his right were drawn shut to keep out the view of the opposite hill of Har Homa, a huge Jewish suburb that he had worked against being built in the 1990s.

"Israelis are paranoid because of their past, while Palestinians are paranoid because of their present," he said. "But we are doomed to live together or blessed to live together, depending on your point of view.

"It is true that the economy is improving slightly. But beyond that, I'm afraid very little is getting easier."

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

November 9, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 674 words

Byline: Compiled from Deseret News wire services

Body

Afghanistan: Reporter freed

KABUL -- A <u>female</u> Canadian TV journalist abducted and held for nearly four weeks in Afghanistan was freed Saturday after Afghan tribal leaders persuaded her kidnappers to release her, officials said.

Mellissa Fung, a reporter for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. on her second visit to Afghanistan, was taken hostage Oct. 12 after reporting in a refugee camp in Kabul. Adam Khan Serat, spokesman for the provincial governor in Wardak, said there was no ransom involved in negotiating her release.

Egypt: U.S.-Russia meeting

SHARM EL-SHEIK -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with her Russian counterpart on Saturday as they sought to ease escalating tensions in the waning weeks of the Bush administration.

In what may be one of her last such sessions with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as the chief U.S. diplomat, Rice hosted Lavrov at her hotel in this Egyptian Red Sea resort for an 80-minute discussion that the State Department described as "good and productive." Despite the length of the private meeting, there was no sign either side had budged on its position on the most contentious issues, notably missile defense, arms control and Russia's war with Georgia.

Gaza Strip: Blockade defied

GAZA CITY -- A group of European lawmakers sailed from Cyprus into Gaza Saturday, defying an internationally backed blockade of the *Hamas*-run territory with activists promising to send more visitors and goods to end the coastal strip's isolation.

Israel's navy did not try to block the vessel, Dignity, which made its third run from Cyprus to Gaza since August. The 23 passengers included 13 members of various European parliaments and an Israeli journalist, who will stay until Tuesday. The activists say they want to highlight the harm done to Gaza's 1.4 million residents.

Gaza Strip: Gunfire exchanged

GAZA CITY -- The Israeli army and <u>Hamas</u> militants say their forces traded fire on Gaza's border, testing a shaky truce in place since June.

World datelines

The gunbattle between Israeli forces and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen took place Saturday morning on Gaza's eastern border. The Israeli army says its soldiers were detonating two explosive devices on the border fence when <u>Hamas</u> gunmen opened fire, prompting the exchange. There were no reports of casualties.

Israel: Rabin remembered

TEL AVIV -- Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered Saturday night at the square where Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated, to remember the man and his legacy 13 years after his killing.

The square in front of Tel Aviv city hall was the site of a peace rally on Nov. 4, 1995. As it ended, Rabin was gunned down by an ultra-nationalist Jewish opponent of his policy of trading land to the Palestinians for peace. Israel officially marks the 13th anniversary of Rabin's slaying on Monday.

Mexico: Disabled officers killed

CIUDAD JUAREZ -- Two disabled police officers, part of a special unit to help the disabled, were shot dead while on traffic patrol in northern Mexico, an official said Saturday.

Unknown assailants opened fire on the men from a car at an intersection in the northern city of Chihuahua on Friday, said state Public Safety spokesman Carlos Rodriguez. Tirso Reza, 50, and Jose Luis Paez, 47, worked for a police unit dedicated to helping disabled people, including by ensuring that parking spaces designated for them were not illegally occupied. Reza was wheelchair-bound, while Paez had extremely weak eyesight.

New Zealand: Leader elected

WELLINGTON-- New Zealanders chose a wealthy, conservative former financier Saturday to help navigate the country through the global financial meltdown, handing long-serving left-wing Prime Minister Helen Clark a crushing election defeat.

John Key, the 47-year-old leader of the conservative National Party, swept easily to power in this South Pacific country of 4.1 million people, ousting Clark's Labour Party after nine years in office. New Zealand's farming export-dependent economy fell into recession early this year, and Key said the worldwide downturn is the most immediate problem for the country.

Load-Date: November 9, 2008



Flowers amid West Bank thorns; Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

The International Herald Tribune
December 25, 2008

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1329 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner and Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: BETHLEHEM, West Bank

Body

They are lining up once again by the hundreds, candle in hand - Spaniards, Russians, Sri Lankans - to descend into the ancient grotto where tradition says Jesus was born. Outside in Manger Square, a municipal tree shines with decorations and telephone wires bear glittery stars in seasonal spirit.

It might seem obvious that in the days leading up to Christmas, this city, which lives in the hearts of Christians worldwide, would become a tourist magnet. But only six years ago the Church of the Nativity was the site of a five-week standoff between Israeli troops and armed Palestinian militants. Even today, to get into Bethlehem requires passing through an Israeli checkpoint under the shadow of the enormous Israeli separation wall.

Yet there are more tourists in Bethlehem this year than at any time in a decade, and their presence signals something beyond the Christmas spirit: life for West Bank Palestinians, oppressive and challenging though it remains, seems to be making substantial, if fragile, improvement.

Israeli and Palestinian officials each report economic growth for the occupied areas of 4 to 5 percent and a drop in the unemployment rate of at least three percentage points. The Israelis report that in 2008 wages here are up more than 20 percent and trade by 35 percent. The improved climate has nearly doubled the number of tourists in Bethlehem and increased them by half in Jericho.

It is not just tourists. The Bethlehem Small Enterprise Center, financed with German aid, has been open for eight months and busy, helping printers improve their software and olive wood craftsmen their marketing.

"It has been the best year since 1999," noted Victor Batarseh, mayor of Bethlehem. "Our hotels are full, whereas three years ago there was almost nobody. Unemployment is below 20 percent. But we are still under occupation."

And all this in a year when the global economy has been sinking at an alarming rate.

Politically, as the mayor notes, there is little real change. A year of negotiations with Israel is drawing to a close without an agreement on Palestinian statehood.

The president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, whose term ends Jan. 9, has said he will call new elections in the coming months. *Hamas* says it will name a competing president if he does not step down Jan. 9, raising concerns of further instability. Israel has its own elections in February, adding to the uncertainty.

Flowers amid West Bank thorns Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

For the Palestinian Authority, the balance between heralding achievements and keeping up criticism of Israeli policies is delicate - especially with the conservative Israeli opposition leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, leading in polls for the elections, advocating emphasis on an "economic peace."

The Palestinians say that a sound economy alone will not bring peace, that the conflict requires a political solution.

Still, Palestinian forces are guarding major West Bank cities, Israeli troops have stepped back - although they continue nighttime raids on those suspected of being militants - and Israel says it is about to significantly ease some restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank, a prerequisite for further economic growth.

A senior Israeli official in the northern West Bank said that 4,000 Israeli Arab citizens were driving in to shop in the area every weekend and that 115 new stores had opened in Tulkarm in the past four months.

In addition, the government of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has secured \$1.7 billion in international aid this year, allowing it to resume the payment of salaries to tens of thousands of government employees.

Even in Nablus, a volatile city of 200,000 that has been subject to a particularly suffocating Israeli security regime, the atmosphere is beginning to change. A gleaming mall owned by the municipality, under construction since 1999, finally opened this year.

Ahmed Ayed, 22, manages a <u>women</u>'s clothing store there. Sporting long hair and a goatee, he said the outlet, the sixth in Nablus of a chain owned by his father, opened half a year ago; a seventh has since opened nearby.

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The manager, Muhammad Amer, said the 700-year-old hammam had been hit by Israeli rockets and raided seven times by troops looking for wanted militants during the second intifada, from 2000 to 2005. It was renovated and reopened two years ago.

A bastion of Fatah, Abbas's movement, Nablus has also become a stronghold of <u>Hamas</u>, its main rival. A list widely associated with the Islamic group swept local council elections here in 2005, winning 13 council seats out of 15.

After the <u>Hamas</u> takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, Fatah vigilantes roamed Nablus torching offices and institutions associated with the rival group.

Set on ending the chaos, the Palestinian Authority began a law-and-order campaign there a few months later, deploying hundreds of extra police officers. Israel went along with an amnesty program for wanted men loyal to Abbas.

But prosperity, businesspeople there say, depends on Israel's removing the major checkpoints in place since 2002, when at the height of the Palestinian uprising the Israeli Army invaded the cities of the West Bank and set them up, a step it said was necessary to prevent the movement of suicide bombers.

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"We as a command are willing to take more risks as hostile terrorist activity goes down," said Colonel Benny Shik, a senior Israeli military official in the West Bank.

Mayor Adly Yaish of Nablus said he had heard about the proposed changes and called them "a good start."

The way ahead, though, is dotted with pitfalls. The Israeli military emphasizes that all changes can be reversed. And the Israeli measures to suppress <u>Hamas</u> can sometimes be clumsy and counterproductive. Anabtawi and Yaish have each spent time in Israeli detention in the past year on suspicion of having financial links with <u>Hamas</u>. Israeli judges ordered them released.

In the West Bank, <u>Hamas</u> is currently subdued, with its armed men deep underground, its political leaders in Israeli jails and those representatives still at large in the local authorities diligently playing by Palestinian Authority rules.

The governor of Bethlehem, Salah Tamari, a Palestinian activist and coexistence advocate for decades, said *Hamas* was weakening in the West Bank as people saw how hard life was under its rule in the Gaza Strip. What he really worried about was a future with Israel, despite his years of Israeli friendships. In his office, the curtains to his right were drawn shut to keep out the view of the opposite hill of Har Homa, a huge Jewish suburb that he had worked against being built in the 1990s.

"Israelis are paranoid because of their past, while Palestinians are paranoid because of their present," he said. "But we are doomed to live together or blessed to live together, depending on your point of view.

"It is true that the economy is improving slightly. But beyond that, I'm afraid very little is getting easier."

Load-Date: December 25, 2008



Aid Groups Rebuke Israel Over Conditions in Gaza

The New York Times
January 9, 2009 Friday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1300 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER; Reporting was contributed by Neil MacFarquhar from the United Nations; Rachel Donadio from Rome; Isabel Kershner and Steven Erlanger from Jerusalem; and Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza.

Body

JERUSALEM -- International aid groups lashed out at Israel on Thursday over the war in Gaza, saying that access to civilians in need is poor, relief workers are being hurt and killed, and Israel is woefully neglecting its obligations to Palestinians who are trapped, some among rotting corpses in a nightmarish landscape of deprivation.

The United Nations declared a suspension of its aid operations after one of its drivers was killed and two others were wounded despite driving United Nations-flagged vehicles and coordinating their movements with the Israeli military. The United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, called for an investigation by Israel for a second time in a week after the more than 40 deaths near a United Nations school from Israeli tank fire on Tuesday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reported finding what it called shocking scenes on Wednesday, including four emaciated children next to the bodies of their dead mothers. In a rare and sharply critical statement, it said it believed that "the Israeli military failed to meet its obligation under international humanitarian law to care for and evacuate the wounded."

Israeli officials said that they were examining all the allegations, that they did not aim at civilians and that they were not certain that the source of fire that killed and wounded the United Nations drivers was Israeli.

"We do our utmost to avoid hitting civilians, and many times we don't fire because we see civilians nearby," said Maj. Avital Leibovich, chief army spokeswoman for the foreign media. "We are holding meetings with U.N. officials to try to work out a mechanism so that their work can go forward."

She said that the army learned of the Red Cross allegations in a media report, and that the Geneva-based committee had not yet presented the evidence of what she called "these very serious allegations" to the army.

At the United Nations, members of the Security Council voted Thursday night to approve a resolution calling for "an immediate, durable and fully respected cease-fire" that would lead to the "full withdrawal" of Israeli forces from Gaza, the passage of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians and an end to the trafficking of arms and ammunition into the territory.

Fourteen nations approved the measure, with the United States abstaining. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the United States abstained from voting on the resolution, which left it unclear how a cease-fire would be

Aid Groups Rebuke Israel Over Conditions in Gaza

enforced, because it wanted to see whether mediation efforts undertaken by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt succeed. The United States did not veto the resolution because Washington supports its overall goals, she said.

Some Arab ambassadors expressed disappointment that the measure did not specifically call for a lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and some Western ambassadors acknowledged a long history of United Nations resolutions that led nowhere.

"We are all very conscious that peace is made on the ground, while resolutions are written in the United Nations," said David Miliband, the British foreign secretary.

A Red Cross spokeswoman, Anne-Sophie Bonefeld, said that when the children and others were rescued in Gaza on Wednesday, workers had to leave behind a number of bodies. On Thursday, she said, 100 civilians were rescued from the same Gaza City neighborhood. They were not wounded, but they were weakened because of being without food or water for two days.

As the war entered its 14th day, and Israeli airstrike destroyed a five-story building, killing at least seven people, <u>Hamas</u> security officials told The Associated Press.

The Gaza authorities said that the death toll passed 750, with <u>women</u> and children making up about 40 percent of the dead. Israel held its fire for three hours Thursday afternoon, the second day in a row, to allow in aid. It was during that pause that local ambulance crews and the Red Crescent found dozens of bodies under a collapsed building. Three Israeli soldiers were killed in combat; seven other soldiers have died during the military campaign, which is aimed at stopping *Hamas* rocket fire, and three civilians have been killed by rockets.

More rockets flew into Israel and, for the first time since the operation against <u>Hamas</u> began, three Katyusha rockets were shot from Lebanon into northern Israel. Hezbollah, which fought a war with Israel in 2006 that included thousands of rockets, said it was not responsible.

But attention was increasingly focused on the growing humanitarian crisis and on the increasing anger abroad.

Israel condemned a high-ranking Vatican official for comparing Gaza to "a concentration camp."

"Look at the conditions in Gaza: more and more, it resembles a big concentration camp," Cardinal Renato Martino, the head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said in an interview published Wednesday in II Sussidiaro.

He defended his comments in the center-left Italian daily La Repubblica on Thursday. While noting that <u>Hamas</u> rockets into Israel were "certainly not sugared almonds," he called the situation in Gaza "horrific." Israel sharply condemned the cardinal's use of World War II imagery. "We are astounded that a spiritual dignitary would have such words that are so far removed from truth and dignity," said Yigal Palmor, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

The Vatican sought to play down the remarks, calling them inopportune.

John Holmes, a United Nations emergency relief coordinator, said in New York that the three-hour daily pause in the fighting permitted by Israel in Gaza was insufficient. He said the Gaza authorities counted 758 fatalities, among them 257 children and 56 <u>women</u>. The injured totaled 3,100; of them 1,080 were children and about were 465 women.

He added that the Gaza authorities reported that 20,000 were displaced but that conditions prevented officials from helping them properly. "The continuing violence is making humanitarian aid increasingly difficult and almost impossible," Mr. Holmes said.

Antoine Grand, head of Red Cross operations in Gaza, said his group's workers came under Israeli fire on Thursday. He said a convoy of two trucks, one clearly marked as Red Cross and the other from the Ministry of Health, was taking medical equipment to the southern city of Khan Yunis, followed by 13 ambulances heading to the Egyptian border.

Aid Groups Rebuke Israel Over Conditions in Gaza

He said the convoy's movement was "fully coordinated with Israel. I did it myself." And it was during the three-hour lull, at 3:30 p.m., he said, when they stopped in front of the checkpoint that the Red Cross vehicle was shot at from a tank.

"One bullet passed 10 centimeters from the head of the driver," he said. He was lightly injured from shattered glass. Mr. Grand said the group would limit its operations to Gaza City.

Israeli officials said they were investigating.

The Jerusalem Post's Web site quoted an Israeli medical worker as saying that the killing of the United Nations driver that contributed to the suspension of aid delivery was the work of a *Hamas* sniper.

John Ging, who heads United Nations relief operations in Gaza, said by telephone that he was unaware of any information suggesting that the driver had been shot by *Hamas*.

"If they have evidence, let them present it," he said, adding that in none of the events of the past few days -- the attacks on the school or the trucks -- was there any evidence of cross-fire. He visited the school after the shelling.

"I want an exhaustive investigation to establish all the facts," he said in a telephone interview. "In the school, they say two of those killed were militants. But that means 41 were civilians. That is wholly and totally a very serious matter regarding duty of care and appropriate use of force. But I can't pass judgment without the facts."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTOS: A Palestinian woman inspected the remains of her Gaza home after an airstrike Thursday, day 13 of Israel's anti-*Hamas* operation.(PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS)(A1)

Palestinians carried sacks of flour from a United Nations Relief and Works Agency warehouse in Gaza City on Thursday. The United Nations declared a suspension of its aid operations.(PHOTOGRAPH BY ALI ALI/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY)(A8) MAP: Trucks taking supplies to Khan Yunis came under fire. (A8)

Load-Date: June 17, 2011



Israeli shelling kills dozens at UN school in Gaza

Guardian.com January 6, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 1300 words

Highlight: * Reports of more than 40 killed in and around UN shelter* 12 members of family killed in Gaza City air

strike

Body

The civilian death toll in Gaza increased dramatically today, with reports of more than 40 Palestinians killed after missiles exploded outside a UN school where hundreds of people were sheltering from the continuing Israeli offensive.

Two Israeli tank shells struck the school in Jabaliya refugee camp, spraying shrapnel on people inside and outside the building, according to news agency reports.

The medical director of the hospital in Jabaliya told the Guardian 41 bodies had been brought in so far and more could be on the way. Reuters journalists filmed bodies scattered on the ground amid pools of blood and torn shoes and clothes.

In addition to the dead, several dozen people were wounded, hospital officials said. The Israeli military said it was looking into the reports.

"I saw a lot of <u>women</u> and children wheeled in," Fares Ghanem, a hospital official told the Associated Press. "A lot of the wounded were missing limbs and a lot of the dead were in pieces."

Majed Hamdan, an AP photographer, who rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks, said many children were among the dead. "I saw <u>women</u> and men parents slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said.

"In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there wasn't enough space for the wounded."

Elsewehere, at least 12 members of an extended family, including seven young children, were killed in an air strike on their house in Gaza City. The bodies of the Daya family were pulled from the rubble of a house in Gaza city's Zeitoun district after it was hit by two Israeli missiles. The dead included seven children aged from one to 12 years, three <u>women</u> and two men. Nine other people were believed to be trapped in the rubble.

Hours earlier, three young men - all cousins - died when the Israelis bombed another UN school, the Asma primary school in Gaza City. They were among about 400 people who sought shelter there after fleeing their homes in Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza.

Israeli shelling kills dozens at UN school in Gaza

The UN, which said the school in Jabaliya was clearly marked, said it was "strongly protesting these killings to the Israeli authorities and is calling for an immediate and impartial investigation".

"Where it is found that international humanitarian law has been violated, those responsible must be held to account. Under international law, installations such as schools, health centres and UN facilities should be protected from attack. Well before the current fighting, the UN had given to the Israeli authorities the GPS co-ordinates of all its installations in Gaza, including Asma elementary school."

The killings take the total toll in Palestinian lives since the Israelis launched their assault on the Gaza Strip 11 days ago to above 600. Doctors at Gaza hospitals say that at least one-fifth of the victims are children and a large number of **women** are among the dead.

Israel continues to insist that the bulk of those killed are <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad fighters, although its claim to be going to extraordinary lengths to target only "terrorists" has been undermined by one of its own tanks firing on a building being used by Israeli troops, killing four.

The sharp spike in the number of civilian casualties came as Israeli troops and tanks moved into Gaza's second largest city, Khan Younis, for the first time today, supported by intensive artillery strikes as the military pledged to press on with its attack.

In a separate attack earlier in the day, three Palestinians were killed in an air strike on another school run by Unwra, the UN relief agency.

Nine Israelis, including three civilians hit by rocket fire, have been killed in the conflict. At least five rockets fired from Gaza landed in Israel today, including one that hit the town of Gadera, 17 miles from Tel Aviv, police said. A three-year-old girl was wounded.

The heaviest fighting has been in northern Gaza, with witnesses reporting wave after wave of bombing strikes across the north of the territory accompanied by gunfire from helicopters and artillery from land and sea. Thousands of Palestinians have been ordered to leave their homes or forced to flee the fighting.

In Shajaiyeh, east of Gaza City, Israeli troops seized control of three apartment blocks and set up gun positions on the rooftops. Residents were locked in their homes and soldiers confiscated their mobile phones, neighbours said.

Three of the four Israeli soldiers killed by friendly fire died when a tank mistakenly fired on a building where the soldiers had taken up positions. There was heavy artillery fire to cover the evacuation of 24 soldiers who were injured, including the commander of the Golani infantry brigade, one of Israel's key fighting forces.

Israel's defence minister, Ehud Barak, said his country's troops would continue their operation despite mounting Palestinian casualties and growing international calls for a ceasefire.

"Hamas has so far sustained a very heavy blow from us, but we have yet to achieve our objective, and therefore the operation continues," Barak said.

The Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, said the offensive was intended to change permanently the shape of Israel's conflict with <u>Hamas</u>. "When Israel is targeted, Israel is going to retaliate," she said. Israel has rejected calls for a ceasefire.

The military said it had bombed more smuggling tunnels across the border with Egypt, in the south, and hit more than 40 other sites across Gaza including buildings storing weapons and rocket launching areas.

In Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, the most senior leader of <u>Hamas</u> in the strip and a hardliner in the movement, appeared on the party's al-Aqsa television station and gave a defiant speech threatening attacks not only in Gaza but elsewhere.

Israeli shelling kills dozens at UN school in Gaza

"The Zionists have legitimised the killing of their children by killing our children. They have legitimised the killing of their people all over the world by killing our people," Zahar said. He urged *Hamas* fighters to "crush your enemy".

Another <u>Hamas</u> figure, a recognised military spokesman called Abu Ubaida, said thousands of <u>Hamas</u> fighters were waiting in Gaza to take on the Israeli military, and that rocket attacks would increase. More than 40 were fired into southern Israel yesterday, including one that landed in an empty kindergarten, which, like all schools near the Gaza border, has been closed since the conflict began.. Israeli police said a total of 520 rockets had been fired in the past 11 days of fighting.

Israeli troops are now deployed in and around the major urban areas of Gaza, particularly to the north, in Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya and Jabaliya. Using leaflets, telephone calls and radio announcements, they have ordered residents in many areas to leave their homes, forcing at least 15,000 Palestinians to flee to safety elsewhere. At least 5,000 are staying in 11 different UN schools and shelters.

The UN said more than 1 million Gazans were still without electricity or water and that it was increasingly difficult for staff to distribute aid or reach the injured. It said more industrial diesel was needed to reopen the strip's sole power plant, which has been shut for a week. Ten transformers have been damaged in the fighting.

More wheat grain is needed for food handouts, and the UN said Karni, the main commercial crossing, should be reopened to allow it in. Four ambulances and three mobile clinics were destroyed when bombs hit the headquarters of the Union of Health Care Committees in Gaza City.

John Holmes, the UN emergency relief coordinator, said Gaza represented an "increasingly alarming" humanitarian crisis, and that the territory was running low on clean water, power, food, medicine and other supplies since Israel began its offensive. Israeli leaders claim there is no humanitarian crisis.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



Flowers amid West Bank thorns; Fragile signs that Palestinians' oppressive lives are improving

The International Herald Tribune December 24, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1329 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner and Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: BETHLEHEM, West Bank

Body

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Load-Date: December 26, 2008



Israel strikes at Lebanon rocket site

The Evening Standard (London)
January 14, 2009 Wednesday
B Edition

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 482 words

Byline: MARTIN BENTHAM

Body

ISRAEL was today hit by rocket attacks from Lebanon. At least three Katyusha rockets landed in northern Israel, prompting residents to flee to bomb shelters, although there were no reported injuries.

Lebanese security officials said that three more Grad rockets about to be fired were discovered and dismantled by Lebanese troops.

Israel responded by firing at least eight artillery shells, while helicopter gunships flew along the heavily protected border. Lebanese troops and UN peacekeepers sent out patrols. The clashes, which follow a similar exchange of fire last week, will raise renewed fears that the 19-day-old conflict in Gaza could spread to Israel's border with Lebanon in what would be a serious escalation of the fighting.

Hezbollah, the militant organisation which fought a month-long war with Israel in 2006, denied being behind last week's attacks.

It is likely that today's rockets were fired by Palestinian militants sheltering in Lebanon, which would reduce the likelihood of a serious conflagration.

In Gaza City, <u>Hamas</u> militants and Israeli troops fought hand to hand today. The ground offensive, which came as doctors warned of severe malnutrition across Gaza, was backed up by about 60 new air strikes by Israeli warplanes and renewed shelling from gunboats.

A cemetery in Gaza City was hit, destroying graves and scattering flesh and body parts. The Israeli military did not comment but rocket squads have used graveyards as launch-pads in the past.

Resident Ahmad Abu Jarbou said: "There was flesh on the roofs, there was small bits of intestines.

Israel strikes at Lebanon rocket site

My neighbour found a hand of a woman who died a long time ago, we put it all into a plastic bag." Israeli officials said the strikes had hit targets including a police court in Gaza City, rocket-launching sites, weapons-production and storage facilities and about 35 weapons smuggling tunnels.

In return, at least three rockets from Gaza were reported to have hit Israel.

At least five Israeli soldiers were injured in the clashes, while the overall Palestinian death toll is now approaching 1,000, including several hundred children and a substantial number of **women**.

Israel says that 10 of its soldiers and three civilians have died. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, is in Cairo for talks with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Mr Ban said: "I repeat my call for an immediate and durable ceasefire," he said. "It is intolerable that civilians bear the brunt of this conflict." Mr Ban is also due to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders and senior politicians in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, but is not scheduled to meet any representatives of *Hamas*.

Options thought to be under discussion are the deployment of Turkish troops along Egypt's border with Gaza to prevent weapons smuggling by militants and the resolution of Israel's key demand that any peace plan must include measures that would prevent <u>Hamas</u> from re-arming..

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



Israel Welcomes French-Egyptian Gaza Peace Initiative

RTT News (United States)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 270 words

Body

(RTTNews) - Israel on Wednesday welcomed the French-Egyptian proposed truce deal aimed at ending the ongoing fighting in the Gaza Strip and said that it will send its representatives to Cairo for further discussions on the issue.

Israeli spokesman Mark Regev said that the Jewish country has "on the principles" of the ceasefire proposal, adding that the present challenge "is to get the details to match the principles."

"Israel welcomes the initiative of the French president and the Egyptian president to bring about a sustainable quiet in the south," he said.

Also on Wednesday, Israeli Foreign Ministry said that it will send senior officials to the Egyptian capital of Cairo to discuss the French-Egyptian proposed truce deal in detail.

The two preconditions kept by Israel for a Gaza cease-fire deal include the halting of rocket attacks by Palestinian militants on southern Israel and the stopping of arms smuggling to Gaza.

On the other hand, <u>Hamas</u>, the radical Islamic group that rules Gaza, insists that a cease-fire in Gaza is possible only if Israel lifts its blockade on the Palestinian territory unconditionally.

The Israeli assault on the Gaza strip began on 27 December after <u>Hamas</u> refused to renew an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire deal that expired in December, and began pounding southern Israel with rockets and mortar shells.

It is estimated that at least 680 Palestinians, including <u>women</u> and children, have been killed and over 3,000 wounded in the Israeli offensive that began 12 days ago.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



ANTI-ISRAEL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN INDIA

Hindustan Times

January 1, 2009 Thursday 6:10 PM EST

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Length: 243 words

Byline: Report from Asian News International brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Srinagar/Kolkata

Body

Srinagar/Kolkata, Jan. 01 -- (ANI): Groups of youths took to streets in various parts of Srinagar, raising slogans in solidarity with the suffering people of Gaza.

Many in the Kashmir Valley have condemned the Israeli aggression against the Palestines.

The processions were led by members of the Bar Association, local intellectuals and separatist leaders.

"We want to tell the world that we are with the Palestinians. We want the aggression of Israel against the Palestinian people, their <u>women</u>, their children and their old and young should be stopped," said Mian Qayoom, the President of the Kashmir Bar Association.

Similar protests took place in Kolkata.

Protestors raising slogans against Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, damaged his photographs by tossing their shoes and later burnt his effigy.

On Wednesday, Israel stepped up preparations for a possible ground offensive after *Hamas*'s long-range rockets hit a major population centre.

Diplomats said the deadliest conflict in the Gaza Strip in four decades appeared close to a tipping point after four days of cross-border fire killed 385 Palestinians and four Israelis.

Foreign powers have increased pressure on both sides to halt hostilities, but the public anger in Israel over the widening of the rocket attacks to include Beersheba, 40 km from the Gaza Strip, could move the government to hit the *Hamas* even harder. (ANI)

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Load-Date: January 1, 2009



KASHMIRIS PROTEST AGAINST ISRAELI ATTACKS ON GAZA STRIP

Hindustan Times

January 12, 2009 Monday 6:11 PM EST

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Length: 240 words

Byline: Report from Asian News International brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Srinagar

Body

Srinagar, Jan. 12 -- (ANI): Youths gathered here to protest against the continuing aggression of Israel against Palestine.

Separatist leader Altaf Khan, head of Jammu Kashmir Peoples Freedom League (JKPFL) lead the protest.

The protestors marched around Lal Chowk area, raised anti-Israel and anti-American slogans and expressed their solidarity with the Palestinians.

"We want to ask United Nations that when people die in one country then such a big hue and cry is created. Now, the future of whole Palestine is in jeopardy. No one is coming forward to protect the interest of Palestinians. Nine hundred people have died in Gaza strip and about 3000 people have been injured. Still United Nations has not done anything for Palestine," said Altaf khan, head of Jammu Kashmir Peoples Freedom League.

The demonstration dispersed peacefully after flag of Israel was burnt.

The protesters also blamed America for its continuous support to Israel.

Protestors also condemned the brutality against innocent children and women.

Many innocent Palestinians have been killed among whom a large number happen to be civilians, since Israel launched its offensive on December 27 to curtail *Hamas*' rocket attacks on its territory from Gaza.

Israel has accused <u>Hamas</u> of taking shelter among the civilian population and using sites such as mosques and schools as military posts. (ANIO

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009



BARELY SURVIVING; VICTORIA WARD REPORTS FROM FRONT LINE IN ASSAULT ON GAZA TERROR AS ISRAEL STORMS STRIP 100 CIVILIANS AMONG 500 DEAD

The Mirror

January 5, 2009 Monday

1 Star Edition

Copyright 2009 MGN Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 6 Length: 849 words

Byline: VICTORIA WARD

Body

THE bombs rained down again, bringing more mayhem and death to Gaza - as they have for more than a week.

As I watched, fighter planes and helicopters fired salvos of missiles - backing up Israel's ground invasion of the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Azmi Keshawi, 43, told of the terror inside Gaza City as residents struggle to stay alive.

He fled his home with his wife and four kids - the youngest aged just eight months - to find safety before Israel's invasion on Saturday.

But there is nowhere to hide and as I talked to him, our conversation was punctuated by ear-splitting blasts too close for comfort.

Cameraman Azmi said: "Saturday was a night no one will ever forget.

I don't know if there are words to describe it. We are barely surviving.

"We have seen waves of attacks and violence for years but this time it went to unprecedented levels.

"From midnight until 6am it was continuous, almost one blast every second. There is no electricity so the Gaza Strip was pitch black.

Only the lucky ones with generators could find out what was going on through the news."

As we spoke, there was an explosion. Azmi asked, startled: "Did you hear that?"

There was a long pause before he was back on the line, shaken. "I can see the plane firing rockets," he went on. "I can see shooting from my window. Never in my life have I witnessed firing like this.

"If you had come to Gaza eight days ago, you wouldn't recognise it now."

BARELY SURVIVING VICTORIA WARD REPORTS FROM FRONT LINE IN ASSAULT ON GAZA TERROR AS ISRAEL STORMS STRIP 100 CIVILIANS AMONG 500 DEAD

The fresh fighting brought the death toll in the Gaza Strip to more than 500 since the escalation of the conflict on December 27.

The grim figure, from Palestinian health chiefs and UN officials, is believed to include at least 100 civilians - around a third of them kids.

Foreign journalists remain banned from Gaza. But last night, from Kfar Aza near the border, just over a mile from the city, I watched - close enough to witness the attacks, too far to hear the screams.

An Israeli helicopter circled slowly, hovering over the tall buildings.

Then blasts pierced the silence as rockets were fired.

For a moment they glowed bright orange against the blue sky. And then they disappeared. Seconds later clouds of smoke rose from the ground.

Intermittently, a siren sounded and we ran to a shelter as *Hamas* retaliated with rockets.

In Gaza, however, there are no shelters. Azmi said: "With the strength the Israelis are using, there would be no point anyway.

"If you are not in a shelter you can run. Inside, you would be buried."

Not everyone, tragically, is able to run to safety. Now hospitals and clinics, some with staff working around the clock, are struggling to cope with the rising numbers of dead and wounded.

Blood covers the floors. There are frequently no tools to sterilise operating equipment. One centre has run out of anaesthetic.

Fikr Shalltoot of Medical Aid for Palestinians said: "We only have 2,050 beds across the whole Gaza Strip but the number of injured already exceeds that.

"There are not enough drugs or ambulances. Medical teams are resuscitating women and children on the floor.

"People are waiting to be operated on but there is no equipment and they are just given painkillers. Relatives are told to find the mortuary on their own, but it is full and many bodies are piled outside. It is a disaster."

Conditions are also grim among those who have so far escaped death and injury.

More than 2,000 families have fled their homes and aid workers warn of a chronic shortage of food and water. Save The Children says that even before the current crisis, 50,000 kids were suffering chronic malnutrition.

But aid agencies say it is difficult to get supplies to where they are most needed.

Some Save The Children staff are risking life and limb to deliver aid. The charity's Dominic Nutt said: "What they're doing, in the teeth of a military onslaught, is brave in the extreme.

"But children are going hungry. They are vulnerable and we fear for them." Yesterday's casualties included a paramedic with an Oxfam-funded group, killed as an Israeli shell hit a civilian ambulance in Beit Lahiya north of Gaza City.

Israel started its bombardment on December 27 to stop *Hamas* firing rockets across the border.

But Oxfam claims Israel's insistence that it is targeting only <u>Hamas</u> militants rings hollow. The charity's John Prideaux-Brune said from Jerusalem: "It shows that trying to fight a military campaign in the densely populated Gaza Strip will inevitably lead to civilian casualties."

BARELY SURVIVING VICTORIA WARD REPORTS FROM FRONT LINE IN ASSAULT ON GAZA TERROR AS ISRAEL STORMS STRIP 100 CIVILIANS AMONG 500 DEAD

Azmi went further as he raged: "My colleague's brother and 11-year-old son were killed when their house was hit in the middle of the day.

"Civilians are the target in this war.

It is punishment for the people of Gaza for backing *Hamas*."

<u>Hamas</u> fired 45 rockets into Israel yesterday. Israel said one of its soldiers was killed in a mortar attack and 32 were injured, three seriously.

As fighting continued last night, Israeli forces were encamped either side of Gaza City and along a major east-west road - effectively cutting the Strip in two.

A senior military officer said the troops were in for the long haul and stressed the operation was "not a rapid one that would end in hours or a few days".

Graphic

SUFFERING Father carries his burned daughter yesterday; FIRE IN THE SKY Flames and smoke over Gaza City Pictures: AFP/GETTY IMAGES/REUTERS/AP Gaza City Yesterday; ARMED An Israeli soldier set for attack; FACE OF FEAR A terrified Palestinian girl hides

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



It's too easy just to blame Jews

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 12, 2009 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Opinion; Pg. 9

Length: 965 words

Byline: PAUL SHEEHAN

Body

'American Jews are not authentic. They're obsessed with money. There's something annoying about them." This comment, from a Jewish reporter, Danny Ababa, for Israel's largest-selling daily, Yediot Aharonot, was published last November 21, while I happened to be in Israel. Not surprisingly, it caused consternation, especially among the American Jews attending an international assembly in Jerusalem.

On the same day, there was a report of physical violence between competing factions within the ultra-orthodox Jewish communities in Jerusalem. At the same time, ultra-nationalist Jews were preparing for a siege against the Israeli Defence Forces over their occupation of an illegal Jewish settlement in Hebron in the Palestinian territories.

When it comes to the morality of Israel's behaviour, no community is more fiercely divided, or vocal, or politically fractionalised than the Jewish community itself. Israel is special, and it inspires passions out of all proportion to its size given that the total number of Jews worldwide is about 13 million, or 0.2 per cent of the world's population.

This applies doubly to anti-Jewish sentiment, which is being carried by the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Look no further than the demonstration in Melbourne eight days ago. Amid demonstrators protesting against the Israeli attacks on Gaza were those carrying signs that said: "Clean the Earth from the dirty Zionists" . . . "Chosen dirty people of the Earth" . . . "Stop the sub-human Zionist land-grabbing barbarian mass murder in occupied Palestine".

Then there was the young man with an Australian accent, interviewed by the BBC in Beirut last week, during a demonstration against Israel's actions in Gaza: "I'm an Australian, but I'm here to kill Jews."

Kill Jews. Dirty People. Sub-human. Mass murderers. Greedy.

The passions run deep and viscerally. After 60 years of conflict without end over the borders of Israel, since 1948, the intellectual and moral terrain is filled with ruts, trenches and no-go areas. On both sides minds snap shut at the first hint of sympathy for the enemy.

When I visited a Palestinian refugee camp in November, the Aida camp on the West Bank, near Bethlehem, I was escorted around by a charming 16-year-old, Mohammed, who wants to become a doctor. He is a third-generation refugee. When I asked if he had ever visited Israel, he replied: "Yes, I have been to occupied Palestine." (Where was the term "occupied Palestine" when the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza were an ethnic majority living under the rule of an ethnic minority, the Hashemites of Jordan, for 20 years until 1967?)

It's too easy just to blame Jews

Even in Sydney, negative stereotypes of Jews sit quietly below the surface: the gaudy Hungarians of Double Bay, the haughty South Africans who left as soon as the blacks took over, the Zionist billionaires Frank Lowy and Dick Pratt, the divided loyalties of the orthodox Jews. It's not hard to scratch a Jewish itch in Lakemba, Punchbowl, Bankstown or Auburn.

The idea of disproportionate Jewish power and success is an unspoken emotional subtext that puts so much heat and resentment into the Israel-Palestine debate. It is not just geography and history and morality. Then action begets reaction. Complaints have come into the Herald from outraged Jews: your coverage is biased against Israel. It is insulting. Expect consequences. We will boycott your paper. You will feel our power.

Because the existence of Israel radiates an affront to the Muslim world, only Palestinians have been sequestered from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to a special agency. That agency, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, has warehoused displaced Palestinians for decades because it has been in the interests of the Arab world for this problem not to be solved.

Gaza has become a giant warehouse of misery. It has no economic growth, no prospects, almost no civil order, yet about half the population is under the age of 17. The population has exploded amid economic privation. <u>Women</u>, living under Sharia law, are used primarily as breeding stock. When Nizar Rayan, the most senior member of <u>Hamas</u>, was killed in the latest Israeli attacks, he had four wives and 14 children.

Why did Israel go into this strategically useless, densely populated area, which it had already given up, risking urban warfare, civilian casualties, international condemnation and more anti-Semitism? Based on briefings I received from the Israeli Government, there are four reasons for Operation Cast Lead:

- * A perception had grown in the Arab world that Israel was losing its stomach for a war of attrition and had responded tepidly to 6000 *Hamas* rocket attacks. Israel wants to end that perception.
- * To stop the rocket attacks, Israel has a very specific target, the Philadelphi corridor along the border with Egypt. It has occupied the corridor, destroyed the smuggling tunnels, and will pass control only to an international military force.
- * Neither Israel nor Egypt want an Islamic Hamastan solidifying on their doorsteps in Gaza. They want <u>Hamas</u> to be synonymous with chaos.
- * Finally, Israel believes it did not waste the war in Lebanon in 2006. Hezbollah was badly damaged. After 17 days of attacks in Gaza, Hezbollah has not opened a second front of rocket attacks from Lebanon. Its leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, remains in hiding, giving speeches and sermons via video link.

None of this answers the tricky question of Israel's disengagement, but a far more troubling question is why *Hamas* launched more than 6000 rockets into Israel despite the impossibility of military victory and the urgent need to rebuild society. Because *Hamas* is, above all, about jihad.

If Gaza becomes a sinkhole of oppression and dysfunction in the process, just blame the Jews.

Graphic

ILLUSTRATION: by Andrew Joyner

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



Israeli forces encircle Gaza city with combined attacks

RTT News (United States)
January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 292 words

Body

(RTTNews) - Israel's war to end rocket fire from the Gaza Strip intensified Tuesday, with its forces encircling the Gaza city facing stiff resistance from *Hamas*, reports said.

A combined attack by Israeli air force helicopters, navy gunboats, and the ground forces came hours after Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned militants they would face an "iron fist" unless they agreed to Israel's terms to end the fighting.

<u>Hamas</u>' armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, claimed to have destroyed two Israeli tanks in the Gaza City neighborhood of Zeitun and that they killed many soldiers in the village of Khuzaa, near the Israeli border. The Israeli army refuted the claims.

Reports quoting witnesses said Special Forces advanced into the southern neighborhood of Tal al Hawa after midnight.

Tanks opened fire, backed by aerial bombing, to shatter resistance by Palestinian fighters.

One Palestinian was reported killed and three others wounded in the encounter.

The IDF's incessant attacks deep into the Gaza heartland draw inspiration from Olmert's statement Monday that "We will continue to strike with full strength, with full force until there is quiet and rearmament stops."

The number of Palestinian casualties has crossed 900 as the Israeli "Operation Cast Lead" aimed at trouncing Gaza militants entered 18th day. Almost half of those killed are <u>women</u> and children, according to UN humanitarian agency and Gaza medics.

Israel has suffered 13 casualties; ten of them soldiers.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has urged both sides to "just stop, now," on his way to the region to push for a ceasefire.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



Anger over official silence on Gaza

therecord.com

January 5, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. B1

Length: 509 words

Byline: April Robinson, RECORD STAFF

Dateline: KITCHENER

Body

Organizers urged restraint as more than 100 Palestinian supporters marched silently along King Street Saturday afternoon.

"No chanting. Please. Keep calm," called Mohamed Bendame through a megaphone, as people hoisting placards, women with strollers and children with tiny Palestinian flags walked slowly from Frederick Street to Kitchener City Hall.

The group was led by people carrying a banner which read: "Stop the genocide in Gaza." Another read "Israel, stop killing Palestinian children."

Some held giant Palestinian or Canadian flags. Others held signs with photos depicting bloodshed.

It was the second rally for Gaza held in Kitchener in two days. Nearly 300 people gathered in front of Kitchener City Hall to protest escalating violence on the Gaza Strip.

"I empathize with your frustration and your rage," Dr. Abdur-Rahman Lawendy, a former University of Waterloo student, told the crowd. "You stand here and you wonder why you shouldn't scream." But he said the silent march represents the silence of the Canadian government.

"The fear is we stand in complacency because our government does nothing about it."

The rally, organized by the Muslim community of Kitchener and Waterloo, came as Israeli tanks and infantry entered Gaza after nightfall on Saturday, launching a ground offensive after a week of air attacks on <u>Hamas</u> targets. More than 460 Palestinians have died. Four Israelis have died from <u>Hamas</u> rocket fire.

"We feel hopeless with all the suffering and violence and carnage in Gaza," said Idrisa Pandit, of Waterloo, who attended the rally with her children.

She said she wanted to show her support for Palestinians but wants Canadian political leaders to condemn the Israeli offensive.

Anger over official silence on Gaza

Silently attending the rally "doesn't do much for them," said Pandit, who was born in Kashmir. "But what can we do?"

Rabbi Yosil Rosenzweig, of Kitchener's Beth Jacob synagogue, says his congregation is praying for peace.

But he thinks people should remember Israel is protecting itself against *Hamas*.

"The sovereign nation is being bombed on a daily basis by hundreds of rockets, and when that nation retaliates, they're considered the aggressors," he said in a phone interview. "There's a huge double standard here."

Saturday's crowd was urged not to cheer in Arabic.

"Remember who you're trying to reach," Ed Corrigan, a London, Ont. immigration lawyer told the crowd.

"Your target audience is the Canadian people."

Bilal Ahmed, 23, said the aim was to show Canadians you don't have to burn tires and act aggressively to get your message across.

But undertones of anger were apparent in those attending the rally.

"What's the difference between Hitler and Israel?" asked Bashar Hamdan, 16, wearing a black and white-checked scarf to symbolize freedom for the Palestinian people.

Hamdan, of Kitchener, said he was born in Jordan.

Mark Corbiere, 23, waved a Mohawk war flag among the sea of Palestinian colours.

"There's a definite parallel between Palestinian and Native oppression," said Corbiere, of Kitchener.

"And land is the main struggle."

arobinson@therecord.com

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Their battlefield is not in our country

Herald Sun (Australia)
January 6, 2009 Tuesday
1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: ED; Pg. 16 Length: 258 words

Body

HOT TOPIC

Sunday's rallies in the city stirred strong feelings among readers of heraldsun.com.au

LEAVE the hatred beyond our shores, or simply leave.

Eddie, Viewbank

WHY are these people blocking the streets of Melbourne for something the majority of Australians have nothing to do with?

If they feel so strongly, go over there and do something about it, and not rant and rave on Aussie streets.

Emilemorel, Melbourne

IF you want to protest, this is not the place to do it. Hit the road. It's not our problem.

Leave the anger and violence out of Australia.

Ashley, Berwick

LET <u>women</u> have a go, and I believe there is a strong possibility of peace once and for all.

Miss M, Melbourne

WHY do these people bring their problems here?

The same type have hijacked the tennis each year now so I guess we'll see similar people wrecking a great family event with borrowed political views.

Jack Thomas, Ballarat

ISRAEL'S war is immoral with too many innocent lives being lost but, on the other side of the coin, I don't know how anyone can stomach to support groups like *Hamas*.

I saw it at the rally . . . romanticising *Hamas* as Robin Hood and his Merry Men.

Their battlefield is not in our country

John,

I WAS in the city yesterday and was truly horrified by what I saw and heard.

The hatred, racism and bigotry being demonstrated were terrible to see.

How long before we start seeing open violence and even suicide bombs in Australia?

Fossil@work, Melbourne

ALL we need is Barack Obama and Super Kevie to sit by the campfire, join hands and sing Kumbaya.

Paul Chao, Box Hill

To join our online debates, go to heraldsun.com.au

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Attack is hidden from cameras

Derby Evening Telegraph January 9, 2009 Friday

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Length: 277 words

Body

The world is watching only partial coverage of the terrorist bombing of Gaza, under the pretext of "defending Israel".

As usual, the Zionist state has prevented journalists from entering the war zone to deny the world from witnessing the genocide it carries out against the unarmed population of Palestine.

The truce with <u>Hamas</u> expired as <u>Hamas</u> stated that Israel did not fulfil the pledges it had made at the start of the cease-fire agreement. For the last two months, the civilians in occupied Palestine were prevented access to humanitarian supplies, medicine, industrial fuel and cooking oil.

As I write, the death toll is around the 350 mark, the vast majority are women and children as the Gaza Strip is carpet bombed.

The army awaits orders for a full land onslaught as the 200 or so F-16 Israeli fighter jets have finished their 72-hour pogrom. Once they enter, the casualty rate will no longer register on the counter as everything will just become a statistical reference.

The response of the neighbouring Arab countries?

Well, the western-educated and backed rulers will mutter their disapproval that will barely be audible as they have to conform to their US masters' wishes of being "seen but not heard".

The White House will applaud Israel as if it is the victim. In so doing, it will be applauded by the Zionist-owned sultinational corporations as they financed President Rush's ascension to Washington DC in order for him to serve th

multinational corporations as they infanced President Bush's ascension to washington DC in order for him to serv
their interests. Downing Street will respond in a similar fashion, but no-one really cares as it's obvious that it serve
the US in a relationship that can only be described as master and slave.
Abdul Aziz,
Normanton
Normanton.

Load-Date: June 11, 2009

Derby.



Will Israel never learn? Each bomb is a gift to its enemies

Mail on Sunday (London)
January 4, 2009 Sunday
1ST Edition

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Section: Pg. 27

Length: 475 words

Byline: Peter Hitchens

Body

ISRAEL is wrong to attack Gaza. I say this as a consistent hard-line supporter of the Jewish state, who refuses to join in the fashionable condemnation of everything it does. But just because the usual anti-Israel factions and their gullible supporters are automatically against the bombing, Israel's friends should not automatically take the other side.

First of all, the action will not achieve the aim that Israeli politicians claim for it. <u>Hamas</u> missile raids on Sderot and other towns could be stopped only if Israel permanently reoccupied the Gaza strip from end to end. This is impossible.

The operation's real purpose is to improve the standing of two politicians, Tzipi Livni and Ehud Barak, in impending elections. Nobody should die for such a motive.

Israel's supporters should ask themselves this simple question: What do the leaders of <u>Hamas</u> hope to achieve by firing rockets at Israel? The answer, quite obviously, is that they wish to provoke Israel into just this sort of futile, self-damaging retaliation.

<u>Hamas</u> does not mind if the civilians of Gaza suffer, provided their suffering can be used to weaken Israel's alliance with the USA and Europe.

The inhabitants of Gaza and the West Bank are pawns, who could long ago have been given decent, peaceful lives if the wealthy Arab world really cared about them.

Israel, and its friends, should also grasp the simple point that the fate of the Middle East will not be decided by armed force, as it was in the wars of 1967 and 1973. It will be decided on the TV screens of Europe and North America.

Israel is the small, threatened victim in the conflict. It is a tiny piece of land, hemmed in on all sides by many millions of Muslims, mostly Arabs, who believe that the Jewish state can, and ought to be, wiped off the map.

Yet its attack on Gaza, like its 2006 attack on Lebanon, allows Israel to be portrayed as the big bully, and the vast, oil-rich Arab world to portray itself as the victim.

I should think most readers of this column take this ridiculous, inaccurate view. I am not surprised.

Will Israel never learn? Each bomb is a gift to its enemies

Israel is largely to blame, by allowing itself to stumble into trap after trap of this kind.

Terrorist attacks on Israel are indeed revolting and indefensible.

But the bombing of densely populated areas, however accurate, is certain to cause the deaths of many innocents.

How then can it be defended? In what important way is it different from Arab murders of Israeli <u>women</u> and children? One is directly deliberate. The other is accidental but unavoidable.

I wouldn't say that was a specially important distinction, especially if you are a victim of it.

The real problem, persuading the Arab states and peoples to accept that Israel truly does have a right to exist, will not be solved by this sort of thing. In fact, it will be made much harder. Increasingly, I see a dark and bitter ending to this story.

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



Protesters took the law into their own hands at war demo

Luton On Sunday January 7, 2009

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Length: 257 words

Byline: LUI STRACCIA

Body

A law teacher witnessed scenes of violence outside the Iranian Embassy in London during a march against the war over the Gaza Strip.Luton Sixth Form College staff member Steve Coghlan was in the capital on Saturday protesting peacefully against Israel's attack. Steve Coghlan But others were not as restrained as Mr Coghlan, 44, who says he saw 'hothead' activists throwing punches and bottles at police officers outside the embassy.Mr Coghlan is a member of Luton Friends of Battir, which was formed to raise awareness of the plight of the Palestinian village of Battir.Nearly 5,000 people live in the small village, which is about six miles from Bethlehem and surrounded by Israeli settlements.Mr Coghlan joined more than 12,000 people marching through London, joining thousands of others around the world in public events against the attacks on the Palestinian territory.He said: "As a law teacher I make a point not to break the law."I saw fights between police and protesters.The police had their batons and some people were hitting back and throwing things."

On the situation on the Gaza Strip, Mr Coghlan added: "It's very complicated. We'd say <u>Hamas</u> were elected in the first place, while the Israelis have accused <u>Hamas</u> of breaking the ceasefire."It's terrible. Innocent people are being killed, <u>women</u> and children are being taken out."We'd say that indiscriminate bombing is terrorism in anyone's books. WHAT'S your view on the crisis in the Gaza Strip? Are you involved in any way? If so, contact our newsdesk on 01582 707707.

Load-Date: July 9, 2009



Our readers | have their say

Daily News (South Africa)
January 06, 2009 Tuesday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7 Length: 744 words

Body

Gaza

p If Palestinians were not converted to Islam, but remained loyal to their indigenous beliefs, then they would not be fighting their |"brothers", the Israelis.

p Why isn't there a similar outcry when Muslims kill their fellow Muslims in Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan?

p I am very disappointed, Mr Moolla. Palestinians are far from innocent and deserve the hiding they are getting. Pray for those children. Chris, Gillitts.

p Do you really expect Israel to sit idly by while being subjected to unprovoked attacks? <u>Hamas</u> is directly responsible for deaths, not Israel. Wake up.

p Why did <u>Hamas</u> break ceasefire agreement and start rocketing Israel? Now the death of innocent Palestinians is on the hands of <u>Hamas</u>, who were warned by the UN Security Council. This cross-border killing must stop.

p Ismail Moolla needs to get a grip on reality when referring to the Israeli attacks on so-called innocent Palestinians, when in fact it is the Palestinians who are harbouring the militants that kill innocent Israelis. Because the Palestinians are not removing these militant factions from their country, they now have to bear the might of Israel defending itself. Mike, Johannesburg.

p It seems the truth is not told when it comes to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Why are daily rockets and mortar shelling directed at Israeli citizens by <u>Hamas</u> thugs not condemned? We only hear howls of condemnation when the state of Israel retaliates. Nkosinathi, Durban.

p Israel terrorises <u>women</u> and children with American-made weapons. Israelis have no respect for human and animal life. They are cowards. Airstrikes cannot be compared with rockets.

p South African Jews are silent about the war in Gaza. Why? Because they support this criminal act wholeheartedly.

Matric results

p Poor results for township and rural schools. Most of these teachers supported the strike that resulted in teachers losing many teaching hours and part of their remuneration. The recovery plan was a huge flop. Lack of resources,

Our readers |have their say

failure in the implementation of OBE and the strike contributed to bad results. Worse, a lawyer, Ina Cronje, was made political head instead of taking Peggy Nkonyeni with her teaching diploma. Sadtu shop steward.

p After dismal matric results once again, a senior technocrat, Casius Lubisi, told parents in KZN that poor performance was because most of the schools are in rural areas. My foot! So next year this civil servant will order all parents with children in matric to relocate to urban areas. Parents should remove this SACP government from power, it is not coping. Nkosinathi, Durban.

Cricket

p Congratulations Proteas. See what can be achieved when we forget about politics and get on with the game. Good luck for the third game.

p Congratulations to the SA Cricket team for their first ever Test series win against Australia. It's a New Year's gift for South Africa.

Odds and ends

p Our rates have almost doubled, but the state of the Bluff is worse than ever. Where is our money going? We want answers now. Don't blame the rain. There has been no cutting of grass on the Bluff.

p My landline has been down for three weeks and Telkom said it could not do anything about it until January 5. Do we still need to pay the rental? Just wondering.

p The Department of Trade and Industry intends to lift restrictions on Chinese textiles this year. The government is aware of the rise in unemployment in the country and now wants to increase the figure. This does not help job seekers.

p Ever wondered why there are so many new cars with a "learner" sign? Most of the drivers are not learners, but crooks who can afford to buy a licence. These people are a danger to other motorists.

p When Shameen-Thakur Rajbansi responds to a reader critisizing her party, she outlines the same tired, boring policy of her party of "working with the majority party". This confirms the long-held view that this party was formed to take voters for a ride by exploiting the real fears of the Indian community when in fact it is a family dynasty. NH Mkhize, Avoca Hills.

p Durban ratepayers are paying a heavy price for Moses Mabhida Stadium. Rates increases are not being spent on maintaining Durban. Dirty Durban.

p How is it possible that we can find R300 million in aid for Zimbabwe, but we have a "lack of resources" when we have to deliver services to our own people? Franklin.

p Maybe Cele has family or friends lined up for a new bus company. There are more taxi accidents than bus accidents. Dawn A.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



<u>Tragic missteps; France, Egypt propose Gaza truce plan after Israeli mortar</u> kills 30

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 26

Length: 662 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza

Body

France and Egypt announced an initiative to stop the fighting in Gaza late Tuesday, hours after Israeli mortar shells exploded near a UN school sheltering hundreds of people displaced by the onslaught on <u>Hamas</u> militants. At least 30 Palestinians died, staining streets with blood.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner released no details of the ceasefire plan, saying at the UN Security Council that the presidents of his country and Egypt were awaiting a response from Israel.

Israeli officials in Jerusalem declined immediate comment on the announcement, which came amid diplomatic efforts by the United States and other countries to resolve a conflict between Israel and the Islamic militants of <u>Hamas</u> that has seen 600 people killed in 11 days. U.S. president-elect Barack Obama broke his silence on the crisis Tuesday, saying that "the loss of civilian life in Gaza and in Israel is a source of deep concern for me." He declined to go further, reiterating his stance that the United States has only one president at a time.

Israel's military said its shelling at the school -- the deadliest single episode since Israeli ground forces invaded Gaza on Saturday after a week of air bombardment -- was a response to mortar fire from within the school and said <u>Hamas</u> militants were using civilians as cover.

Two residents of the area who spoke with The Associated Press by telephone said they saw a small group of militants firing mortar rounds from a street near the school, where 350 people had gathered to get away from the shelling. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Majed Hamdan, an AP photographer, rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks. At the hospital, he said, many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men -- parents -- slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said. "In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there wasn't enough space for the wounded."

He said there appeared to be marks on the pavement of five separate explosions in area of the school.

Tragic missteps; France, Egypt propose Gaza truce plan after Israeli mortar kills 30

An Israeli defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to make the information public, said it appeared the military used 120-mm shells, among the largest mortar rounds.

UN officials demanded an investigation of the shelling. The carnage, which included 55 wounded, added to a surging civilian toll and drew mounting international pressure for Israel to end the offensive against *Hamas*.

At UN headquarters, Kouchner said Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy had proposed a plan for ending the fighting. He said it would bring together the main parties, including the Palestinian Authority, to take "all measures" to end the conflict, including the key issues of protecting Gaza's borders and reopening all crossings.

"We are awaiting the Israeli response and we harbour hope that it will be a positive one," Kouchner said.

Asked about Kouchner's statement, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's spokesman, Mark Regev, told AP: "We are holding off comments on that for the time being."

Israeli officials have said that any ceasefire agreement must prevent further rocket attacks by Gaza militants and put in place measures to prevent the smuggling of missile and other weapons into the small Palestinian territory.

Earlier at the UN, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called the Israeli bombardment of the group's facilities in Gaza "totally unacceptable." Israel's shells have fallen around three schools, including the girls school hit Tuesday, and a health centre for Palestinian refugees.

Ban added that it was "equally unacceptable" for militants to take actions that endanger Palestinian civilians.

Some 15,000 Palestinians have packed the UN's 23 Gaza schools because their homes were destroyed or to flee the violence. The UN provided the Israeli military with GPS co-ordinates for all of them.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike on a street near a U.N. school, after an Israeli attack killed dozens of Palestinians, in Jabaliya refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, on Tuesday. An Israeli bombardment struck outside a U.N. school where hundreds of Palestinians had sought refuge on Tuesday, the U.N. and Palestinian medics said, killing at least 30 people, many of them children whose parents wailed in grief at a hospital filled with dead and wounded.;

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Attack is hidden from cameras

Derby Evening Telegraph January 9, 2009 Friday

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Length: 277 words

Body

The world is watching only partial coverage of the terrorist bombing of Gaza, under the pretext of "defending Israel".

As usual, the Zionist state has prevented journalists from entering the war zone to deny the world from witnessing the genocide it carries out against the unarmed population of Palestine.

The truce with <u>Hamas</u> expired as <u>Hamas</u> stated that Israel did not fulfil the pledges it had made at the start of the cease-fire agreement. For the last two months, the civilians in occupied Palestine were prevented access to humanitarian supplies, medicine, industrial fuel and cooking oil.

As I write, the death toll is around the 350 mark, the vast majority are women and children as the Gaza Strip is carpet bombed.

The army awaits orders for a full land onslaught as the 200 or so F-16 Israeli fighter jets have finished their 72-hour pogrom. Once they enter, the casualty rate will no longer register on the counter as everything will just become a statistical reference.

The response of the neighbouring Arab countries?

Well, the western-educated and backed rulers will mutter their disapproval that will barely be audible as they have to conform to their US masters' wishes of being "seen but not heard".

The White House will applaud Israel as if it is the victim. In so doing, it will be applauded by the Zionist-owned multinational corporations as they financed President Bush's ascension to Washington DC in order for him to serve tl

nultinational corporations as they infanced Fresident busins ascension to washington be in order for him to serve
heir interests. Downing Street will respond in a similar fashion, but no-one really cares as it's obvious that it serves
he US in a relationship that can only be described as master and slave.
Abdul Aziz,

Load-Date: January 10, 2009

Normanton.

Derby.



Thousands protest Gaza war in Chicago

University Wire

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 Daily Northwestern via U-Wire

Length: 504 words

Byline: By Chris Kirk, Daily Northwestern; SOURCE: Northwestern U.

Dateline: EVANSTON, III.

Body

Chanting "free, free, Palestine," thousands gathered in Chicago on Friday to march on the Israeli Consulate in protest of Israel's bombings in the Gaza Strip.

"We want to show the world that we don't accept what's going on in Gaza," said rally organizer Awad Hamdan, who estimated the attendance to be near 10,000.

Israel started bombing Gaza on Dec. 27 in response to <u>Hamas</u> firing hundreds of rockets into southern Israel, which killed one Israeli citizen. The military followed their air assault with a ground invasion on Jan. 3. Authorities estimate that 13 Israelis and 879 Palestinians have been killed, 250 of which were children.

Friday's march began at Daley Plaza, where, standing among leftover holiday decorations, several speakers rallied the crowd.

"We believe that the blood of the Palestinian child is not cheaper than the blood of an Israeli child," said Zaher Sahloul, a councilman of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago. "We believe that the tears of a Palestinian child are not cheaper than the tears of an Israeli child. We believe that the pain of a Palestinian child is not less than the pain of our children."

The protesters carried a banner that read: "Occupation is the highest Form of Terrorism. End the Israeli Occupation Now. STOP Terrorism." Hamdan, a member of American Muslims for Palestine, guided cheers from a pickup truck, his voice amplified.

"[The speakers] demanded something concrete and something feasible-that we need an immediate cease-fire, that the people in Palestine need immediate medical help and humanitarian aid, that the people who are starving and who are dying of thirst and babies and the <u>women</u> and children don't need to be a part of this conflict," said McCormick senior Mohanned El-Natour, who has family in Gaza.

The group stopped in front of the Israeli Consulate, where anti-war activist John Beacham spoke.

"There is no terrorist in Palestine, sisters and brothers," Beacham said. "The terrorists are in Washington and Tel Aviv."

The protest followed an earlier pro-Israel rally at the Federal Plaza. Three thousand attended that rally, one of 200 such events across North America last week, according to the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, which sponsored the event.

Thousands protest Gaza war in Chicago

Rabbi Josh Feigelson of NU's Fielder Hillel Center said Israel has the right to defend itself.

"The question that we come to is 'What's the alternative?'" he said. "The alternative is for Israel to sit by and allow rockets to be fired."

Nathan Enfield, a Weinberg freshman who is co-president of Students for Israel, said <u>Hamas</u> has made it impossible to avoid civilian casualties.

"It's a Catch-22," Enfield said. "Because how can you deal with an enemy that doesn't value human life, that would use human shields as a way to defend themselves?"

Feigelson made a similar point, arguing that <u>Hamas</u> would have surrendered already if it cared about their own civilians.

"They value their people even less than the Israeli army does," he said.

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009



The Jerusalem Post

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1119 words

Byline: Raffi Berg, Declan Carroll, Ronnie Stekel, Paul Schur, Ellis Overstone, Martin D. Stern, Barbara Bloom

Silverman, Jan Sokolovsky **Highlight:** Readers' Letters

Body

Solidarity x 3

Sir, - You reported that 5,000 attended the Israel solidarity rally at Trafalgar Square on Sunday. This is actually well short of the actual number. The organizers, the Board of Deputies, said it was 15,000, and in my opinion (I was there) that is probably accurate ("Despite e-mail hoax, thousands attend pro-Israel rally in London," January 12).

RAFFI BERG

London

Yours, understandingly

Sir, - Just to let you know that not all people outside Israel are anti-Israel and a lot of us do understand why Israel is taking the current action in Gaza ("'We see a broader support for this war than we've seen in decades,'" January 13).

Yes - it is sad, terrible and shocking to see the innocent, especially children, suffering. The solution is that they need not suffer now or in the future if *Hamas* simply stops firing missiles into Israel.

Many journalists here in Ireland understand Israel's point of view and write about it. I hope the madness stops soon and people can simply live and let live.

I am sure there are moderates in the Arab world who need to be heard. Let's hear them.

DECLAN CARROLL

Dublin

A new start?

Sir, - The inhabitants of Gaza could never have imagined that the actions of the <u>Hamas</u> leadership they elected would lead to the pounding they are now receiving ("Economic activity - both legal and illegal - comes to a standstill in Gaza," January 13).

They should be allowed, as soon as is practicable, to express their views on whom they wish to have as leaders. They should be allowed a free and fair election, under independent supervision, to choose a new government. It could be the opportunity for a new start.

RONNIE STEKEL

Jerusalem

Well thanks, guys

Sir, - I just want to say kol hakavod to Yoram Dori for his very well-articulated "An open letter to Annie Lennox" (January 11). I hope he has better luck than I did when I wrote to her expressing my outrage at her comments, but have yet to hear back.

My parents and I left Romania toward the end of 1947 on one of the ships carrying illegal immigrants to Israel. We too were intercepted by a British warship and taken to Cyprus, where we spent three or four months in a camp. We were allowed to reach Israel because I was around three years old, and the Brits decided to let us go. I guess I too should thank them for that.

PAUL SCHUR

Toronto

Numbers game

Sir, - The reason for the inflated numbers of civilian casualties claimed by the Palestinians is a simple matter of how the terms are defined ("Discrepancies over number of Palestinian civilian deaths," January 13).

For Palestinian purposes, anyone not in uniform is, ipso facto, a civilian even though <u>Hamas</u> has told its "operatives" to wear civilian clothing, something outlawed by the Geneva Convention.

When "the Palestinian figures indicated that 292 children and 75 <u>women</u> were among the civilian dead [and] did not give a figure for male civilian fatalities," they include anyone under a certain age, probably 18 though possibly older, as a child even when they are manning Kassam launchers.

These teenagers are the equivalent of what we in England call "feral youths" who regularly terrorize run- down inner-city housing estates.

As for the <u>women</u>, I cannot understand why a woman wearing an explosive belt is any different from a man except that she can pass herself off as heavily pregnant in order to deliver a larger bomb. Such gender discrimination ought to offend the left-wing peaceniks who naively parrot Palestinian propaganda as if it were verified fact.

ELLIS OVERSTONE

Kenton, Middx, UK

Force 'em out

Sir, - <u>Hamas</u> is reportedly using the bomb shelter under the main hospital in Gaza as its headquarters on the assumption that Israel would be too scared of offending international public opinion if it attacked it ("Dichter: <u>Hamas</u> salaries paid at Shifa Hospital," January 12). This use of a hospital is clearly forbidden under the Geneva Convention, but it is doubtful if anyone outside Israel will protest.

Would not a sensible tactic be to send in commandos to saturate <u>Hamas</u>'s underground refuge with tear gas and force them out? Any fatalities would be unfortunate, but not inevitable, and could hardly be legitimately described as innocent civilian casualties.

MARTIN D. STERN

Salford, UK

Packages from Home

prompt 1,000 blessings

Sir, - On January 5, this article appeared in your paper: "'A Package from Home' has entered the fray." By 1 p.m.. more than 100 people had come to our shul to help and within two hours had packed 1,300 packages for combat soldiers in Gaza. Since the beginning of the war, we have packed and delivered many thousands of packages.

Among the calls of thanks I've received, one soldier said he had been in his tank for six days before it was safe to exit. When he came out, he sat himself on top of the tank and began to open up his Package from Home. When he saw the pack of 80 wet wipes, he quickly took off his boots and socks and began to wipe his feet with them.

"I know the word in Russian," he said, "and I know the word in Hebrew, but I do not know the word in English to express the joy I felt." He said his whole tank unit wanted to express its appreciation for the fantastic Packages from Home. He asked me to tell the people who made the packages possible that the tank crews bless them with 1,000 blessings.

In another call, Commander L. described his troops' reaction when they saw the packages being unloaded from the trucks. I actually heard their shouts of joy on my cell phone. How many more packages did he need? I asked. His response: "Barbara, keep packing."

A Golani soldier told me that when a soldier eats the sweets from his package he is nourished by the thought that people from around the world made it possible. It strengthens him to face whatever comes, he said.

Forty-five yeshiva boys in Jerusalem recently hosted the packing of another 1,030 packages for combat soldiers, plus an additional 70 for the newly wounded. The latter were specially put together because some of the wounded had lost limbs, others the ability to chew and swallow.

As I write this, I can hear the army helicopters overhead as they deliver wounded soldiers to Hadassah Hospital. May God protect them and the people of Israel.

In the meantime, we are obeying Commander L., and continuing to pack.

BARBARA BLOOM SILVERMAN

Founder, A Package from Home

www.apackagefromhome.org

Jerusalem

Apple doesn't fall

far from the tree

Sir, - If you're wondering where Ariel Lang, who is going to the US presidential inauguration, got his leadership ability and devotion to Israel, look to his indomitable savta, Barbara Silverman, the heroine of "A Package from Home" for our soldiers ("Guess who's coming to the presidential inaugural?" January 13).

JAN SOKOLOVSKY

Jerusalem

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Bush plea . . . Shame on humanity . . . Mass murder

Irish Independent

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

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Independent.ie

Section: LETTERS Length: 259 words

Body

I As a parting gesture before he leaves office, George W Bush could regain some dignity and respect if he made a public request for the journalist who threw his shoes at him to be released. This man is facing up to 15 years in prison and surely a pardon from the world's most powerful man would force even Mr Bush's fiercest critics to acknowledge a good deed when they see one.

I I am extremely disgusted by the Israeli government's attacks on the ordinary people of Gaza. The slaughter of the innocents cannot be justified. Both corrupt governments of Israel and <u>Hamas</u> are a shame on humanity. As usual, it is the ordinary people who suffer.

I Your correspondent (Letters, December 30) is mendacious to ask "How many Gazans should be killed before the world stops this holocaust in Gaza'"

Given the high population density, if Israel really intended to wipe out the civilian population, the casualties would, by now, have been in the tens of thousands rather than the hundreds -- the vast majority of whom, even if described as civilians by pro-Palestinian propagandists, have been *Hamas* activists.

I The deaths of over 300 men, women and children in Gaza must cause the world to pause.

We must now say to Israel that enough slaughter is enough. I do not support violent Palestinian attacks on Israel, however their perpetrators may justify them.

Equally, however, I believe the international community cannot stand by and watch the mass murder of Palestinians by the government of a people who surely know more than enough about the effects of genocide.

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



With a Grain of Salt: Merci for your impartiality

Daily News Egypt
January 2, 2009 Friday

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Length: 782 words

Body

CAIRO: I received a phone call from a French TV correspondent asking me to comment on Gaza. A few minutes earlier, I had watched the Israeli Embassy spokeswoman in Paris speaking on another TV program. The presenter told her that the World Public Opinion calls for a ceasefire on both sides. "You cannot put Israel and <u>Hamas</u> in the same scale pan" the spokeswoman replied. What applies to one cannot be applied to the other; Israel is a democratic state committed to the world order and its laws. On the other hand <u>Hamas</u> is an Islamic terrorist organization which aims at bringing down the international system and demolishing Israel." This being the last question, the interviewer told her "Merci," ending the interview.

In my turn, I too say "Merci" to the Israeli spokeswoman. Her reply is more succinct than all ado in the Arabic satellite media. I said to the French TV correspondent that what the Israeli spokeswoman uttered is an arrogant racist view which holds that Israel is comparable and equivalent to none. Its nature is totally different. Israel has a unique history which no other people share, no matter how much is persecuted and expunged. Neither the Armenian, the Kurds nor the Tutsi tribes in Rwanda have the right to speak about the genocide they suffered. If they absolutely have to, they are to choose another name than the "holocaust," which is a brand name, confined only to the Jews.

This is the logic of the Israeli policy, which views Israel as unlike any other country and thus should be allowed what other countries are not; namely, occupying the land of others, annexing these lands to its territories after confiscating them and expelling their indigenous residents. It is also allowed to persecute any Palestinian who refuses to leave his land, wages regular genocide campaigns against the Palestinians with a view to getting rid of the rest of them or driving them to settle in neighboring Arab countries.

Now for the details of what the Israeli spokeswoman said: that Israel is a democratic state. Since when did democracy mean occupation, expansion, bloodletting, expelling the indigenous population and discriminating against Sephardic Jews?

If Israel is truly committed to the international system, does this commitment allow it to defy the resolutions adopted by the international community represented by the UN and its specialized agencies and hide behind the support of the US, which backs Israel in its violation of the international legitimacy out of greed for the Jewish vote? Does

With a Grain of Salt: Merci for your impartiality

Israel's commitment allow it to stock weapons of mass destruction, chemical and nuclear alike, at a time when other countries are threatened if they try to obtain such weapons?

Does this commitment allow Israel to refuse adamantly to sign international agreements on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons? Does Israel's commitment to international laws make it, by means of wars and acts of aggression, annex much more land than what was allotted to it by the UN resolution based on which it came to exist; a resolution which also stipulated the establishment of a Palestinian state on land which has now been annexed by Israel?

Then comes her description of <u>Hamas</u> as a terrorist movement. According to the official Israeli statistics, the number of rockets launched by <u>Hamas</u> are finite. However, the country of democracy and international laws [meaning Israel] has so far killed more than 400 Palestinians, including children, <u>women</u> and innocent civilians and injured more than 1,500 others. So, who is the terrorist? If the terrorism of the former is terrorism by a movement, we as Arabs have reservations about its behavior, the latter's terrorism is that of a state that has become more barbarous and destructive.

Then, I leveled my criticism to the French TV correspondent saying: "It could be understandable that the Israeli embassy's spokeswoman utter these falsities. However, it is not understandable that the French TV broadcasts them with no comments." He answered: "We give freedom [of speech] to each side to present his viewpoint."

I said: "It is your duty towards viewers to present them with the truth. But I have not heard once that the Palestinian people are under Israeli occupation and that they are seeking to liberate their land after more than 40 years of occupation. I imagined that France can better understand than anybody else the legitimacy of resistance movements. However, by accepting the descriptions given by the Israeli spokeswoman, you are de facto accepting what the Nazis, who occupied your country, said about the French resistance movement."

Mohamed Salmawy is President of the Arab Writers' Union and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ahram Hebdo.

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



... And Another Thing; COMMENT & DEBATE

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 5, 2009 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 8

Length: 268 words

Body

COUNCIL rates quadruple and an old gentleman may be forced to sell his home (3/1). Bewildered Brumby has to do something about mad councils that think we have bottomless pockets. Paul Kehoe, Chirnside Park

Environment

I COULDN'T agree more with Peter Rodgers (3/1). Doubling up on A2 and the classifieds is a waste of paper, energy and money.

Lynne Johnstone, Bairnsdale

MR BRUMBY, when you ordered the

el-cheapo egg timers, did you consider requesting sand? Unless I wear my glasses in the shower, the "sand" is invisible.

Ann Leith, Canterbury

Roads

I TOOK Ian Panther's advice (3/1) re speed cameras and "joined the dots". This was the result: \$\$\$.

Peter Morton, Noble Park North

MAY I suggest that impatient drivers allow elderly people to cross at traffic lights without driving their cars straight at them to "hurry them up".

Nola Martin, East Preston

Gaza

SHAME, Israel, shame. Helen Suzman was a better example than you. Remember: guns breed only guns.

Bruce Dudon, Mount Macedon

<u>HAMAS</u> is firing hundred of rockets into Israel. Those <u>Hamas</u> fighters are hiding behind the skirts of <u>women</u> and children, some so brave they even hide their faces. The killing has to stop on both sides.

... And Another Thing COMMENT & DEBATE

John Yeo, Glen Waverley

Furthermore

HAS Barry Dickins (Comment & Debate, 3/1) confused the film Australia with Manning Clark's Short History of Australia?

Elaine Hill, Warrnambool

RE THE cricket. I am reminded of the standing joke about the abysmal batting ability of former Victorian and Test spinner Bert Ironmonger. Bert's wife rings to speak to him and, when told he has gone into bat, says: "I'll hold on."

Alan Eason, Broadbeach, Qld

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



UN reports offensive's toll on civilians rising

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)
January 14, 2009 Wednesday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 8

Length: 452 words

Byline: Ian Munro, New York, with Guardian

Body

THE proportion of civilian casualties in the Gaza conflict is increasing, according to a United Nations relief official.

UN under-secretary for humanitarian affairs John Holmes said 93 <u>women</u> and 275 children were among the 884 Palestinians killed since Israel launched its air strikes and invasion.

He said civilians were now estimated to comprise 42per cent of those killed. Earlier the UN had estimated that at least 25per cent of fatalities were civilian.

Mr Holmes said 12 medical workers were among the dead, but he said there had been no more Israeli attacks against UN installations.

Of the 3860 people wounded in the conflict, 1333 were children and 587 were <u>women</u>, "which means that 49per cent of the wounded are **women** and children", Mr Holmes said.

He said the casualty figures were supplied by the Palestinian Health Ministry yesterday. "We cannot independently verify these figures but they seem to us to be plausible; and what continues to be worrying is that the Palestinian civilian casualty rate appears to be still increasing."

He said Israeli authorities had reported that four civilians had been killed and 250 injured by *Hamas* rocket attacks, which are continuing. Also unable to be confirmed is Israel's claim to have killed 300 *Hamas* fighters.

Later figures put the toll of Palestinian casualties even higher than those cited by the UN, at 910 dead and about 4000 injured.

Despite the incident last week in which 43 Palestinians in a UN school were killed by Israeli shelling, the number of civilians seeking refuge in UN facilities had increased to about 30,000, Mr Holmes said. He said the UN did not describe its facilities as "havens" because it had no means to ensure they were safe except through co-ordination with Israeli forces.

The Gaza chief of the UN Relief and Works Agency, John Ging, speaking by video link, refused to respond to claims by Israel's ambassador to Austria that *Hamas* had infiltrated the UNRWA in Gaza.

"It's best not to debate these matters through the media, but to do justice to the sad and tragic event by having a proper full investigation," Mr Ging said. "We are just not going to continue to answer allegations that are unfounded

UN reports offensive's toll on civilians rising

... In all official interactions that we have had with the Israeli establishment, at all levels ... there has been nobody contesting our version of events."

Mr Holmes said the movement of humanitarian aid, which was stalled last week after Israeli forces shot dead a truck driver, had resumed but the Karni crossing used for shipping bulk amounts of food remained closed. He said the UN and the Israel Defence Forces had agreed to new communication procedures to avoid a repeat of attacks on UN facilities and personnel. -- With GUARDIAN

Graphic

PHOTO: Under siege: the Dali family cook a meal over a fire made from paper and cardboard refuse in the Gaza Strip's Shati (Beach) refugee camp as the Israeli offensive continues. PICTURE: AP

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Standing Between Enemies

The New York Times

January 11, 2009 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section WK; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 10; THE PUBLIC EDITOR

Length: 1199 words

Byline: By CLARK HOYT

Body

BOMBS and rockets are flying between Israel and Palestinians in Gaza, and once again, The Times is caught in a familiar crossfire, accused from all sides of unfair and inaccurate coverage.

"To describe The Times's reporting as inadequate and favorable to Israel is an understatement," said Hugh Sansom of Brooklyn. Dorit Sauer Raskin of Manhattan saw it in an entirely different light. "Why do you not print any articles of the suffering of the people in Israel?" she asked. "Where are the pro-Israel articles?"

Jill Abramson, the managing editor for news, responded last week on the newspaper's Web site to similar complaints. She said the paper is scrupulously careful to describe the motives, histories, politics and perspectives of everyone in the conflict, allowing readers to decide who is right or wrong. "I see a backwards vote of confidence in The Times's reporting, given that every identifiable faction in this fractured collision of peoples and injustices believes so firmly that we are taking a side -- someone else's," Abramson said.

It can be risky for editors and reporters to think that if everyone in a dispute is angry with them, then they must be doing something right. Sometimes they are so wrong the anger is justified. But in the case of the complex, intractable struggle between Israel and the Palestinians, even the best, most evenhanded reporting will not satisfy those passionately on one side or the other.

David K. Shipler, a former Times correspondent who won a Pulitzer Prize for his book "Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land," said in an interview that each side firmly believes it is the victim in the struggle. "Any fair-minded coverage has to shatter that paradigm," he said. "Both sides are both victims and perpetrators at the same time."

But the readers I am hearing from are not ready to accept that notion. Supporters of Israel want coverage that stresses the terror caused by <u>Hamas</u> rockets fired ever deeper into Israeli territory, and are offended at so many pictures of Palestinian casualties. Supporters of the Palestinians want the coverage to focus on the suffering caused by Israel's bombs and missiles, and on the economic sanctions and border closings that isolated Gaza before the latest fighting began.

The intensity of the criticism is no surprise. "It isn't just a war," said Nicholas Lemann, dean of the graduate school of journalism at Columbia University. "It's a media war. Public opinions outside the region are very important, and they're shaped by the press coverage."

Standing Between Enemies

Because of its international reach and influence, The Times comes in for particularly close scrutiny. Abramson said she thinks no other topic of news generates as much feedback. Photographs, the content and play of articles, headlines, captions and even individual word choices are examined and challenged.

Early in the conflict, Ethan Bronner, the Jerusalem bureau chief, wrote a deep and incisive front-page news analysis that contained a single slip. When he said Israel would need "another peace treaty" with <u>Hamas</u> -- he told me he had meant cease-fire -- Roger Gerber of Scarsdale, N.Y., saw it as a sign of bias or "at best sloppy reporting" because <u>Hamas</u> rejects the existence of Israel and would never sign a peace treaty.

Bert Distelburger of New City, N.Y., said he suspected that a front-page picture last Monday of a dead Palestinian girl being carried on a stretcher in a Gaza City hospital was a faked "propaganda photo" because, "A doctor does not examine a person face down." Patrick Witty, the photo editor who recommended the picture, showed me how he blew it up on a large computer screen and scanned it carefully for any signs of digital doctoring. "This is a real photograph," he said. He also showed me obvious propaganda photos from both sides that he said he would never put in the newspaper -- posed pictures of Palestinians looking at bodies or Israel's prime minister visiting a smiling soldier in a hospital.

Witty and his colleagues are frustrated because Israel has barred journalists from entering Gaza, and although The Times has two photographers in the region ready to go, it must rely on pictures taken by Palestinian photographers. "When I can't have my own person there, I have to question every picture that comes in -- to an obsessive degree," he said. Last summer, Witty unmasked as a fake a photo of an Iranian missile test that ran on many other front pages.

Stephen Weil of Washington said he understood that Israel's bombings had killed hundreds more Palestinians than the number of Israelis killed by <u>Hamas</u> rockets. Yet photos on the newspaper's Web site "tell a different story: for every Palestinian victim, an Israeli one is shown." He urged me to do a photo count, and said that if The Times was trying to suggest that the suffering on each side was roughly equal, "it is a lie."

My assistant, Michael McElroy, did such a count, from the start of the latest fighting through Friday, and found that online and in the newspaper, there were almost three photos from Gaza showing the impact of the war for every photo from Israel. There were 28 photos, some quite graphic, of dead and wounded Palestinians, five of Israelis. Such a ratio offends supporters of Israel, who argue that <u>Hamas</u> uses civilians as human shields and that the pictures inflame people against Israel.

But most of the destruction is in Gaza, and news photographs are not about blame but about showing what happened. Demolished buildings and dead bodies provide dramatic images; fear in Israel is more difficult to capture with a camera. "There's nothing fair in war photography," Witty said. "It's tragic."

Some readers questioned the accuracy of casualty numbers in The Times. "Casualty figures are always incorrect," Shipler said, "especially the day you report them."

The newspaper ran a correction last Monday, saying that for the first three days of the conflict, it should have said more than 60 civilians were killed, not "some 60." United Nations officials had counted 62 dead <u>women</u> and children but had no count of civilian men, because it is hard to tell them from <u>Hamas</u> fighters who do not wear uniforms.

When Israeli bombs killed dozens at a United Nations school on Tuesday, it was too dangerous for the newspaper's Palestinian stringer, Taghreed El-Khodary, who has worked for The Times for seven years, to go to the scene. She went instead to a hospital, where an official told her that 40 were killed, including 10 children and 5 <u>women</u>. The head surgeon and an ambulance driver said 45 were dead. United Nations officials, who were not on the scene, said 30 were killed. The Times emphasized the hospital's count of 40.

lan Fisher, the deputy foreign editor who helps direct daily coverage, said, "Like all human things, we are not perfect, but the attention that goes into this is tremendous."

Standing Between Enemies

Though the most vociferous supporters of Israel and the Palestinians do not agree, I think The Times, largely barred from the battlefield and reporting amid the chaos of war, has tried its best to do a fair, balanced and complete job -- and has largely succeeded.

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



Massacre of innocents as UN school is shelled; Obama breaks silence to express deep concern over civilian casualties UN had given co-ordinates to Israelis in bid to protect refugees from attack

The Independent (London)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

First Edition

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Byline: Donald Macintyre and Kim Sengupta IN JERUSALEM

Body

Hundreds of Palestinians had fled their homes for the refuge of the al-Fakhoura school, hoping the blue and white flag of the UN flying over the impromptu shelter would protect them from the Israeli onslaught. The UN had even given the Israeli army the co-ordinates for the building to spare it from the shells and air strikes raining down on the Gaza strip. But yesterday afternoon tank shells exploded outside the school, sending shrapnel into the crowds, killing at least 40 and wounding another 55.

It was the worst confirmed bloodshed of Israel's attack on Gaza and sparked outrage and condemnation around the globe, with the US President-elect Barack Obama breaking his 11-day silence, the UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon calling the incident "totally unacceptable" and Gordon Brown describing the conflict as "the darkest moment yet for the Middle East".

Within hours of the strike on the school, with the Palestinian death toll topping 600 and pressure mounting on Israel to stop its crushing military campaign, Egypt proposed an immediate ceasefire and talks with Israel and <u>Hamas</u> on a long-term settlement, including an end to the Gaza blockade.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who was in Cairo on the latest stop of a two-day tour of the Middle East, said that his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak, was inviting "notably the Israeli side to discuss the issue of border security without delay".

Arriving in New York for an emergency UN Security Council meeting, David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, welcomed the statement by Mr Mubarak saying it "underlined the fast-moving nature of events". The world, Mr Miliband told the Council, was witnessing in Gaza, "the horror of war piled upon months of deprivation".

At the meeting, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas voiced support for the Sarkozy-Mubarak ceasefire initiative. The killings at the school in Gaza confirmed the "heinous crime being committed against our people," he said.

Massacre of innocents as UN school is shelled Obama breaks silence to express deep concern over civilian casualties UN had given co-ordinates to Israelis in bid....

Israel had yet to respond to the initiative last night. However, a statement was issued late in the evening announcing Israel's willingness to set up a "humanitarian corridor" into Gaza for the safe delivery of emergency supplies "to prevent a humanitarian crisis" there.

The US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, said Washington backed Mr Mubarak's ceasefire proposal. "We need urgently to conclude a ceasefire that can endure and that can bring real security," she told the Security Council. "In this regard we are pleased by and wish to commend the statement of the President of Egypt and to follow up on that initiative."

With Israeli troops moving further south into the cities of one of the world's most crowded territories, the Palestinian death toll is beginning to rival that in Lebanon in the summer of 2006. Yesterday, the UN demanded an immediate independent investigation into the latest school killings.

The emergency room of northern Gaza's Kamal Adwan hospital was packed to overflowing after the carnage. "We have become quite used to noises of explosions but then they started bringing in all those who had been caught in the attack and it was a very bad sight," Dr Bassam Abu Warda told The Independent.

"It was terrible, really terrible. We are living at a very difficult time but even as doctors it is always hard to see children being hurt and we had a lot of them today and we are not really equipped to deal with this type of emergency here."

Majed Hamdan, a photographer, said he rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks, which happened just as many of the refugees had ventured outside for fresh air. "I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor," he said. "They knew their children were dead."

Gruesome footage on <u>Hamas</u>'s al-Aqsa TV showed medics starting to unload the bodies of men who had been stacked up in the back of an ambulance, three high, and were dragged out without stretchers. The blood-caked stumps of one man's legs bumped along the ground as he was pulled from the ambulance.

Responding to criticism of its hit on the school in the Jabalya refugee camp, the Israeli military accused <u>Hamas</u> of "using civilians as human shields". It said that the results of its "initial inquiry" was that mortar shells had been fired from the school at forces operating in the area and that, "in response to the incoming enemy fire, the forces returned mortar fire", and said that this was not the first time <u>Hamas</u> had fired mortars and rockets from UNRWA school premises in Gaza. Two <u>Hamas</u> militants, Imad Abu Askar and Hasan Abu Askar, were among the dead, the army said.

John Ging, the operations director for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which runs the school, expressed his outrage. "Those in the school were all families seeking refuge," he said. "There's nowhere safe in Gaza. Everyone here is terrorised and traumatised ... I am appealing to political leaders to get their act together and stop this."

Ahead of the Security Council session, there were signs of tension between the White House and the US State Department. "We would like an immediate ceasefire, absolutely," a department spokesman, Sean McCormack, told reporters before Ms Rice's departure for New York. "An immediate ceasefire that is durable, sustainable and not time-limited." Minutes later, the White House said this did not represent a shift in the US position.

Veering away from his mantra of "one president at a time", Mr Obama said "the loss of civilian life in Gaza and Israel is a source of deep concern for me." Gordon Brown said: "This is a humanitarian crisis. This is the darkest moment yet for the Middle East and it affects the whole world."

Al-Qai'da's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri, made an internet appeal for Muslims to "hit the interests of Zionists and Crusaders wherever and whichever way you can".

While the school killings represented the single biggest loss of life since the Israeli offensive began on 27 December, details are emerging of other incidents involving high numbers of civilian casualties. An Israeli human rights agency, B'Tselem, and the UN's Office for the Co-ordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) independently

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released reports that more than 30 members of the same extended family had been killed on Monday during the shelling of a building in the northern Zeitoun district of Gaza City.

With foreign journalists currently prevented from entering Gaza and with mobile telephone use in Gaza intermittent, it is virtually impossible to verify details of all casualties.

In Israel, the <u>Hamas</u> rockets have continued to land. At least five hit Israeli soil yesterday, including one in Gadera, 28km (17 miles) from Tel Aviv. A three-month-old baby was hurt.

The Israel Defence Forces says seven Israeli soldiers have died during the offensive: one during the air strikes, three more since the ground invasion began and, late on Monday, three were killed and another 24 wounded by a tank shell in a friendly fire incident.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



Morning Star
January 10, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 2224 words **Byline:** John Pilger

Body

"When the truth is replaced by silence," the Soviet dissident Yevgeny Yevtushenko said, "the silence is a lie."

It may appear that the silence on Gaza is broken. The small cocoons of murdered children, wrapped in green, together with boxes containing their dismembered parents, and the cries of grief and rage of everyone in that death camp by the sea can be witnessed on Al-Jazeera and YouTube, even glimpsed on the BBC.

But Russia's incorrigible poet was not referring to the ephemera we call news. He was asking why those who knew the why never spoke it and so denied it.

Among the Anglo-US intelligentsia, this is especially striking. It is they who hold the keys to the great storehouses of knowledge - the historiographies and archives that lead us to the why.

They know that the horror now raining on Gaza has little to do with *Hamas* or, absurdly, "Israel's right to exist."

They know the opposite to be true - that Palestine's right to exist was cancelled 61 years ago and that the expulsion and, if necessary, extinction of the indigenous people was planned and executed by the founders of Israel.

They know, for example, that the infamous "Plan D" of 1947-8 resulted in the murderous depopulation of 369 Palestinian towns and villages by the Haganah (Israeli army) and that massacre upon massacre of Palestinian civilians in such places as Deir Yassin, al-Dawayima, Eilaboun, Jish, Ramle and Lydda are referred to in official records as "ethnic cleansing."

Arriving at a scene of this carnage, David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, was asked by a general, Yigal Allon: "What shall we do with the Arabs?" Ben Gurion, reported the Israeli historian Benny Morris, "made a dismissive, energetic gesture with his hand and said: 'Expel them'."

The order to expel an entire population "without attention to age" was signed by Yitzhak Rabin, a future prime minister promoted by the world's most efficient propaganda as a peacemaker.

The terrible irony of this was addressed only in passing, such as when the Mapam party co-leader Meir Ya'ari noted "how easily" Israel's leaders spoke of how it was "possible and permissible to take <u>women</u>, children and old men and to fill the road with them because such is the imperative of strategy. And this we say ... who remember who used this means against our people during the (second world) war ... I am appalled."

Every subsequent "war" that Israel has waged has had the same objective - the expulsion of the native people and the theft of more and more land. The lie of David and Goliath, of perennial victim, reached its apogee in 1967 when the propaganda became a righteous fury that claimed the Arab states had struck first against Israel.

Since then, mostly Jewish truth-tellers such as Avi Shlaim, Noam Chomsky, Tanya Reinhart, Neve Gordon, Tom Segev, Uri Avnery, Ilan Pappe and Norman Finkelstein have undermined this and other myths and revealed a state shorn of the humane traditions of Judaism, whose unrelenting militarism is the sum of an expansionist, lawless and racist ideology called zionism.

"It seems," wrote the Israeli historian Pappe on January 2, "that even the most horrendous crimes, such as the genocide in Gaza, are treated as discrete events, unconnected to anything that happened in the past and not associated with any ideology or system ... Very much as the apartheid ideology explained the oppressive policies of the South African government, this ideology - in its most consensual and simplistic variety - allowed all the Israeli governments in the past and the present to dehumanise the Palestinians wherever they are and strive to destroy them.

"The means altered from period to period, from location to location, as did the narrative covering up these atrocities. But there is a clear pattern (of genocide)."

In Gaza, the enforced starvation and denial of humanitarian aid, the piracy of life-giving resources such as fuel and water, the denial of medicines, the systematic destruction of infrastructure and killing and maiming of the civilian population, 50 per cent of whom are children, fall within the international standard of the Genocide Convention.

"Is it an irresponsible overstatement," asked Richard Falk, UN special rapporteur for human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories and international law authority at Princeton University, "to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalised nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not."

In describing a "holocaust-in-the making," Falk was alluding to the nazis' establishment of Jewish ghettos in Poland.

For one month in 1943, the captive Polish Jews, led by Mordechaj Anielewicz, fought off the German army and the SS, but their resistance was finally crushed and the nazis exacted their final revenge. Falk is also a Jew.

Today's holocaust-in-the-making, which began with Ben Gurion's Plan D, is in its final stages. The difference today is that it is a joint US-Israeli project.

The F-16 jet fighters, the 250lb "smart" GBU-39 bombs supplied on the eve of the attack on Gaza having been approved by a congress dominated by the Democratic Party, plus the annual \$2.4 billion in war-making "aid," give Washington de facto control.

It beggars belief that president-elect Obama was not informed. Outspoken about Russia's war in Georgia and the terrorism in Mumbai, Obama has maintained a silence on Palestine that marks his approval, which is to be expected given his obsequiousness to the Tel Aviv regime and its lobbyists during the presidential campaign and his appointment of zionists as his secretary of state and principal Middle East advisers. When Aretha Franklin sings Think, her wonderful 1960s anthem to freedom, at Obama's inauguration on January 20, I trust that someone with the brave heart of Muntader al-Zaidi, the shoe-thrower, will shout: "Gaza!"

The asymmetry of conquest and terror is clear. Plan D is now Operation Cast Lead, which is the unfinished Operation Justified Vengeance.

This was launched by prime minister Ariel Sharon in 2001 when, with George W Bush's approval, he used F-16s against Palestinian towns and villages for the first time.

In that same year, the authoritative Jane's Foreign Report disclosed that the Blair government had given Israel the "green light" to attack the West Bank after it was shown Israel's secret designs for a bloodbath. It was typical of new Labour's enduring complicity in Palestine's agony.

However, the Israeli plan, reported Jane's, needed the "trigger" of a suicide bombing which would cause "numerous deaths and injuries (because) the 'revenge' factor is crucial." This would "motivate Israeli soldiers to demolish the Palestinians."

What alarmed Sharon and the author of the plan, General Shaul Mofaz, then Israeli chief of staff, was a secret agreement between Yasser Arafat and *Hamas* to ban suicide attacks.

On November 23 2001, Israeli agents assassinated <u>Hamas</u> leader Mahmoud Abu Hanoud and got their "trigger." The suicide attacks resumed in response to his killing.

Something uncannily similar happened on November 4 last year when Israeli special forces attacked Gaza, killing six people.

Once again, they got their propaganda "trigger," a ceasefire sustained by the <u>Hamas</u> government, which had imprisoned its violators, was shattered as a result of the Israeli attacks and home-made rockets were fired into what used to be called Palestine before its Arab occupants were "cleansed."

On December 23, <u>Hamas</u> offered to renew the ceasefire, but Israel's charade was such that its all-out assault on Gaza had been planned six months earlier, according to the Israeli daily Haaretz.

Behind this sordid game is the Dagan Plan, named after General Meir Dagan, who served with Sharon during his bloody invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Now head of the Israeli intelligence organisation Mossad, Dagan is the author of a "solution" that has brought about the imprisonment of Palestinians behind a ghetto wall snaking across the West Bank and in Gaza, now effectively a concentration camp.

The establishment of a quisling government in Ramallah under Mahmoud Abbas is Dagan's achievement, together with a hasbara (propaganda) campaign relayed through mostly supine, if intimidated Western media, notably in the US, which says that <u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist organisation devoted to Israel's destruction and is to "blame" for the massacres and siege of its own people over two generations, since long before its creation.

"We have never had it so good," said the Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Gideon Meir in 2006. "The hasbara effort is a well-oiled machine."

In fact, <u>Hamas</u>'s real threat is its example as the Arab world's only democratically elected government, drawing its popularity from its resistance to the Palestinians' oppressor and tormentor.

This was demonstrated when <u>Hamas</u> foiled a CIA coup in 2007, an event ordained in the Western media as "*Hamas*'s seizure of power."

Likewise, *Hamas* is never described as a government, let alone democratic.

Neither is its proposal of a 10-year truce reported as a historic recognition of the "reality" of Israel and support for a two-state solution with just one condition - that the Israelis obey international law and end their illegal occupation beyond the 1967 borders.

As every annual vote in the UN general assembly demonstrates, most states agree. On January 4, the president of the general assembly, Miguel d'Escoto, described the Israeli attack on Gaza as a "monstrosity."

When the monstrosity is done and the people of Gaza are even more stricken, the Dagan Plan foresees what Sharon called a "1948-style solution" - the destruction of all Palestinian leadership and authority, followed by mass expulsions into smaller and smaller "cantonments" and, perhaps, finally into Jordan.

This demolition of institutional and educational life in Gaza is designed to produce, wrote British-based Palestinian exile Karma Nabulsi, "a Hobbesian vision of an anarchic society: truncated, violent, powerless, destroyed, cowed ... Look to the Iraq of today: that is what (Sharon) had in store for us and he has nearly achieved it."

Dr Dahlia Wasfi is a US writer on Iraq and Palestine. She has a Jewish mother and an Iraqi Muslim father. "Holocaust denial is anti-semitic," she wrote on December 31.

"But I'm not talking about the World War II, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (the president of Iran) or Ashkenazi Jews. What I'm referring to is the holocaust we are all witnessing and responsible for in Gaza today and in Palestine over the past 60 years ... Since Arabs are semites, US-Israeli policy doesn't get more anti-semitic than this."

She quoted Rachel Corrie, the young US citizen who went to Palestine to defend Palestinians and was crushed by an Israeli bulldozer.

"I am in the midst of a genocide," wrote Corrie, "which I am also indirectly supporting and for which my government is largely responsible."

Reading the words of both, I am struck by the use of "responsibility."

Breaking the lie of silence is not an esoteric abstraction but an urgent responsibility that falls to those with the privilege of a platform.

With the BBC cowed, so too is much of journalism, merely allowing vigorous debate within unmovable, invisible boundaries, ever fearful of the smear of anti-semitism.

The unreported news, meanwhile, is that the death toll in Gaza is the equivalent of 18,000 dead in Britain. Imagine, if you can.

Then there are the academics, the deans and teachers and researchers. Why are they silent as they watch a university bombed and hear the Association of University Teachers in Gaza plead for help?

Are British universities now, as Terry Eagleton believes, no more than "intellectual Tescos, churning out a commodity known as graduates rather than greengroceries?"

Then there are the writers. In the dark year of 1939, the Third American Writers' Congress was held at Carnegie Hall in New York and the likes of Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein sent messages and spoke up to ensure that the lie of silence was broken. By one account, 2,500 jammed the auditorium.

Today, this mighty voice of realism and morality is said to be obsolete. The literary review pages affect an ironic hauteur of irrelevance. False symbolism is all.

As for the readers, their moral and political imagination is to be pacified, not primed. The anti-Muslim Martin Amis expressed this well in Visiting Mrs Nabokov: "The dominance of the self is not a flaw, it is an evolutionary characteristic; it is just how things are."

If that is how things are, we are diminished as a civilised people. For what happens in Gaza is the defining moment of our time, which either grants war criminals impunity and immunity through our silence, while we contort our own intellect and morality, or it gives us the power to speak out.

For the moment, I prefer my own memory of Gaza - of the people's courage and resistance and their "luminous humanity," as Nabulsi put it.

On my last trip there, I was rewarded with a spectacle of Palestinian flags fluttering in unlikely places. It was dusk and children had done this. No-one had told them to do it. They made flagpoles out of sticks tied together and a few of them climbed onto a wall and held the flag between them, some silently, others crying out. They do this every day when they know foreigners are leaving, in the belief that the world will not forget them.

- This article appeared in the New Statesman.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Palestinian home game historic, says FIFA

Daily News Egypt
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Body

RAM: Palestinians may not have a state, but now they have a way to express their national pride - through football. On Sunday, the national team was hosting an international match for the first time, in the West Bank's only regulation-size stadium. The stadium was renovated with the help of FIFA, football's governing body. FIFA President Sepp Blatter was on hand to cheer. "We are here to realize a dream, that is the national team of Palestine playing in its own stadium," Blatter said ahead of the friendly game against Jordan.

He said the event was "historic." Blatter was received like a head of state, and spent much of the day in the company of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.Palestinians said international recognition means a lot to them."We now have a stadium, and the Palestinian flag will be flying in this stadium," said Wissam Abu Sharif, a 30year-old football fan. "Palestine is on the map of international sports." It's not a football powerhouse, though. The Palestinian team is ranked 180th of 207 members by FIFA, peaking at No. 115 in April 2006. Still, for an afternoon, football promised to make Palestinians forget their troubles, whether decades of Israeli military occupation or the acrimonious split between the West Bank and the *Hamas*-run Gaza Strip. *Hamas* Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a football enthusiast, planned to watch the game on TV, even though the West Bank event was another expression of international support for his rival, Abbas.Blatter started the day at Abbas' headquarters, where he laid a wreath on the grave of Abbas' predecessor, Yasser Arafat. The two men then opened a tournament of six women's teams, and a tournament named after Arafat. Some of the female players wore headscarves with their uniforms. Later Sunday, Blatter was to attend the Jordan-Palestine match at the 6,000-seat stadium in Ram, a West Bank suburb of Jerusalem. The Palestinian team has existed for a decade, but until now had only played "home" games in Jordan and Qatar. The stadium was renovated for \$4 million, and on Sunday morning, workers were putting on the finishing touches. A bulldozer smoothed a dirt road to the stadium while workers hung banners from the game's sponsors. The Palestinian team boasts players from Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Chile, but not all will play. Five of the team's six Gazan players were granted permits by Israel to travel to the West Bank, but the team's captain, Saeb Jundiyeh, was not." I am full of anger and sadness because I was denied being there for this historic event which I have always dreamed about," Jundiyeh said. He added that he was in phone contact with his teammates and would watch the match with friends and family in Gaza. Israel and Egypt have virtually sealed off Gaza from the world since *Hamas* seized control of the territory in June 2007. Gaza and the West Bank lie on opposite sides of Israel, and Gazans need Israeli permits to reach the West Bank.

Load-Date: October 28, 2008



Clinton, Familiar With Pitfalls of Mideast Politics, May Face Early Test in Gaza

The New York Times

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Byline: By MARK LANDLER

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

When Hillary Rodham Clinton ran for a New York Senate seat nine years ago, she labored to persuade skeptical Jewish voters of her support for Israel, after an incident in which she stood by as the wife of Yasir Arafat delivered an inflammatory attack on Israeli policies.

Now, having secured her standing as a friend of Israel, Mrs. Clinton must show a new audience that she can also be a mediator in her next expected role as secretary of state, when her first challenge may well be the renewed violence in Gaza. Given Mrs. Clinton's once troubled history with Arab-Israeli issues, that could be a tricky task.

Mrs. Clinton brings several strengths, according to current and former aides and Middle East experts, including her knowledge of the region and experience in navigating it, as well as lingering good will among Arabs and Israelis won by her husband, Bill Clinton, for his efforts to broker a peace deal in the waning days of his presidency.

But Mrs. Clinton will have to reassure the Palestinians that she, too, can be a broker, working with Egypt and other Arab neighbors, and putting pressure on the Israeli government, when needed.

"She's going to have to demonstrate her independence from Israel," said Aaron David Miller, a public policy analyst at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. "Our interests are inevitably going to diverge from their interests. We cannot be an 'amen corner' for them."

The diplomatic tightrope was evident this week, as the departing secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, condemned <u>Hamas</u> for firing rockets into southern Israel, while she privately urged Israeli leaders to agree to a cease-fire, after days of escalating airstrikes against <u>Hamas</u> militants in Gaza.

Mrs. Clinton has not commented on the latest violence; a spokesman said she would abide by the principle that "there is one secretary of state at a time." But as New York's junior senator, she strongly condemned a round of <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks on Israeli towns in May 2007.

"I stand with the people of Israel who live in fear as their homes are besieged, and maintain my unwavering commitment to the welfare and survival of the state of Israel," Mrs. Clinton said in a statement at the time.

In a speech to an Israeli lobbying group shortly after she lost the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama, Mrs. Clinton said the next president should shun direct negotiations with <u>Hamas</u> because it was a terrorist group, equipped by Iran and bent on destroying Israel.

Earlier, Mrs. Clinton declared that the United States could "obliterate" Iran if it attacked Israel with nuclear weapons -- a far more strident tone than that of her potential new boss, President-elect Obama.

Most experts believe that Mrs. Clinton's support of Israel is heartfelt, even if it is also smart politics in New York.

But when she was first lady, Mrs. Clinton made waves on two occasions for seeming to tilt toward Palestinian interests. In 1998, she told a gathering of Israeli and Arab teenagers that creating a state of Palestine was "very important for the broader goal of peace in the Middle East."

The White House disavowed her comments, saying they did not reflect the administration's policy. Today, the twostate solution is a central part of the American blueprint for a peace deal.

More trouble loomed in November 1999, when Mrs. Clinton, by then a Senate hopeful, visited the West Bank town of Ramallah. At a ceremony with Palestinian health officials, the first lady did not react when Suha Arafat accused Israeli forces of using "toxic gases" against Palestinians, causing cancer in **women** and children.

At the end of the ceremony, Mrs. Clinton gave Mrs. Arafat a polite kiss -- a gesture that angered Jewish groups and earned the first lady critical newspaper editorials in New York.

Mrs. Clinton attributed her silence to the fact that the translation of Mrs. Arafat's remarks was incomplete. An aide who was with her said Mrs. Arafat's accusations appeared to be standard boilerplate, to those listening. The full import of her words set in only hours later.

The tempest briefly threatened Mrs. Clinton's Senate bid in New York, though she managed to put it behind her through a fence-mending tour with Jewish leaders. After eight years of her steadfast support for Israel, the incident is viewed by most analysts as ancient history.

In one way, Mrs. Clinton's baggage may carry a silver lining. Some Palestinians point out that she was ahead of the curve, as an American public figure, in calling for a Palestinian state.

Her marriage to former President Clinton also gives her a valuable calling card. Though his efforts to forge a peace deal fell apart, Middle East experts say that people on both sides credit him for trying longer and harder than other presidents.

"People don't just perceive her as a senator from New York who was very close to Israel," said Ziad J. Asali, the president of the American Task Force on Palestine, an Arab-American advocacy group that favors a Palestinian state. "They perceive her as a Clinton."

Being a Clinton also gives the next secretary of state ready access to Mr. Clinton's Middle East brain trust. Mrs. Clinton is being advised by Martin S. Indyk, who was a senior State Department official and United States ambassador to Israel during the Clinton administration.

Mr. Indyk is among those mentioned as a potential special envoy to the Middle East. Given the gravity of the crisis, however, experts say Mrs. Clinton may well have to tackle Gaza herself.

Some predict that Mrs. Clinton will be given the benefit of the doubt merely because she represents a new White House. While Mr. Obama's response to the Israeli assault on <u>Hamas</u> has not differed much from that of President Bush, Mr. Asali said the Bush administration would bear the brunt of any anti-American feeling that bubbled up as a result of the attacks.

The challenge for Mrs. Clinton, experts said, will be reaffirming her support for Israel while establishing strong relations with Egypt, an undertaking many believe will be critical to brokering a durable cease-fire in Gaza.

Clinton, Familiar With Pitfalls of Mideast Politics, May Face Early Test in Gaza

"She has to quickly restore the relationship with Egypt," said Mr. Miller, a former State Department veteran of numerous Middle East peace negotiations. "In doing so, she's going to have to bear the brunt of being accused of indirect negotiations with *Hamas*."

Given the pace and fluidity of events in the Middle East, some experts say that the Gaza crisis may end up as a footnote in Mrs. Clinton's diplomatic tenure, even if it now looms as a huge early test.

"She may have to deal with a rough episode coming in, but it doesn't have to define her," said David Makovsky, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "You need a smart person who understands the complexity of the situation, and she is that."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTO: Hillary Rodham Clinton at the Western Wall in Jerusalem in 2005. After awkward episodes as first lady, she proved to be Israel's friend as senator.(PHOTOGRAPH BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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Weekend Australian

January 10, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 19

Length: 2247 words **Byline:** John Lyons

Body

Israelis fear they will pay a terrible price if they fail to achieve a clear victory in Gaza, reports Middle East correspondent John Lyons

THERE is an intriguing little town in the Negev desert in Israel called Tze'elim which, although most people have never heard of it, has played a key role in this week's ground invasion of Gaza.

It amounts to a strategic smorgasbord for the Israeli Defence Forces, the strongest military in the Middle East.

In a highly secured location, various mock villages have been built; if it's training for fighting in Nablus on the West Bank of the Jordan River, then it's up the back. Gaza? Over to the right, please.

Or today we might be simulating jungle warfare against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Or fighting in the mountains of Syria.

Like a giant film set, bulldozers, technology and makeshift buildings are used to create a range of simulated battlefields that are identical to the terrain and conditions Israeli soldiers would face in these different theatres of war. Tze'elim is what you build when you're at war, or potentially at war, with several of your neighbours. During the last year, a large number of the Israeli soldiers now deployed in Gaza have trained here.

Etched into the psyche of every Israeli soldier, it seems, and member of the public, is Israel's war against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006. Inside Israel, that war is now seen as a debacle.

The death toll was high on both sides -- 1100 Lebanese died and 160 Israelis -- and Hezbollah to this day remains in control of southern Lebanon. Many analysts say Hezbollah is stronger than ever: it claims to have 40,000 missiles, including long-range ones, across southern Lebanon, ready to be deployed against Israel should the occasion arise. Israel's army was poorly trained for the conditions of southern Lebanon, equipment was poorly maintained and key elements of the war leaked to the media.

As a result, training was dramatically improved, with the construction of the conflict-of-choice facility at Tze'elim.

While for people around the world the war is an international news story, for people living in Israel -- Jewish and Palestinian -- it is a raw reality.

One Australian who has been living in Israel for many years tells Inquirer: ``Everyone knows if we bungle this war we're in deep trouble. If we can't knock off an organisation of 12,000 to 15,000 fighters [*Hamas*] there will be a lot of others in this neighbourhood who smell blood. This is meant to resurrect our military reputation."

A Palestinian mother from my son's school -- which is a mixture of Palestinian, Israeli and foreign students -- gave a very different perspective. She had been very polite and mild-mannered as we waited for school to finish until I asked her about the war in Gaza. You could see the passion in her face: Israel was engaging in a ``massacre, there's no other word for it".

Her response to whether Palestinians would respond with violence inside Israel met with a similar answer to that of many Israelis: that unlike previous years, Israel was now much better at managing threats to its own security. The wall between Israel and the West Bank -- or fence, as Israelis prefer to call it -- allows Israel to seal off Palestinian towns on the West Bank during times of crisis.

Certainly, at least for now, Israel itself seems safer than in previous years. In 2002, for example, there were 62 suicide bombings in Israel, resulting in 260 deaths.

That's not to say Israelis are not nervous. The Australian man who said Israel's neighbours might ``smell blood" has told his adult sons who often hitchhike around Israel to stop for the time being. He has also told friends visiting from Australia not to visit Bethlehem, on the West Bank, normally a relatively safe tourist site.

In Gaza, meanwhile, people do not have the luxury of deciding where visiting friends should go and where they should not.

It is clear by all accounts that whoever is to blame, Gaza is a humanitarian tragedy.

Inside Israel, while support for air strikes was strong, as the pictures came out of Gaza after the ground offensive began, voices of dissent grew. One of the leading newspapers, Haaretz, called on Israel to cease the ground war. The paper said ``it is difficult to understand the purpose of prolonging the ground operation, which is liable to end in a difficult entanglement and casualties".

Israeli historian Tom Segev added a note of discomfort inside the country when he told BBC Television: "We are getting to a point where this operation is no longer about justice, it is about vengeance."

Part of the complex layers that make up Israel is that even as Israelis and Palestinians are at war in Gaza they go about their daily lives in harmony in Jerusalem.

On Thursday, as I walked in the Old City, I saw two Israeli policemen, heavily armed, laughing in conversation with a young Palestinian woman. Earlier in the week I watched an elderly Palestinian couple walk through a crowd of ultra-orthodox Jews to go into Bikur Holim hospital. In the Jerusalem suburb of Abu Tor, I watched Palestinian and Jewish children playing in the same street: not together, but in the same street. But despite this co-existence, when it comes to Israeli soldiers engaging in a conflict it seems to seep through the soul of the populace.

Early in the week, as Israeli troops and tanks spread out through Gaza, a group of Israeli <u>women</u> gathered in a hairdressing salon at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. As they sat having their hair done, some of them pulled out psalm books and began reciting prayers for the soldiers.

Again, the contradiction of Israel: one of these <u>women</u> scoffed as she watched news reports on TV of civilian casualties from Gaza. Yet that same woman pays for a taxi for her Palestinian cleaners to get home to the West Bank twice a week when many Israelis are happy to let their workers go by bus.

Israel will never win a popularity contest in this neighbourhood. But the war in Gaza has highlighted the growing gap between moderates in the Middle East -- such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan who have decided to co-exist and do deals with Israel -- and those committed to its destruction.

The leader of the latter camp is Iran, with Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> enthusiastic supporters. Others, such as Syria, are in an intriguing position: while their rhetoric is anti-Israel, they are acting differently in private.

Until the hostilities between Israel and Gaza broke out two weeks ago, Syria was quietly negotiating a possible diplomatic recognition of Israel in Ankara, Turkey.

Some in Israel believe the country's very existence is at stake. They believe this year is one of the most important in Israel's history; while the year starts with a war against <u>Hamas</u> it may end, they believe, with a war of sorts (air strikes) against Iran as they try to prevent Iran developing nuclear capacity.

Israel this week was condemned around the world for the ferocity of its response to <u>Hamas</u>'s firing of rockets into southern Israel, in which more than 660 Palestinians have been killed in the past 12 days.

But in Israel such condemnation seemed to have little effect. Instead, Israelis evoked their age-old military position: if you hit us we'll hit you so hard you'll think carefully before you do it again. Much of the world media calls it disproportionate response.

To begin to understand this conflict, one needs to try to understand Defence Minister Ehud Barak, at the moment the most powerful man in Israel.

The war on Gaza is occurring in two vacuums: Jerusalem and Washington. It's clear that Israel feels that until January20's inauguration of Barack Obama it has a free hand as far as the US is concerned. America is in transition, and that suits Israel.

The other vacuum is inside Israel. As is George W. Bush, caretaker Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is a lame-duck leader. And his Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni's star has faded in recent weeks. Although she has a high profile on the world stage, inside Israel her fortunes have fallen.

Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud's candidate for PM, is polling strongly but is not even in the parliament yet. Which leaves Barak, the Israeli war hero, who is running the war in the Gaza. Barak's stocks have soared during the Israeli offensive. Barak leads the Labor Party, which only a few weeks ago was facing a wipeout at the February 10 election.

Polls had Labor winning as few as seven seats; now the polls have them winning as many as 16 seats.

Barak is a creature of the Israeli military: he has spent his entire adult life in the army, rising to become its chief of staff. He tapped the public mood in Israel last week with one line when he announced the air strikes against <u>Hamas</u> targets in Gaza: ``We believe it is our primary contract with our citizens to protect them against terrorist attacks."

Given there are about 800,000 people in Israel living within the 40km range of <u>Hamas</u> rockets from Gaza, Barak was speaking to a strong constituency. Barak is in an extraordinary position, in that whoever wins, he is almost certain to remain Minister for Defence, which in Israel is a hugely influential position, given the country's strategic realities.

Around the country during the past week, thousands of young Israelis were called up for military service, ``reservists" who have other jobs but are called on when Israel goes to war.

While soldiers engaged in a brutal ground war across the border in the south of the country in Gaza, other troops went on alert in the north of the country, alert to the possibility that Hezbollah, with strongholds in the south of Lebanon, may deploy some of its missiles to take advantage of the fact that Israel has its attentions elsewhere. While <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah are formidable opponents, the extraordinary feature of Middle Eastern politics is that for Israel they are not the main game: that title rests with Iran.

This is Israel's year of living dangerously. After a relative two-year calm since the end of the war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, Israel is beginning a year that could determine its future. When I told an Israeli official a few months ago that I was coming to Israel to work, he quipped: ``Are you going to get there before the war starts?"

He meant war with Iran, not *Hamas*.

It was before Obama was elected US president, and he went on to say: ``Israelis are watching every word Obama says about Israel. Have you noticed all the European leaders going to Israel at the moment? They don't want Israel to feel isolated. An isolated Israel is a dangerous Israel."

The official's argument was that if Israelis sensed Obama would not support, or at least turn a blind eye to, an air strike by Israel against Iran's nuclear research facilities then they would act alone.

Obama quelled some concerns inside Israel by appointing Rahm Emanuel, a strong supporter of Israel, as his chief of staff.

Israelis may be watching every word Obama utters about the Middle East, but the world was not watching everything that occurred this week in Gaza because Israel banned foreign journalists from entering.

This made it the ``war without witnesses", the media unable to verify claims and counter-claims. Israel appears to have made this decision -- again -- following the Lebanon debacle of 2006. In that war, foreign media reported words and pictures of the bombing of Beirut, including countless images of civilians being killed. This time it's an odd mix -- pictures of injured children being carried by their parents -- along with words defending their actions by Israeli defence officials.

One of those officials is Sydneysider Benjamin Rutland, "head of the European and Pacific Desk, IDF Spokesperson".

Rutland explains to Inquirer that the IDF has a list of <u>Hamas</u> targets inside Gaza and ```we are taking them out one by one".

The UN school that was hit, killing up to 40people, is not one of those, he says. He says the soldiers in the field spotted mortar fire coming at them and returned fire, not knowing exactly what they were firing at. He says of the 40 or so killed, some were <u>Hamas</u> fighters. `Unfortunately there were civilians hit as well," he says.

Inquirer asks Rutland how, given that Israel has banned foreign media from entering Gaza, can people be sure the army is telling the truth? ``We do tell the truth when we put things out," he says.

An interesting perspective was provided this week by Richard Haass, a former adviser to the first Bush president, George H.W. Bush. Haass, president of the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, has expertise in conflict zones: he was Washington's negotiator in peace talks between the British Government and the Irish Republican Army in the days of terrorism in Northern Ireland.

"The British achieved success in Northern Ireland not because of police or the British army alone but because the message was sent to the IRA that they could not shoot their way to power," he told France 24 TV this week. "What Israel has done militarily needs to be complemented by economic and diplomatic initiatives. There needs to be a set of initiatives without which radical elements in the Middle East could be emboldened."

Clearly, the hostilities between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> are so deep that alone they cannot resolve their longer-term problems.

This week it took Egypt and France to provide some hope of a short-term solution. After January 20, that mantle moves to Obama to find that which has eluded so many of his predecessors: peace in the Middle East.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



International: Gaza: Analysis: For as long as both sides think they can win, blood will continue to be spilt

The Guardian - Final Edition
January 3, 2009 Saturday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 6

Length: 891 words

Byline: Jeremy Bowen

Body

Israel was not allowing international journalists into Gaza this week, so I sat under a pine tree on a small hill, on the edge of the Israeli border town of Sderot, watching the war from a distance. Israeli attack helicopters moved lazily across the sky, taking all the time they wanted, waiting for the next target.

An F-15 warplane suddenly screamed over, only a couple of hundred feet up, fiery decoy flares flicking around its tail just in case <u>Hamas</u> had managed to smuggle in some sort of anti aircraft missile through the tunnels from Egypt.

A vapour trail rose out of the dark line of buildings on the edge of Gaza City. Almost simultaneously a <u>female</u> voice drifted towards our pine tree from the loudspeakers in Sderot.

"Colour Red. Colour Red."

Her voice was a signal to run for cover. They used to have sirens but they frightened the children too much. The voice was calm, insistent; maybe she is meant to sound like a mother. The voice meant a launch had been detected and a rocket was coming in from Gaza. The 15 or 20 seconds before it struck were not pleasant. There was a scream from the rocket before it exploded. A cloud of black smoke rose from the grass to the south of the hill, about 200 metres away. No one was hurt. The cameramen on the hill focused on the spot from where the launch had come. They expected an Israeli answer, a plume of smoke and an explosion.

But half an hour later the launch sites still had not been attacked. Presumably the rocket crews had gone back under cover and were now planning their next attack.

The lesson they can learn is that firing at the Israelis does not mean certain death. The young, religious men in the armed wing of <u>Hamas</u> have taken some very heavy casualties so far, and many more of them will die before this is over. But those who have launched rockets and are still alive must be gaining confidence for whatever lies ahead. It is clear that for all its air power, surveillance drones and modern technology, the Israeli air force cannot stop every rocket.

International: Gaza: Analysis: For as long as both sides think they can win, blood will continue to be spilt

Reputation

That is why Israeli generals were pressing to send troops in, to wipe out the stain on the army's reputation caused by its poor showing in Lebanon in 2006. Halfway through the week, lines of Israeli tanks were lined up in the ploughed fields between Sderot and the border wire. It was hard to say whether the soldiers hunkered down around the tanks, water dripping down their necks, were keen to be off and into Gaza or keen to be out of the field and back home - journalists were not allowed to talk to them, and the fields had been declared a closed military area, so we were not meant to be there at all.

Even though it has not been possible this week for most journalists to report firsthand from Gaza, plenty of information is coming out about the condition of the people there.

The Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, says there is no humanitarian crisis there because Israel is allowing in dozens of truckloads of relief supplies every day. Her view is not shared by the people at the United Nations who run the relief operation.

Even before Israel started its military campaign they were providing food aid to one million people, which is two-thirds of Gaza's population. The Israeli blockade over the past 18 months has destroyed Gaza's economy; 80% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day.

This week there has been an extra, deadly dimension to civilian life in Gaza. Five sisters from the Balusha family were killed as they slept. Even through a TV picture you could feel the grief and loneliness of the sister who survived as she described how the walls fell in on them. Too many other Gazans have similar stories to tell.

Civilian casualties get Israel a lot of bad publicity, so it is probably fair to say that it does not hit every target it wants, otherwise many more would have died. Even so, it knows that the use of powerful weapons in a territory as confined and heavily populated as Gaza means that the most accurate satellite-guided weapons in its arsenal will still heighbours, passersby, children taking out the rubbish or playing outside. I spoke to a friend in Gaza on the phone. He said he had evacuated his wife and children. What he meant was he had moved them a short distance from their home to a place that seemed less exposed. In Gaza, there aren't many places to go to.

Israel would like to topple <u>Hamas</u> from power in Gaza. The government hopes the people of Gaza will stop blaming Israel for what is happening to their families and start blaming <u>Hamas</u>. The people I speak to here say that is not happening, and will not.

Accusations

If Israel cannot stop the rocket fire, with or without sending in the tanks, its leaders will be accused of failure, as they were after the 2006 summer war in Lebanon. If <u>Hamas</u> can still fire a rocket or even a bullet when the ceasefire comes it will claim victory, just as Hezbollah did in Lebanon in 2006.

In this war both sides believe their actions are legitimate and justified on grounds of self defence. Many more Palestinians than Israelis have died, but both sides believe they are the real victims. The only way to settle their differences is through political agreement. But there are people in Israel, and in Gaza, who think they can win. And while they think like that, more blood will spill.

Jeremy Bowen is the BBC's Middle East editor

Load-Date: January 3, 2009



The tragedy when a regime uses its citizens as tools of war; COMMENT & DEBATE

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Opinion; Pg. 11

Length: 903 words

Byline: FANIA OZ-SALZBERGER - Fania Oz-Salzberger holds the Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel studies at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, and is a senior lecturer at the faculty of law,

University of Haifa.

Body

Criticism of *Hamas* by moderate Arabs offers a ray of hope in Gaza.

IMAGINE your next-door neighbour - with whom you have had a long and bloody feud - pulling out a gun and shooting into your windows from his own lounge room, which is densely packed with <u>women</u> and children. In fact, he's holding his daughter on his lap as he claims he will not stop till your family is dead. Police are unavailable. What should you do?

One option is to do nothing, or little. You try this for a while. After all, your neighbour is poor and traumatised, and you must bear some of the blame. Finally, as one shot hits your child's bedroom, you decide that enough is enough. You pull out your far superior gun. You attempt a surgical strike: aim at the shooter's head, try to spare the innocents.

In an abstract sense, this is what Israel is doing. But there is nothing surgical about the blood and agony that has engulfed Gaza since Saturday. Try as it might to target militants alone, Israel cannot achieve this. Civilian bodies are being pulled out of the rubble of military bases - because, like our metaphorical gunman's home, militants and civilians inhabit the same urban space in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza City and Rafah are towns doubling as army camps. Fighters train next to schools and rockets are stored in the basements of multi-storey family homes. Western aid money, diverted to buy weapons for <u>Hamas</u>, is now buried under the ruins. Over a million Palestinians, unable to flee either to Egypt or to Israel, have for years been ruled by a military junta that prioritises the killing of Israelis, across the international border, at all costs.

So much for conventional war, for the sand-table battlefield. No military strategist in history envisaged this monstrous, deliberate mingling of armed fighters and civilians, this novel doctrine that pitches infantry among infants and babies as barricades. Of course, civilians have always been in the line of fire and conquest, from Troy to Berlin. But no regime ever used its citizens so deliberately as tools to arouse world sympathy, as hostages to modern sensitivities.

The tragedy when a regime uses its citizens as tools of war COMMENT & DEBATE

Theories of "just war" tell us not to hurt non-combatants. But <u>Hamas</u> and its military arm have made a conscious decision, banking on global humanitarian concerns, to make sure that Israel hits as many civilians as possible.

Even if Israel's current war against Gaza is a just war - after eight years of rocket attacks, a unilateral Israeli retreat from every inch of Gaza, a forced evacuation of thousands of Jewish settlers, and attempts at limited and "measured" retaliation - it is therefore a very dirty war too. There is a sad zero sum game between Palestinian suffering and Israeli sovereignty, security, and normal life.

Within a few hours, Israel may switch from aerial bombardment to ground invasion. In this case, the civilian death toll will surely rise. As world opinion slowly awakens from its holiday slumber, it is likely to turn against Israel. After all, it is the strong guy, the former occupying power, the better shooter. Even Russia, its boots still covered with Georgian dust, has joined the choir of double standards.

Israelis are used to this kind of blanket accusation. It is the kind of message that unites them, in grim resolve. Most agree with Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni that enough is enough. What, they ask, would other nations do in their stead?

Does the enemy's civilian suffering trump Israel's sovereignty? Does it trump the real, if less bloody, agony and fear of hundreds of thousands Israelis over long years?

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defence Minister Ehud Barak, and Livni have cast aside their political rivalries in order to orchestrate an answer. Israel must fight off the Gazan rockets. A vast Israeli majority currently supports them. Political tables are thus overturned in a uniquely Israeli way.

Don't count on Israel's unity for long. It is a democracy, not a one-voice nation. If the Gaza campaign turns Lebanon-like, with humanitarian catastrophe, ongoing bombardment of Israeli civilians, or both, domestic criticism will be loud and clear. But even the greatest opponents of Olmert's second war must face the blunt fact that *Hamas* is lethal.

To the detriment of their own people, its leaders, Haled Meshaal and Ismail Haniyeh, want neither peace nor compromise. Like their friend President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, they want Israel dead. It's as simple as that.

Some good news arises even at this dismal juncture. Moderate Arab leaders, including Egypt's foreign minister, have openly blamed <u>Hamas</u> for the current Gazan predicament. Here is a serious ray of hope: Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan are willing to broker peace, and perhaps save the Palestinians from their own worst leadership. Israel has gone a long way since the Arab world set out to kill it off. For the first time, prominent Arab voices acquit Israel of the wholesale blame that some Western critics still lazily throw at it.

So here's the real challenge for Israel's next leader, whoever he or she will be: talk to the Arab League. Its proposed peace plan will require tough Israeli negotiation, but it is a start. It could prevent future wars, including just wars. Give it a chance. -- Fania Oz-Salzberger holds the Leon Liberman Chair in Modern Israel studies at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, and is a senior lecturer at the faculty of law, University of Haifa.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008



US's chance to step between Israel and Palestinians

Canberra Times (Australia)
January 6, 2009 Tuesday
Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 15 Length: 961 words

Byline: GARY YOUNGE

Body

On New Year's Day Atif Irfan boarded a flight in Washington, DC, with seven members of his family. Edging down the aisle, he wondered out loud whether the back of the plane was the best place to be.

His sister-in-law said she thought it was the safest part, rather than being close to the engine or wings "in case something happened".

The conversation was overheard by two teenage girls, who took one look at the men's dark skin and beards and the **women**'s headscarves and saw a family of suicide bombers, including three small children aged between two and seven. The girls told their parents, who told the flight attendant, who told the air marshals and the captain. The air marshals called the FBI and the airport police.

The pilot asked the marshals to remove the family from the plane.

Then officials asked everybody else to get off so they could perform a thorough sweep. The family and a family friend were surrounded by armed guards, detained for questioning and then released. The plane eventually took off without them. When they tried to get on a later flight the airline refused to book them. The Irfan family's ordeal escalated according to its own humiliating logic.

But, seven years after 9/11, it's not an isolated incident. Presumptive and discriminatory, it speaks volumes about the prevailing values in the United States. A country that confuses Muslim and terrorist, and conflates the civilian and combatant by taking popular fear and prejudice and handing them over to state power. Driven by the maxim that you are better safe than sorry, it leaves nobody safe and everybody sorry.

There is nothing particularly American about this. The war on terror may have started in the US but it quickly went global. In the months after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, everybody wanted a piece of the action.

However, few nations pursued it with such consistent zeal as Israel.

"You in America are in a war against terror," Ariel Sharon said after he left the White House following suicide bombings in Haifa and Jerusalem in December 2001. "We in Israel are in a war against terror it's the same war."

US 's chance to step between Israel and Palestinians

The trouble is that over the past seven years, the war on terror has been thoroughly discredited not only morally, but militarily and strategically. Nobody listens to moderates, let alone to reason, when bombs are falling and people are dying. That is as true for the rockets that have killed a handful of Israelis as it is for the bombs and tanks that have killed hundreds of Palestinians.

By erasing any prospect of negotiation, the violence did not weaken extremists but emboldened them. Israel may want to boost the moderate Fatah faction which governs the West Bank now. But *Hamas*'s electoral rise was a direct result of the contempt the Israelis showed them in the past.

Meanwhile, the Iraq war has left Iran the primary sponsor of both Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> with far more influence in the region than they would have had. On almost every front in almost every part of the world, including in the US, the war on terror is now seen as a colossal mistake. Only Israel did not get the memo. And it is now set to fail for the same reasons that America has.

Diplomatically, Israeli efforts to sell its bombardment and invasion of Gaza as a straightforward extension of the war on terror have been fairly blatant. It has described the shelling of homes, mosques and police stations as the destruction of "the infrastructure of terror". Even as the rest of the world condemns it, Israel's foreign minister, and Kadima party leader, Tzipi Livni, has been saying that her country's actions place it firmly within the community of nations and leaves Gazans and their democratically elected rulers outside.

"Israel is part of the free world and fights extremism and terrorism <u>Hamas</u> is not," she said. Livni added, "These are the days when every individual in the region and in the world has to choose a side."

Meanwhile, Israel has been busy implementing the very tenets of the war on terror that have served the US so badly, primarily that intractable political problems can be solved solely by military means with the aim of not simply bombing your enemies into submission, but eliminating them and then creating resolution on your own terms from the rubble.

"What I think we need to do is to reach a situation in which we do not allow <u>Hamas</u> to govern," Deputy Prime Minister Haim Ramon said.

"That is the most important thing."

Who he thinks should govern when <u>Hamas</u> has gone, and precisely what legitimacy they would have, does not seem to bother him.

On this matter Livni is right. People have to choose sides. But, so far, it has not been her side. The war on terror is over. War lost. For the first time in a long time, that even appears to be true in the US.

A recent poll shows the US public far less indulgent of Israeli aggression than many previously believed.

Opinion on the bombing of Gaza is fairly evenly divided, showing 44 per cent supporting Israel's military action against the Palestinians and 41per cent saying it should have tried to find a diplomatic solution to the problems. Given the absence of any honest or informed debate about events in the Middle East, this suggests significant room for manoeuvre for President-elect Barack Obama in pursuing a more even-handed policy towards the region, if he should choose to take it.

The benefits could strengthen America's hand throughout the region. Majorities in seven Arab nations say their opinion of the US would significantly improve if it put pressure on Israel to comply with international law in its treatment of Palestinians.

That is the change the US and the Middle East need. It's also the change most of the rest of the world wants to believe in.

Gary Younge writes for The Guardian.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Strike near UN school leaves 30 dead in Gaza

therecord.com

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A1

Length: 951 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser, The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA

Body

Israeli mortar shells exploded yesterday near a UN school in Gaza that was sheltering hundreds of people displaced by Israel's onslaught against <u>Hamas</u> militants, killing at least 30 Palestinians, tearing bodies apart and staining streets with blood.

Israel's military said its shelling -- the deadliest single episode since Israeli ground forces invaded Gaza Saturday -- was a response to mortar fire from within the school and said *Hamas* militants were using civilians as cover.

Two residents of the area who spoke by telephone said they saw a small group of militants firing mortar rounds from a street near the school, where 350 people had gathered to get away from the shelling.

They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Majed Hamdan, an AP photographer, rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks. At the hospital, he said, many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men -- parents -- slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said. "In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there wasn't enough space for the wounded." He said there appeared to be marks on the pavement of five separate explosions in area of the school.

An Israeli defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to make the information public, said it appeared that the military used 120mm shells, among the largest mortar rounds.

UN officials demanded an investigation of the shelling. The carnage, which included 55 wounded, added to a surging civilian toll and drew mounting international pressure for Israel to end the offensive against *Hamas*.

President-elect Barack Obama broke his silence on the crisis yesterday saying, "the loss of civilian life in Gaza and in Israel is a source of deep concern for me." He declined to go further re his stance that the United States has only one president at a time.

Strike near UN school leaves 30 dead in Gaza

At the UN in New York, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called the Israeli bombardment of the group's facilities in Gaza "totally unacceptable." Israel's shells have fallen around three schools, including the girls school hit yesterday, and a health centre for Palestinian refugees.

Some 15,000 Palestinians have packed the UN's 23 Gaza schools because their homes were destroyed or to flee the violence. The UN provided the Israeli military with GPS co-ordinates for all of them.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met yesterday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to lobby for a U.S.-backed ceasefire plan for Gaza. Arab countries were floating a revised UN resolution calling for an immediate end to all military action, and deployment of an international observer force to monitor a ceasefire and protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

In the wake of the criticism, Israel agreed to set up a "humanitarian corridor" to ship vital supplies to the Gaza Strip, an idea put forth by the UN Security Council. Under the plan, Israel will suspend attacks in certain areas to allow people to get supplies.

The three mortar shells that crashed down on the perimeter of the UN school struck at mid-afternoon, when many people in the densely populated camp were outside getting fresh air, thinking an area near a school was safe.

Images recorded by a camera operator from AP Television News showed crowds fleeing the scene, pavements smeared with blood and battered bodies of the dead being carried off by medics and bystanders. A youth who limped away from the scene was helped by several others. Sandals were scattered on the ground by a pockmarked wall.

World powers that tried but failed to get a truce in place before Israel sent in its ground forces warned of the potential for higher civilian casualties if the fighting moved onto Gaza's streets, and Gaza's main hospital has been overwhelmed with wounded innocents. Mortar fire, in particular, is far less accurate than the laser-guided bombs Israel has used throughout the campaign.

The UN agency that runs the school along with other programs for Palestinian refugees said two other UN schools in Gaza were struck by Israeli fire since Monday night. In the first incident, an air strike on the Asma Elementary School in Gaza City killed three men who were among more than 400 people taking refuge in the building. In the other, an artillery shell landed inside an empty boys school in Jebaliya.

"There's nowhere safe in Gaza. Everyone here is terrorized and traumatized," said John Ging, head of Gaza operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

The episode is certain to add to the urgency of truce efforts by leaders from Europe and the Middle East.

An Israeli military statement said it received intelligence that the dead at the girls school included <u>Hamas</u> operatives, among them members of a rocket launching cell. It identified two of them as Imad Abu Askar and Hassan Abu Askar.

Two residents told a reporter by phone that the two brothers were known to be low-level <u>Hamas</u> militants. They said a group of militants -- one of them said four -- were firing mortar shells from near the school.

An Israeli shell targeted the men, but missed and they fled, the witnesses said. Then another three shells landed nearby, exploding among civilians, they said.

Palestinian militants have frequently fired from residential areas in the past.

Ging said the UN agency's staff work to prevent militants from entering the schools it has opened to shelter those at risk.

A total of 71 Palestinians were killed yesterday with just two confirmed as militants, health officials in Gaza said.

Strike near UN school leaves 30 dead in Gaza

Dr. Bassam Abu Warda, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, said 36 people were killed, while the UN confirmed 30 deaths.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



The Australian

January 8, 2009 Thursday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 11

Length: 2553 words

Body

Hamas attacks on Jewish children are nothing new

MOST TALKED ABOUT

THE HUMAN TOLL

JOHN Lyons (``<u>Hamas</u> terror: every Jewish child now a target", 7/1) reports that <u>Hamas</u> has delivered a ``bloodcurdling precursor" to the entry of Israeli tanks into Gaza by declaring that it now regards Jewish children as legitimate targets. The suggestion is that <u>Hamas</u> had previously refrained from attacking Jewish children, but that it would now do so in response to the deaths of Palestinian children over the last week.

This suggestion is absurd. The terror organisation's objective has always been to inflict maximum injury to the maximum number of Israeli citizens, whether they be soldiers, civilians, men, <u>women</u> or children. It has made numerous statements to that effect, and has demonstrated its willingness to attack young people in its suicide attacks on nightclubs inside Israel. Unfortunately, attempts by <u>Hamas</u> to attack Jewish children are nothing new.

Eli Court

Richmond, Vic

THE Israeli bombing of the UN school in Gaza is an attack on all 192 United Nations member-states, including Australia.

It is not the first time that this has happened. During the Israel-Lebanon conflict, nine UN positions were hit, some repeatedly, and 12 UN personnel were killed, despite pleas to Israel to stop the shelling. As was the case on Tuesday, Israel had been given the co-ordinates of the UN positions before the attacks.

This week's incident is another case of Israel's callous disregard for civilian lives, peace efforts and international opinion. The world must respond. All military support to Israel should be frozen immediately in response to this attack on the 192 UN member-states. An attack on the UN is an attack on all of us.

John Murphy

Woodville South, SA

ISRAEL'S slaughter of the innocent in Gaza is as self-defeating as it is barbarous. Far from weakening <u>Hamas</u>, the carnage strengthens it. <u>Hamas</u> needs death. So what if Israel kills a few thousand <u>Hamas</u> fighters? The war will recruit thousands more. Fatah's impotence is starkly revealed. Israeli and US intransigence convinces the Muslim world that extremism is the only way.

The Palestinians, overwhelmingly secular and moderate, have never received a modicum of justice from Israel. Without real concessions, the cycle of violence will roll on.

Frank Campbell

Anglesea, Vic

WHY hasn't the Red Crescent organised the evacuation of <u>women</u> and children from Gaza City? It is inconceivable that children would be sent to school under existing conditions. It is hard to escape the conclusion that it suited <u>Hamas</u> to leave the children in the city in order to attract world condemnation of Israel when, as is inevitable, children were among those killed.

Even so, surely the UN, or the Red Crescent, should have insisted on safe passage for Gaza's children out of the battle zone long before matters reached this sorry state. Earlier, Israel evacuated its children from a school, and their lives were saved when a rocket from Gaza scored a direct hit.

During World War II, children were evacuated on a grand scale from London and its surrounds. It is surely the normal response of a population under fire and concerned for the safety of its young.

Zillah Williams

Canberra, ACT

ISRAELI foreign minister Tzipi Livni keeps repeating that any other nation would have responded to <u>Hamas</u>'s provocation in similar fashion. She is partly right. In occupied Europe, the Nazis rounded up and shot 10 civilians for each German soldier killed by the Resistance. Since then the practice has not often been repeated. Britain did not bomb Dublin in response to IRA attacks in England, including attempts on the life of Margaret Thatcher, nor did France send tanks into the Algerian casbah.

Constance Lever-Tracy

Eden Hills, SA

THE media and the public respond frantically to the latest suffering in the Middle East. If it was about care and compassion, one would expect them to respond with the same zest to far greater suffering around the world: Darfur, Chechnya, Zimbabwe, Tibet, Burma, or even the suffering of Muslims who are victims of their own leaders. The true mobilising force of this response is not hate towards Israel but fear of Muslim anger. Unfortunately the common use of intimidation, violence and terror by Muslims has proven effective. I'm afraid the free world is going to pay a heavy price for that if we don't confront it now with courage and determination.

Hagai Avisar

Elwood, Vic

A DEMOCRATIC country, a close friend of Australia, is raining bombs on a population of 1.5 million in an area a quarter the size of metropolitan Hobart. Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein also rained bombs on to rebel populations. The difference is that Kosovar and Kurdish civilians had the option of running away to the mountains. The 1.5 million Gazans are unique in the world. They don't even have the right to be refugees.

Ahmed Hassan

Rowville, Vic

IF <u>Hamas</u> hides behind <u>women</u> and children, and fires mortars or rockets from schools, then it must also accept responsibility for the resulting civilian casualties.

Kenneth Higgs

Lindisfarne, Tas

Hoax on Quadrant was an

accident waiting to happen

KEITH Windschuttle (``Fabrication of scientific theory: the Windschuttle hoax", 7/1) will just have to take it on the chin. Any editorial policy which, like Quadrant's, works on the principle my enemy's enemy is my friend is an accident waiting to happen.

However, Quadrant should be defended against one charge brought by the hoax article's author, that it failed to have the article peer-reviewed. Quadrant is a current affairs monthly, and makes no claim to be a refereed journal. Nor should it be one, since serious peer-reviewing is impossible for any current affairs monthly, where short lead times are of the essence. The author's claim here just seems to be an attempt to play up

the parallels with the Sokal hoax, but those parallels are limited since Social Text, the magazine targeted by Alan Sokal, is a quarterly which claims refereed-journal status.

The moral of the story would seem to be that a capacity for critical detachment from one's own convictions -- and hence an awareness of the need to test all the more carefully views which accord with one's own -- is a virtue insufficiently regarded on both sides of politics.

Stephen Buckle

Glebe, NSW

MY response to the complicity by Crikey in the Windschuttle hoax is similar to catching an acquaintance stealing, say, \$5 from me. The money is well worth the knowledge that my acquaintance is a thief.

I now know that Crikey is just another e-rag for which the integrity of journalism is a distant consideration compared to some cheap propaganda in the culture wars. One more site I need not bother with.

M. Seward

Launceston, Tas

KEITH Windschuttle is now the patron saint of politicians and other con merchants. It is OK to publish false information if it is not too false or if you do not bother to verify it. Is this defence a real hoax hoax or just a faux hoax?

Glenn Wood

Bardon, Qld

KEITH Windschuttle now knows what it's like to be suckered by fraudsters from the Left. He'll be issuing global warming scare stories any day now.

Bernard Slattery

Geelong West, Vic

THAT critics of Keith Windschuttle have to resort to anonymous fraud in order to score a point is more to the detriment of their position than Windschuttle's.

Len Watson

Bribie Island, Qld

ERN Malley lives! Where are the Chasers? Keith Windschuttle will be counter-punching now, blaming others, just not copping his own sloppy ignorance. What an editor, what a sneaky triumph for Windschuttle watchers.

Phil Pryor

Turramurra, NSW

Medal for man of steel

I ALMOST almost choked on my muesli when I read that their ``Man of War" is giving our ``Man of Steel" a medal for promoting world peace (``Bush honours his `Man of Steel", 7/1). The shock and awe assault on the Iraqi people by the coalition of the willing makes Israel's current incursion into the Gaza Strip look like amateur hour.

Peter Hallahan

Coorparoo, Qld

TO us latte drinkers and leftie weirdos, the awarding by George W. Bush of the US Presidential Medal of Freedom to John Howard is no more than the punch line to a very long, very sick joke.

Peter Lane

Margaret River, WA

The throwaway society

THE collapse of Waterford Wedgwood (``After 250 years, receivers pick up pieces", 7/1), following the bankruptcies of two other historic names in the fine china trade, Spode and Royal Worcester. is not merely a consequence of the current economic chaos; it is emblematic of the tectonic shift in societal values. My wife and I could have predicted it.

The wedding presents we were given half a century ago -- Royal Doulton, Shelley, Wedgwood and Royal Crown Derby -- are almost worthless today, although still in mint condition. Our children and grandchildren have no interest in them. It's a sad change from the days when their purchase represented real sacrifice, their gift a recognition that utility need not be brutish, and centuries-old craft tradition stood for something.

The dishwasher may have helped to kill the appeal of fine china, but today the money is spent on things to look at, listen to, or get around in. Fashion (exemplified by the impractical square plate) rules over style and good taste in a superficial throwaway society. Only a tiny minority remains to value crystal and the products of the famous Staffordshire potteries, and this is not sufficient to support their industries.

One-hundred-and-forty years ago,

Matthew Arnold wrote: ``The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich are just the very people whom we call the Philistines." Where is the Arnold of the 21st century?

Geoffrey Luck

Killara, NSW

200 years of exclusion

DAVID Burchell ("Government policies must foster Aboriginal resilience", Opinion, 5/1) skewered the tendency towards hypocrisy amongst some of us "bleeding heart" doctors who work in indigenous health by the vignette of

the medical specialist hoist on her own petard when confronted with the irreconcilable nature of the uplifting sentiments she felt when flying over remote Australia and the reality on the ground of appalling health and domestic violence.

This sentiment is termed ``elective affinity", and is described by Barry Hill in Broken Song, his psychoanalytical account of the life of anthropologist Ted Strehlow (p254), as a ``way of stressing symmetries that are imaginatively persuasive". He gives Margaret Mead as an example of an idealistic ``Apollonian'', a member of the literary intelligentsia romantically enamoured of the primitive; and then the painful demystification by Derek Freeman.

However, we need not be faced with a binary option when faced with the conflicting aspects of indigenous society. In the same way that we can celebrate the high artistry of our Celtic and Anglo-Saxon forebears' illuminated texts and jewellery and yet accept that life then was brutal and short, or admire under-floor central heating in a Roman villa in northern England whilst accepting that daily life then for most people was fraught with the risk of random violence, so we should be able to admire without proviso our fellow Australians' high ritual art and complex cosmology and yet keep our focus on the alleviation of the effects of 200 years of systematic exclusion from mainstream society through fostering the renewal of both agency and resilience.

Dr John Boulton

Carrington, NSW

Rear-view mirror analysis

YOUR editorial (`Bank on trouble with deposit guarantees", 7/1) requires correction on a number of points. It suggests that `mortgage and cash management funds" are `non-bank deposit takers". In fact, these entities are not deposit-takers and are not subject to prudential regulation by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority under the Banking Act 1959. Authorised deposit-taking institutions (ADIs) under the Banking Act are banks, building societies and credit unions.

The editorial says banks are subject to more rigorous requirements than other deposit takers. This is not so. All ADIs are subject to the same prudential framework and meet strict standards on capital, liquidity, risk management and governance. This framework has been in place for a decade.

APRA's chair John Laker told the Senate Economics Committee on October 23, 2008 that ``our supervisory intensity will be

as strong, if not stronger, now with the government guarantee in place as it was beforehand".

The Government's decision to guarantee deposits in ADIs for three years was timely and effective but has been subject to some dubious rear-view mirror analysis. Conditions for eventual removal of the guarantee will be enhanced if the prudential regulatory framework for ADIs is well and widely understood.

Luke Lawler

Acting Head of Public Affairs

Abacus -- Australian Mutuals

(Abacus is the industry body for credit unions, building societies and friendly societies)

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

Middle East peace? Even the

opinion/letters contributors are anti one side or the other, so how can *Hamas* and Israel ever agree.

Jan McCauley

Bowral, NSW

The most overused word of 2009, and it's only early January, is ``existential". Enough already.

Malcolm Brown

Redwood Park, SA

At least the sudden drop in car sales (``Car sales screech to a halt", 7/1) should be good news for people selling homes on public transport routes.

Norm Neill

Darlinghurst, NSW

With the inclusion of pieces by Nick Minchin and Tony Abbott, my reading of yesterday's Op-Ed page was severely restricted. Would it be possible to adopt a future policy of just one piece of Opposition propaganda per day?

Richard Moss

Chisholm, ACT

Peter Costello is not facing sternward, John Goldbaum (First Byte, 7/1), he's sitting on the starboard side, facing port. This keeps his weight to windward and allows him to see forward of the mast and sails to keep clear of other yachts. He's not holding the tiller upside down either, but is holding the rudder extension bar. The rudder is clearly in the central position.

Peter Taylor

Burradoo, NSW

Lorraine Ingham (First Byte, 7/1) would have us take the view that all the Guantanamo Bay inmates are ``innocent" unless and until they have been proven guilty in a court of law. Following her logic, presumably we must consider the likes of Robert Mugabe, Adolf Hitler, etc, to be innocent too since they've not been found guilty under the law. Wake up in the real, nasty world, Lorraine!

Peter Jamieson

Broadbeach Waters, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Israeli-Palestinian PR occupies YouTube; OPINION & ANALYSIS

Newcastle Herald (Australia)

January 2, 2009 Friday

Late Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9 Length: 535 words

Byline: Leigh Tonkin

Body

AS the fighting between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> heats up again, the battle is on to see who will win the public relations war in the media.

For foreign reporters, it's been a tough job to get the news out because Israel won't let them into the blockaded Palestinian territory.

Since the airstrikes began on Saturday, journalists have been itching to get into the thick of it, but Israel has refused them access to its border with Gaza for the past month. Egypt, too, refuses access to journalists from its land border.

The only media coverage out of Gaza itself is from Palestinians who live there, working for news agencies, like AP or Reuters, or the Arab satellite channels.

But just because the media can't get in doesn't mean the news can't get out. Plenty of footage is making its way onto the internet. The battle to see who will be cast as the victim or the villain in the piece is on, not just in Gaza, but on the world stage.

Video-sharing website YouTube is the prime battleground. YouTube is the perfect propaganda machine: getting information to the masses without a pesky journalist to get in the way of your story.

The Israeli defence force has embraced it. On Monday it created the IDF Spokesperson Unit, a YouTube channel with videos from the frontline. It's already had nearly 420,000 views, but users aren't allowed to leave comments.

Yesterday, the most-viewed video was Tuesday's strike on the <u>Hamas</u> Government complex. Shot from a plane, you see the bomb flatten the building through target crosshairs. It's a little surreal, more like a scene from a video game than life.

Most videos are of successful strikes, but there are a couple to tug on the heartstrings: Israeli medics treating an injured Palestinian child, aid trucks being allowed to pass.

Outside of the Israeli channel, it's not hard to find graphic images of the human toll of the stand-off.

The best source from the Arab region is from TV network Al-Jazeera's English YouTube channel.

Israeli - Palestinian PR occupies YouTube OPINION & ANALYSIS

Qatar-based Al-Jazeera, which has seen a ratings boom across the Middle East and Africa since airstrikes began, has been airing graphic footage of the casualties in Gaza, more vivid and shocking than what's allowed on Western screens.

Besides Al-Jazeera, it's harder to find current, English-language stuff from the Arab world on YouTube. There are clips from the <u>Hamas</u>'s Al-Aqsa TV station untranslated. And a great video of a <u>female</u> newsreader on an Arabic-language TV station breaking down into uncontrollable sobs as she reads a story on Gaza.

But with the "reporting" left to partisan players there's a gaping hole in the coverage we receive.

The Foreign Press Association, an Israel-based group representing more than 400 journalists, petitioned Israel's Supreme Court on Wednesday to demand the country allows foreign reporters into Gaza. The court ordered the government to allow up to 12 journalists in whenever the crossing is open for humanitarian reasons.

Israel says the blockade is a security measure, not to control the flow of information. And it is true: Gaza is one of the most dangerous places to work as a journalist, to which BBC reporter Alan Johnston can attest after his 114 days as a hostage in Gaza City last year.

Itonkin@theherald.com.au

Load-Date: January 1, 2009



Thousands of reservists on move as Israel watches its back - GAZA INVASION

The Australian

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 7

Length: 525 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich

Body

Jerusalem

ISRAEL began mobilising tens of thousands of reservists yesterday as it prepared for violent reactions to its Gaza incursion from other directions.

Some of the reservists were being deployed along the border with Lebanon as a precaution against attempts by the Hezbollah militia to begin rocketing Israel or stage cross-border raids to divert Israel from the Gaza campaign, officials said. Other reservists had been assigned to deal with the possibility of an uprising on the West Bank. Still others were to be sent to Gaza in case the campaign there was expanded.

The reservists were called up under emergency orders requiring them to report for an open-ended period. Most received their orders before going to work in the morning and were at their bases within a few hours.

Israelis are drafted at age 18. Men serve for three-year stints and <u>women</u> for two, but men continue to serve in the reserves until age 40 and are subject to up to a month's annual duty.

In the 2006 war in Lebanon, more than 60,000 reservists were called up, most of them serving amonth. The precise number mobilised yesterday was not made known but military officials said that more reservists would be mobilised if required.

Reservists constitute two-thirds of Israel's military strength.

The most serious potential spin-off of the Gaza incursion for Israel is a renewal of war with Hezbollah, which fired thousands of rockets into Israel during a month-long clash in 2006.

The militia has since renewed its arsenal and is believed to have tens of thousands of rockets, many of them capable of striking deep inside Israel.

A senior Iranian official, who conferred with Syrian leaders on Saturday in Damascus a few hours before Israel launched its ground attack, said Hezbollah intended to renew its rocketing iflsrael sent forces into Gaza, according to press reports.

Thousands of reservists on move as Israel watches its back - GAZA INVASION

Both Hezbollah and *Hamas* are proxies of Iran, which provides them with funding, weaponry, ideology and training.

A Hezbollah official in Lebanon subsequently declared that the militia had no intention of renewing the fighting with Israel.

In announcing the opening of the Gaza ground campaign on Saturday, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak alluded to the threat from Hezbollah. "We hope that the northern front will remain calm, but we are prepared for any possibility," he said.

Officials in Jerusalem yesterday warned of severe retaliation if Hezbollah joined the fray, noting that only a small part of Israel's air force was engaged in Gaza and that ground forces had been strengthened in the north.

The <u>Hamas</u> leadership has called on West Bank Palestinians to renew guerilla warfare against Israel, a strategy of the early stages of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, that began in 2000.

The most immediate concern for Israel is a renewal of suicide bombings by West Bank Palestinians who have access to Israel. Such attacks took more than 1000 lives during the intifada.

<u>Hamas</u> leaders in Gaza issued a desperate plea for their renewal after the Israeli incursion began.

Thus far, none has occurred but Israelis have begun taking precautions, reducing their presence in marketplaces and coffee houses.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Feature - Palestine will be liberated

Morning Star

January 5, 2009 Monday

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Length: 557 words

Body

It's a very peculiar feeling, agreeing with anything that the US ambassador to the United Nations says, but so be it.

Alejandro Wolff suggested that an official security council statement that criticised both Israel and <u>Hamas</u> would not have been helpful. We can only agree, although for somewhat different reasons than those given by Mr Wolff.

Statements from the US over the weekend have veered from the merely cringeworthy to out-and-out fantasy, with President George W Bush leading the band.

To hear the US president talk, one would imagine that <u>Hamas</u> is raining rockets on Israel, causing hundreds of deaths and thousands of casualties, leaving families homeless and children orphaned.

In fact, the exact reverse is the truth. Over the whole period of the Israeli blitzkreig on Gaza, the sum total of Israeli deaths has been four. Palestinian deaths, however, have now topped 500 with over 2,500 wounded, including many **women** and children.

Anyone who considers that to be a proportionate response stands guilty, at the very least, of a particularly sickening variety of racism.

And, with the undue emphasis placed on Palestinian rocketry, that includes Prime Minister Gordon Brown in the same bag as the chief US warmonger - as usual.

Mr Brown has distinguished himself, in his usual fashion, by parroting US gibberish to a slavish degree.

A BBC report said it all when it announced that "at least nine missiles were fired into Israel from Gaza, targeting Sderot, Netivot and other communities close to the border. There were no reports of damage or casualties."

However, it continued by reporting that "a tank shell fired in northern Gaza killed 12 people, most of them civilians, and at least five people died as shells exploded near a shopping centre and a school in Gaza City."

As Mr Brown was speaking, troops and tanks were continuing to pour across the Gazan border with Israel and the death toll was mounting by the hour.

All across the world, including inside Israel itself, tens and hundreds of thousands of normal, decent people have come out onto the streets to call for an end to Israel's sick assault on the people of Gaza.

And yet the politicians of the capitalist world continue in their drive to equate the desperate resistance of the Palestinian people with the overwhelming force of the modern Israeli war machine.

Feature - Palestine will be liberated

Mr Brown even had the temerity to call for stopping the supply of arms into the region by singling out the cross-border tunnels into Gaza.

Perhaps the Prime Minister doesn't consider US-built F16 fighters with laser guidance systems and air-to-ground missiles to be armaments when in the hands of Israelis, who have a fleet of over 100 of them. We beg to differ.

And perhaps he considers US Apache attack helicopters armed with Hellfire missiles to be a tool for peace. Again, we disagree.

And there are millions of us who will continue our resistance to this blatant collective punishment of the Palestinians for electing *Hamas* into government and will reject our nations' complicity in Israel's murderous policies.

This edition of the Morning Star is unashamedly dedicated to the struggles of the Palestinian people, to their brave battle for statehood and independence and, in common with millions of others across the world, we will not be silent until Palestine is free and its people treated with humanity and respect.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Dozens buried following attack on school

Financial Times (London, England)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT; Pg. 3

Length: 502 words

Byline: Andrew England in Jerusalem

Highlight: UN facility

Body

With explosions and gunfire echoing in the background and Israeli drones flying overhead, thousands of angry Palestinians gathered in Gaza yesterday to bury dozens of people killed by Israeli mortars that struck outside a United Nations-run school on Tuesday.

Men carried the corpses of children wrapped in white cloth in their arms, while <u>women</u> cried out. Lines of bodies were then laid out on the ground, some wrapped in the green flags of <u>Hamas</u> or the yellow flags of Fatah, the rival Palestinian faction, as people crouched to pray.

The attack on the school in Jabaliya in northern Gaza killed at least 40 people - the worst single incident since Israel launched its offensive on Gaza 12 days ago - and will fuel the intense anger Israel's action has triggered throughout the Muslim world. It has already caused Barack Obama, the US president-elect, to end his silence on the Gaza crisis.

Witnesses said four or five Israeli mortars landed in a road just outside the school, killing people in the street and others inside as shrapnel flew through the air.

As the Israeli military campaign has intensified, some 15,000 Palestinians have sought refuge at 23 UN facilities, but the attack has shattered any illusions of safe havens. Three members of one family were also killed in a UN school in Gaza City the previous night.

Israeli officials said its forces were targeting militants who were firing mortars at Israeli troops from within Jabaliya school's compound, and have accused <u>Hamas</u> of using civilians as human shields. A military spokesman said two men who fired mortars at Israeli forces were among the dead.

When asked how Israeli troops had been able to identify the men, the spokesman said the suspected militants had not been identified by soldiers but from "sources on the ground". He declined to elaborate.

Shortly after the Jabaliya attack, the Israeli military e-mailed journalists a link to a YouTube video purportedly showing militants firing mortars from a UN-run school in Gaza - but it was dated October 2007.

Christopher Gunness, at the UN Relief and Works Agency, which is responsible for the Jabaliya school, said the agency was "99.9 per cent sure there were no militants or militant activity in the facility or in the c-ompound".

Dozens buried following attack on school

The agency had called for an investigation into the incident but had so far received no "positive response" from Israeli officials, Mr Gunness said.

For many Palestinians the deaths reinforce views that there is nowhere safe in the besieged strip of land that is home to 1.5m people, and add to the belief that civilians are as much the target of Israeli attacks as *Hamas*.

"Last night was a horrible night and these images will stay in the minds of the people," a Palestinian aid worker said by telephone from Gaza. "If houses are targeted, schools are targeted, healthcare facilities are targeted, where else is there [to go]? On the streets; in the sea maybe? Everybody should throw himself in the sea, then the wishes of some of the Israeli leaders will be true."

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



EDITORIAL: The Gaza games: The lessons of last eight years

The Anniston Star (Alabama)
January 6, 2009 Tuesday

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Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Business News

Section: COMMENTARY

Length: 527 words

Byline: The Anniston Star, Ala.

Body

Jan. 6--Israel's strategy in attacking Gaza is being played out on more than the 25-mile long narrow strip of land bordering Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. As evidenced by last weekend's action, a game is being played.

It's being played in Washington, where a vacuum exists as we await one president's departure and another's inauguration.

It's being played in New York, where over the weekend the Bush administration stood with Israel and against much of the world during a United Nations Security Council meeting where a cease-fire was brushed off the table by U.S. diplomats.

It's being played as Israel takes it best shot against <u>Hamas</u> militants while it has friends in the White House whose heedless pursuit of the terrorists leaves out diplomacy, strategy and proportionality. The Israelis know that while President-elect Barack Obama is no foe. He and his advisers won't turn a blind eye to missteps.

The Israelis' nakedly cynical ploy ought to open the eyes to those in the United States who demand America stand by Israel regardless.

More than 500 in Gaza had died at the hands of Israeli forces by Sunday. Of that figure, perhaps as many as 1 in 5 were <u>women</u> and children. Gaza's 1.5 million residents are in dire shape, according to various human-rights observers.

"We have a catastrophe unfolding in Gaza for the civilian population," said John Ging, a U.N. relief agency administrator. "The people of Gaza City and the north now have no water. That comes on top of having no electricity. They're trapped, they're traumatized, they're terrorized by this situation ... The inhumanity of this situation, the lack of action to bring this to an end, is bewildering to them."

For its part, Israel says its military offense, which is nearing its second week, is a reaction against rockets fired by <u>Hamas</u> from Gaza into Israel. "Israeli forces have gone to strike at the military infrastructure that <u>Hamas</u> has established and to take control of the areas from which most of the missiles have been fired," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told his nation during a live address on television Sunday.

EDITORIAL: The Gaza games: The lessons of last eight years

National defense is essential, but so is protection of innocents, something missing when rampant bombings by Israel claim innocent victims. Also missing is a clear plan to calm the violence over the long haul.

The lessons of the past eight years are before us. Militarism alone cannot defeat terrorism. The world has seen a deficit of strategic diplomacy that seeks to ease tensions while avoiding innocent casualties. November's election of Obama was a recognition that defeating terrorists requires more than the business end of a rifle. Israel's actions 10 days ago are a nod that the old ways of shoot first, second and third might be waning.

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Load-Date: January 8, 2009



KIDS AMONG 40 DEAD AS ISRAELIS BOMB SCHOOL; Carnage as blitz goes on

Daily Record (PM) - UK

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

East Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 497 words **Byline:** Victoria Ward

Body

UP to 40 people were killed yesterday in an Israeli air strike on a UN school in Gaza.

The bloody, lifeless bodies of several children were among those pulled from the rubble of the al-Falluj school in the Jabaliya refugee camp.

Those inside had been seeking shelter from Israel's ground offensive, which has seen massive loss of life.

Medics said there was "carnage" as the school was blitzed.

People scythed down by shrapnel lay in pools of blood where they fell as two tank shells blasted the school.

The area was packed with Palestinian civilians seeking shelter in astrip of land with nowhere to hide.

The Israeli army claimed two <u>Hamas</u> militants were among the dead at the school, saying the men were members of a rocket-launching cell.

Just hours earlier, 12 members of one family were killed in an air strike on their home just outside Gaza City.

The Daya family's four-storey house was wiped out when it was hit by two Israeli missiles. The victims were seven children, aged between one and 12, three <u>women</u> and two men.

A passerby was killed in the strike and at least nine others were last night still feared to be under the rubble.

Three men also died when a second UN school, in the Shati refugee camp near Gaza City, was hit. By midafternoon, the death toll for yesterday stood at 75 - taking it to over 600 since the Israeli military action began.

Last night, Israel said it had agreed to a "humanitarian corridor" suggested by the UN to get vital supplies to the people of the Gaza Strip.

Under the plan, Israel will suspend attacks in specified areas of Gaza to allow the people to get supplies.

People on both sides of the conflict called for an end to the violence.

KIDS AMONG 40 DEAD AS ISRAELIS BOMB SCHOOL Carnage as blitz goes on

Israeli Yariv Oppenheiner, of Tel Aviv's Peace Now, said: "How can this amount of force be justified? How do they intend to end it? Israel should take more dramatic steps to avoid killing innocent civilians, even if that means less success against *Hamas*.

"The international community has to show involvement."

Palestinian Khald Abuznaid, 41, who spoke from Gaza City, said: "Surely the world can see this is not right? Our towns have been crippled, families have been wiped out."

But there was little mercy from the Israeli government yesterday.

Foreign minister Tzipi Livni rejected EU calls for a ceasefire saying Israel was aiming to "change the equation" in the area.

As Israeli troops pushed deeper into southern Gaza yesterday, the Inter national Committee of the Red Cross warned of a humanitarian crisis.

Pierre Kraehenbuhl, head of operations for Gaza, said: "After 10 days of uninterrupted operations, what we're dealing with is a full-blown humanitarian crisis."

Dr Ron Lobel, assistant director of the Barzilai Medical Centre in Ashkelon, which has been hit by several *Hamas* rockets, acknowledged Gaza's medical system had all but collapsed.

He said the medical centre - the nearest in Israel to Gaza - would help treat Palestinians when they could be brought out.

Graphic

HORROR: An injured boy is taken to hospital. Left, three ultra orthodox Jews watch smoke rise above Gaza

DEFIANT: Tzipi Livni

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



KIDS AMONG 40 DEAD AS ISRAELIS BOMB SCHOOL; CARNAGE AS BLITZ GOES ON

Daily Record

January 7, 2009, Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 493 words

Byline: By Victoria Ward

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KIDS AMONG 40 DEAD AS ISRAELIS BOMB SCHOOL CARNAGE AS BLITZ GOES ON

"The international community has to show involvement."

Palestinian Khald Abuznaid, 41, who spoke from Gaza City, said: "Look what is happening here. Surely the world can see this is not right. There is death everywhere. Our towns have been crippled, families have been wiped out. What did we do to deserve this?

"I beg Israel to stop their fight, have mercy."

But there seemed little mercy from the Israeli government yesterday.

Foreign minister Tzipi Livni rejected EU calls for a ceasefire or truce.

She said Israel was aiming to "change the equation" in the area.

As Israeli troops pushed deeper into southern Gaza yesterday, the Inter national Committee of the Red Cross warned of "a full-blown humanitarian crisis".

Pierre Kraehenbuhl, head of operations for Gaza, said: "After 10 days of uninterrupted operations in the Gaza Strip, what we're dealing with is clearly and beyond doubt in my mind a full-blown humanitarian crisis."

Dr Ron Lobel, assistant director of the Barzilai Medical Centre in Ashkelon, which has been hit by several *Hamas* rockets in the last four days, acknowledged that Gaza's medical system had all but collapsed.

He said the medical centre - the nearest in Israel to Gaza - would help treat Palestinians when they could be brought out.

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HORROR: An injured boy is taken to hospital. Left, three ultra orthodox Jews watch smoke rise above Gaza

DEFIANT: Tzipi Livni

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



UN war crimes worry Concern at Israel actions

Sunday Tasmanian (Australia)

January 11, 2009 Sunday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 17

Length: 322 words

Body

THE UN high commissioner for human rights called for an investigation of possible Israeli war crimes in Gaza as residents told more gruesome tales about Israeli troops neglecting wounded civilians and the killing of unarmed Palestinians.

High Commissioner Navi Pillay noted the case of four boys who were rescued on Wednesday by the International Committee of the Red Cross from the side of their dead mother in a dwelling 100m from an Israeli military post. The Red Cross called the incident ``shocking" and Pillay told the BBC that it ``had all the elements of what constitutes a war crime".

Witnesses interviewed by media and human-rights groups described gruesome scenes in Gaza City.

Among them: the charred remains of a toddler that had been partially devoured by animals; an infant bleeding to death in his mother's arms; and an unarmed man allegedly shot dead by an Israeli soldier.

Journalists couldn't independently verify the alleged violations of international law because Israel has blocked foreign correspondents from entering Gaza.

The Israeli military says it's investigating the reports, but it defended its soldiers.

"Israeli forces aim for military targets," said Major Avital Leibovich, the chief Israeli military spokeswoman. "We aim for *Hamas* targets. We don't just kill innocent people for no reason."

Israel and *Hamas* ignored a unanimous UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire.

The Bush administration abstained from voting on the resolution, and the Israeli Government dismissed it as ineffective and impractical, while Gaza militants launched more rockets into southern Israel, causing no serious injuries.

There was no sign that the conflict would end soon.

Instead, Israeli leaders directed the military to intensify operations in Gaza, where about 800 Palestinians -- nearly half of them **women** and children -- had been killed in the past two weeks, Palestinian medical officials said.

Load-Date: January 10, 2009



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

January 11, 2009 Sunday

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Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; Pg. B-3

Length: 759 words

Body

PAINFUL MORAL DILEMMAS ABOUND IN GAZA

Finding moral justification of violence involving innocents raises many questions, such as:

If one of your neighbor's family members started throwing knives across the fence, knives that could hurt or kill a member of your family, are you justified in blowing up your neighbor's house and killing many of their family members?

You tried talking to them, pleading with them to get the one "nut" in their family to stop. But to no avail. Are you then free and justified to blow up all the innocents in their family?

Don't we all -- individuals, families and countries -- have a responsibility to avoid causing death and injury to innocents in our efforts to punish those who perpetrate violence against us? Should Israel be exempt from this responsibility? What kind of response to terrorism is morally justified? Is a military response that will kill far more innocents than terrorists ever justified?

Roark Barron

Santa Fe

Americans just voted for hope and change. Let us again reject "regime change through war" in the case of Israel versus Gaza. *Hamas* is a terrorist organization. But, the response of the Israeli government, to invade and bomb civilians to "bring peace" to Israeli citizens, is a failed strategy; new terrorists are born with the deaths of the children, *women* and men who are filling the hospitals in Gaza.

Israel is refusing to allow Western journalists in Gaza to report the devastation and horror. As the bombs rain down on the families in Gaza living in fear and terror, we must call for an immediate cease fire.

Why not try to explore the possibility of peace and justice instead of warmongering and bloodletting?

Is it so unrealistic to believe in change? Think Rawanda reconciliation, think Berlin Wall coming down, think an African American in the White House

Sign me another American Jewish human being believing in change.

Jasmine Stewart

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Santa Fe

The New Mexican's Jan. 7 front page shows House Speaker Nancy Pelosi at the swearing in at the nation's capitol. She is surrounded by two dozen children whose parents are congressional leaders. On the same day of the swearing in, the New York Times pictured three dead Palestinian babies laid out on the pavement and the father shrieking in grief.

We treasure all babies. The U.S. Congress and administration need to call for a comprehensive cease fire between Israel and Gaza and re-engage in diplomatic efforts. For the sake of all of our children.

Phoebe Girard

Santa Fe

In his book, War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning, Christopher Hedges writes: "The conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians has left each side embracing death. They each believe that they are the only real victims."

During the latest barrage of Israeli air attacks, the civilian population in Gaza is the pawn in this deadly game of titfor-tat. With forthcoming Israeli elections and the inauguration of Barack Obama fast approaching, this massive show of Israeli firepower is a political and tactical move that predictably will create more suicide bombers in the playing out of this perverse dance of death.

One can only hope that our new president will be a real friend to the peace process by being an even-handed intermediary who seeks to negotiate a just and lasting peace, and then puts U.S. weight and resurgent prestige behind the brokered plan's implementation.

Barbara Allen Kenney

Santa Fe

The U.S.-supported Israeli blockade and murder of innocent Palestinians in Gaza has escalated to an unacceptable level of criminal human-rights violations. The people of Gaza have run out of medicine and drugs to save lives and treat the wounded. There is no electricity for hospitals, and no food or clean water. Even though the Israeli military has told them to leave, they are blocked in with nowhere to go. Over 700 civilians have been killed, including children and two aids workers trying to bring food in.

Our government sends \$15 million every day to Israel, making us complicit with the military attacks on the people of Gaza. The Israeli military says they are targeting only <u>Hamas</u>, but innocent children are being killed where the <u>Hamas</u> is hiding out. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that <u>Hamas</u> is holding these helpless people of Gaza hostage. This is certainly true, but apparently the Israeli military considers these unfortunate victims as scapegoats, i.e. collateral damage. I demand that our government end all funding to Israel unless there is a ceasefire held long enough to get the innocent people of Gaza to safe havens.

Sharlene White

Santa Fe

Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



We're rooned and it's all that South African's fault

The Australian
January 9, 2009 Friday
1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 792 words

Byline: Matthew Norman

Body

Matthew Norman, in Britain's The Independent, gets the shakes about Australia's forthcoming Ashes cricket tour

SO the grizzled observer will not cry out for the smelling salts on discovering the Test squad was gripped by internecine chaos just as Australia, so weakened by the loss of Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne, looked nicely placed to be beaten in this [northern] summer's Ashes series.

One admires the English cricket board's thoughtfulness in giving those Aussies a morale-boosting chuckle within days of them losing a home series to [recent England captain] Kevin Pietersen's native South Africa. Of course one does. Charity to Her Majesty's former colonies and dominions across the seas must be cherished. What we cannot admire is the choice of Pietersen as captain in the first place, a decision of such translucent foolishness that the only shock about his departure is that it took so long.

Much the finest England captain of my lifetime was Mike Brearley, who was nothing more than a solid opener. Yet as captain he was more valuable than any number of more lavishly gifted players because he was such an astute reader of the game and the masterly motivator who replaced Ian Botham as captain and instantly coaxed from him feats of such majesty that the 1981 series is known simply as Botham's Ashes.

We could do with Brearley in the dressing room now in his present role as a psychiatrist, because there's a head that is in urgent need of shrinking. Pietersen is a magnificent middle-order cavalier in the Botham mould, and so we must tolerate the cocktail of conceit and petulance that defines him. Touch wood he continues serving his adoptive land with the murderous, hyper-confident batting that allowed him to make his maiden Test 100 under infinite pressure to secure the 2005 Ashes at The Oval.

The Times goes further, saying England is better off without Pietersen:

AND so it is that the England cricket team, with a tour of the West Indies imminent and the Ashes just six months away, find themselves without either coach or captain. The departure of both Kevin Pietersen and Peter Moores was the only possible outcome once it became clear that relations had broken down irretrievably.

The real culprits, however, are those in the [board] who made both appointments. This sorry state of affairs was eminently predictable and, indeed, the cricket correspondent of this newspaper wrote of Pietersen's appointment in August 2008 that it would all end in tears, the only open question was when. It has to be said that Pietersen could start a fight in an empty room. He left South Africa in protest at the quota system for the national team after falling

We're rooned and it's all that South African's fault

out with the hierarchy there. He left Nottinghamshire for Hampshire after an unimpressed teammate emptied the contents of his kit bag over the dressing room balcony.

Another episode in Melanie Phillips's battle with the BBC, as blogged on The Spectator's website:

LAST night's BBC TV News at Ten featured a highly partisan report about Gaza by Jeremy Bowen. Making no mention of the direct hit yesterday by a <u>Hamas</u> rocket on a kindergarten in Ashdod (which was empty for fear of precisely such an occurrence), Bowen concentrated heavily on the growing civilian casualty toll among Palestinians, making no acknowledgement of any <u>Hamas</u> operatives among these figures.

The piece de resistance of this item was a report from Gaza's Shifa hospital by a Gazan BBC producer, Rushdi Abu Alouf. He claimed that hundreds of <u>women</u> and children had been brought to the hospital for medical treatment. Undoubtedly there are many casualties -- tragically, including children -- and the hospital is obviously under pressure.

This (in The Jerusalem Post), though, may help explain some of that pressure: ``<u>Hamas</u> has set up an independent hospital in the Gaza Strip to treat its operatives wounded in fighting with the [Israel Defense Forces] and, according to Israeli estimates, it is pilfering a significant portion of the medicine allowed into the strip."

But the BBC did not tell its viewers the important fact that every journalist and media utterance coming out of Gaza is controlled by *Hamas*. In other words, you can't believe a thing that anyone there tells you.

Mark Latham in The Australian Financial Review offers more analysis of the ALP:

THE [Evan] Thornley experiment was always likely to fail. The dynamism and freedom of creativity he experienced in Silicon Valley are antipathetic to the methods of the party machine. Labor's factions like their members to be predictable and obedient, parliamentarians who can be easily put on autopilot.

Thornley was out of place in the Byzantine world of Victorian politics, with its habitual cross-dealing and preponderance of time-servers and union log-rollers.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



Covering Mideast protests fairly

The Toronto Star

January 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: LETTER; Pg. AA05

Length: 796 words

Body

Pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli

marchers face off, Jan. 4

The photos chosen to accompany your article about the protest on Saturday against Israeli aggression in Gaza were very misleading and not representative at all of the people who attended the rally.

I was proud to be a westerner there among thousands of others, including many Jewish groups such as "Not in our Name," that protested in Toronto against these Israeli war crimes. The Star chose to print two photos that showed Muslim men with their heads wrapped in Palestinian scarfs and a Muslim <u>women</u> in a burka. Why did you choose images that represent what most people associate with militants in the occupied territories?

Alex Bartlett, Toronto

Although I vigorously defend the right of the citizens of Canada to protest peacefully the events of the world they deem unacceptable, I am appalled at the picture of Canadians burning other nations' flags. We don't do that here; it is an empty and cheapening gesture that neutralizes the participants' integrity and erodes the credibility of the protest. We are Canadian first, and Palestinian, British, Israeli or whatever second. People ought to be reminded why they came to this wonderful country in the first place.

Andrew Dobell, Oakville

Your story quotes Meir Weinstein, the head of the Canadian chapter of the Jewish Defence League (JDL), but fails to give any background information on Mr. Weinstein or his group. The JDL is a fringe extremist group that was founded by the late Israeli racialist Rabbi Meir Kahane. Kahane was also the founder of the Israeli political party Kach, which was deemed racist and banned from the Israeli Knesset in 1986. The Kach movement was outlawed completely in Israel in 1994 after one of its members, Baruch Goldstein, massacred Palestinian worshippers killing 29 and injuring 125. At the time, JDL head Meir Weinstein refused to condemn Goldstein's actions, whilst many other Kahanists openly supported it.

Rather than providing accurate coverage of the JDL, you have presented them as a legitimate group, and portrayed their counter-protest as though it was somehow reflective of an intense divide in Canadians views of the conflict rather than the actions of a fringe racist group. As a Canadian Jew I find both the JDL activity and the legitimization of the JDL in the Star extremely concerning.

David Mandelzys, Toronto

Covering Mideast protests fairly

So what exactly constitutes a massacre? Israel says that there is no massacre in Gaza. Yet in 1989, when 14 **women** died at the hands of a lone gunman at Ecole Polytechnic in Montreal, it was described by everyone as the Montreal Massacre.

In spring 2002, Israeli tanks rolled into the impoverished Palestinian Jenin refugee camp, killing more than 52 civilians and wounding hundreds. And in summer 2006s, unprovoked, Israel bombed and killed more than 1,000 people in Lebanon. Neither was considered a massacre.

And of course in the last week, the Israeli Defense Forces killed but did not massacre 430 Palestinians by dropping bombs from Israeli F-16 fighter jets and Apache helicopters. And now with the land invasion, there will be many more deaths - but no massacres.

Judy Haiven, Halifax

In tolerating the Israeli attacks on Gaza, Lawrence Cannon, Canada's foreign affairs minister, cites Israel's right to defend itself. So why do Christian and Muslim Palestinians not have a right to defend their historical homes, cities, villages and lands from Israeli incursion?

It is glaringly ironic that the supposedly secular West condemns Islamic fundamentalism while condoning - indeed financing - the "reclamation" of biblical Israel, and the displacement of indigenous Palestinians, based on theological claims. A peaceful and lasting resolution is impossible without an honest, even-handed approach that values Palestinian as well as Israeli claims. This is something that the West has never done.

Richard Fung, Toronto

Protesters accusing Israel of "war crimes" are getting it backwards.

<u>Hamas</u> deliberately fires from heavily populated areas, and aims rockets at population centres, trying to cause as many civilian casualties as possible. In contrast, Israel goes to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties, for example by using advance "sound bombs" or phone calls to warn people away in advance of an air strike.

Israeli air strikes could put an immediate end to <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks from Gaza if Israel were not taking so much care to avoid civilian casualties. Israel's ground offensive will inevitably cause many Israeli casualties in order to minimize Palestinian civilian deaths.

As for low Israeli casualties so far, it is not for lack of <u>Hamas</u>' intentions and efforts. Both <u>Hamas</u> and its Iranian sponsor are clear about their intention to obliterate all Israeli presence from the region.

Michael Orr, Toronto

Graphic

Colin McConnell toronto star Demonstrators on both sides of Mideast conflict gathered in Toronto Saturday as Israel commenced ground war.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



<u>Democracy and war; Maybe someday Israel will get credit for freedoms it</u> grants and that terrorists do not.

Globes [online] - Israel's Business Arena January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 807 words **Byline:** Lilac Sigan

Body

The sad thing about the growing trend called global terror is the cracks that it found in the timeworn concept called democracy, the way it gets into those cracks with impeccable precision, and the way it succeeds time and again in making a mockery of the concept.

Unpleasant as it may be, the fact that we are a democracy simply keeps working against us in our just attempt to fit in somehow here in the Middle East.

First of all, we are committed to the rules of the United Nations and its decisions, and to the Geneva Convention. And if we miss on any areas related to those pacts? We are immediately condemned by what seems like every country and journalist on the planet.

In contrast, <u>Hamas</u> has been firing, nearly daily, for years, aiming directly and intentionally into our citizen population, as far as it can, and everyone just lets it go, because <u>Hamas</u> is a terror organization. At the end of last week, Katyhusha rockets were fired from South Lebanon, with the clear intention of harming Israeli <u>women</u> and children, and it hit a home for the elderly in Israel. But these actions remain uncriticized, because noone expects anything from <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah noone is threatening sanctions, and, most importantly, the foreign press is silent.

Besides humanitarian concerns that bind our hands, there are other disadvantages to the old and weary concept called democracy. Why? Because we have a free press. Everyone can say anything, and everyone takes full advantage of that.

It is reflected in the field day that our local media industry is having. Every military move is analyzed by at least 300 sophisticated and critical analysts, who succeed in withering our leadership and self-confidence, and in dividing and polarizing the nation. And in the slim chance they miss that opportunity, then 200 other analysts can be found to explain how the communications industry has been recruited by the government, and that it is truly disgusting and anti-democratic.

And what about our leaders? Here, too, democracy works against us. Instead of one person speaking for everyone, with one clear voice that represents the State of Israel, everyone takes full advantage of their freedom of expression, and speaks his or her mind, out of personal or political interest, and what comes out is one big cacophony, a cacophony that is misunderstood, inexplicable, unclear, and above all - confusing and contradictory.

Democracy and war Maybe someday Israel will get credit for freedoms it grants and that terrorists do not.

You have to admit that in this area the Palestinian Authority has a huge advantage over us: Who there even thinks to allow someone to voice his opinion? For some reason, noone seems to be bothered by that, so understandably noone rails against it. The only criticism heard is, of course, of democracy.

The story of the foreign press is the strangest. There is a war, and Israel, for very clear reasons, restricts foreign reporters from the battlefield. So what happens? The world media fumes more than ever at us. Not only that our Supreme Court eventually lets the foreign media in, because, after all, we are a democracy - and what happens? Do we see pictures of *Hamas* heads hiding behind children in hospitals, or setting up military camps in schools? No. The foreign media seeks out pictures of destruction in order to point a scathingly accusatory finger at Israel, and not at those people who turned innocent civilians into human shields in the first place.

Would they fume so much at us if we were unethical, conscience-less terrorists? Probably not. The foreign media would be scared to open its mouth, or at best, would not expect anything from us, and therefore not criticize. Exactly like the poor residents of Gaza. Who should they blame? A restrained, humane, Israel, or ruthless terror organizations?

Obviously it doesn't matter what happens, Israel will never be as scary and as threatening as terrorists who have neither morals nor conscience. Therefore, the foreign media is correct in that sense. Its journalistic courage manifests itself as attacks on those who will not attack back. Between you and me, it's a lot easier that way.

In short, it appears that as we are a democracy, we have two good options. The first is to adopt terrorism, and sooner rather than later, so that we can enjoy all the advantages that this developing concept brings when lined up against anachronistic rules of the game, that no longer hold true in the new global situation.

The second option, perhaps less advisable, but perhaps more realistic, is to try to emphasize once in a while this troubling fact that we are the only democracy in the Middle East, aiming to somehow survive.

Hey, who knows maybe sometime, in the distant future, even the foreign media will somehow give us some credit.

Published by Globes [online], Israel business news - www.globes-online.com - on January 13, 2009

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Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Column: Unconditional support of Israel must change

University Wire

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 Daily Bruin via U-Wire

Length: 815 words

Byline: By Kia Makarechi, Daily Bruin; SOURCE: UCLA

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

To many of us Westerners, the Middle East seems to be a perpetually doomed, inevitably warring place.

The sad truth is there may never be peace in Israel. The Middle East is a region in the grips of terror. But why, then, does Israel presume that the best way to silence terrorism is to close checkpoints and rain bombs on a territory they have under lock and key?

There are two simple answers. The first is that Israel is a Jewish nation surrounded by a swarm of unfriendly Muslim neighbors and thus stands alone in the region. It feels as though it must demonstrate its strength lest bordering nations band together and attack it (except for the small fact that Israel has nuclear capability, essentially alone in this capacity).

The second is even simpler: Israel bombs Gaza into oblivion because it can.

It can and does, with the support of the United States. So while it is appropriate to criticize Israel's military policy, there is little American citizens have to say about their actions. Instead, it is our duty to appeal to our own leadership.

President George W. Bush's response to the increasingly disproportionate war was as such: "By spending its resources on rocket launchers instead of roads and schools, <u>Hamas</u> has demonstrated that it has no intention of serving the Palestinian people." Perhaps the president does not realize that building schools is not a viable option when one of the world's most skilled and aggressive armies is persistently casting an ominous shadow on a territory corralled by Israeli checkpoints.

A reevaluation of America's unequivocal support of Israel is long overdue. In a supposedly more enlightened age than the decades that bore witness to world wars, there is no room for blank-check diplomacy.

More specifically, it is time for America to consider the position of nearly every other government in the world: the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a two-sided mess.

Consider the following from the Times in England: "Europeans and Arabs have simply not been able to believe at times the virtually unyielding pro-Israel line that the US has taken since 2001, whether over Jewish settlements, Ariel Sharon's security fence, the war with Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006 or the present fighting with <u>Hamas</u>, or on any number of lesser but pointed issues."

Column: Unconditional support of Israel must change

Unfortunately, America appears to have termed its "War on Terror" as what is really a "War on Pan-Arab/Muslim Terror." Had the bombs dropped on Gaza fallen from the planes of Islamic fundamentalists or Iranians instead of IDF ones, these acts would have been unequivocally condemned as terrorism.

This sort of two-faced diplomacy is not only careless, it is dangerous. Israel's flagrant, senseless bombardment and invasion of Gaza (an area slightly larger than twice the size of Washington, D.C.) has killed over 500 Palestinians, many of whom were <u>women</u> and children. It is impossible to think of an area riper with terrorist recruiting opportunities than the rubble of Gaza.

In the West, save for Sept. 11, we have little experience with having our loved ones murdered by foreigners and foreign regimes (though we commit the most heinous of crimes against fellow Americans regularly). The hate that is brewing in Gaza is the same hate that led Americans to kill Sikhs and commit hate crimes in the time immediately following the 2001 attacks. (Some might argue that it is the same hate that led to American support for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.)

None of this is justification for the rockets <u>Hamas</u> senselessly fires into Israel. There is no room for condoning violence or aggression of any kind, but the Obama administration must consider understanding it. When the death of four Israelis is answered by the decimation of an entire region, when the kidnapping of two soldiers in Lebanon is countered by bombings in civilian areas, there arises the highest of tides of hate - and terrorism is nothing if not an outlet for hate.

By not engaging <u>Hamas</u> or the Palestinian people in any substantive discussion and instead demanding that they simply take the brutalization Israel has wrought on their kin, America is not only furthering the problem - it is making itself complicit in the deaths of nearly 600 civilians.

America must instead work with both sides to stop aggression and make both sides realize that violence only breeds violence.

We are learning this lesson in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Israeli people are as well: More than 40 rockets were launched into Israel on Monday. Bomb people, and they will bomb back. If they do not have bombs or an organized army, they will throw stones and fire rockets.

Sadly, many agree that it is doubtful that the president-elect will even reevaluate this undying allegiance, especially with such an outspoken supporter of Israel as his secretary of state. For the sake of the Israeli and Palestinian people, let's hope we're wrong.

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Load-Date: January 8, 2009



How many more?

The Scotsman

January 7, 2009, Wednesday

2 Edition

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Section: Pg. 1

Length: 1055 words

Byline: Brian Ferguson

Body

SHE was one of the lucky ones. Bloodied and shocked but still alive, the girl was carried into a Gaza hospital yesterday, following an Israeli bombardment that left at least 40 civilians dead after a United Nations-run school was hit by mortar shells.

There was international outrage over the attack on the school, where hundreds had sought safety. Many <u>women</u> and children were reported to be among the dead after shells struck outside the Fakhura school in the Jabaliya refugee camp - leading to renewed demands for an end to the bloodshed.

The Israeli army said two <u>Hamas</u> militants were among the dead and accused the group of using civilians as human shields.

Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, warned that the Middle East was facing its "darkest moment yet", while Barack Obama, the United States president-elect, said he was "deeply concerned" about civilian casualties in Gaza.

United Nations officials pleaded with world leaders to "get their act together" to end the carnage, while the International Committee of the Red Cross warned of a "full-blown humanitarian crisis".

In the school attack, three artillery shells landed at the perimeter of the building where many Palestinians had taken refuge. As well as the dead, 55 people were injured.

The explosions - which resulted in shrapnel being sprayed over people inside and outside the building - marked the second Israeli attack on a UN-run school. Earlier, at least three Palestinians were killed when a school was hit in the Shati refugee camp.

Outside the Fakhura school, bodies could be seen scattered on the ground amid pools of blood, while torn shoes and clothes littered the scene. A donkey also lay in its own blood.

The attack occurred in the middle of the afternoon, when many people in the densely populated Jabaliya camp were out and about. Many of the refugees apparently had stepped outside the shelter to get some air, thinking the area around a school would be safe.

Fares Ghanem, an official at Kamal Radwan Hospital, said: "I saw a lot of <u>women</u> and children wheeled in. A lot of the wounded were missing limbs and a lot of the dead were in pieces."

How many more?

Majed Hamdan, a news photographer, said he reached the scene shortly after the attacks, and that many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said. "In the mortuary, most appeared to be children. In the hospital, there was not enough space for the wounded."

John Ging, the top UN official in Gaza, said: "There's nowhere safe in Gaza. Everyone here is terrorised and traumatised.

"I am appealing to political leaders here and in the region and the world to get their act together and stop this. They are responsible for these deaths."

In a statement, the Israeli army said an initial investigation had found that "mortar shells were fired from within the school at IDF [Israeli Defence Force] soldiers. The force responded with mortars at the source of fire. The <u>Hamas</u> cynically uses civilians as human shields".

However, hospital officials insisted they had not seen any gunmen among the casualties.

It was the deadliest attack since Israel sent ground forces into Gaza last weekend. The assault has left nearly 600 Palestinians dead.

The rising death toll has drawn international condemnation and raised concerns of a looming humanitarian disaster in Gaza, which is home to 1.5 million people. Many Gazans are without electricity or running water, thousands have been displaced from their homes and food supplies are running thin.

"This is not a crisis - it's a disaster," said Munzir Shiblak, an official with Gaza's water utility. "We are not even able to respond to the cry of the people."

Pierre Kraehenbuehl, head of operations at the International Red Cross, warned that the few remaining power supplies could collapse at any moment.

A senior UN official in Gaza said 350 people had been sheltering at the school in Jabaliya and the UN regularly gave the Israeli army exact geographical co-ordinates to try to keep them safe from attack.

UN staff estimate that 15,000 people have fled to 23 of its schools that have been turned into makeshift refuges.

The school deaths in Gaza, home to 1.5 million people, took the number of Palestinian civilians killed yesterday alone to 77, according to medical officials.

Israel says it will not stop the assault until its southern towns are freed from the threat of Palestinian rocket fire and it receives international guarantees that <u>Hamas</u>, which is backed by Iran and Syria, will not restock its weapons stockpile.

It blames *Hamas* for the civilian casualties, saying the group intentionally seeks cover in crowded residential areas.

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defence minister, said: "The battle is bitter but unavoidable. We set out on this operation in order to deal <u>Hamas</u> a heavy blow and to alter living conditions in the south of the country and to block smuggling into the Gaza Strip."

The growing number of civilian casualties could prove to be a turning point in Israel's "Operation Cast Lead", which was launched on 27 December.

The killing of 28 unarmed Lebanese during Israeli bombing of the village of Qana in the 2006 Lebanon war drained foreign support for its campaign against Hezbollah guerrillas. Israel said it had not known civilians were in the area.

Mr Brown last night expressed the hope that a deal could be struck for an immediate ceasefire.

How many more?

The Prime Minister said the situation was a "humanitarian crisis", and went on: "This is the darkest moment yet for the Middle East and it affects the whole of the world. It's because of that we must get humanitarian aid that we are promising in."

Mr Brown said he had been discussing the situation with fellow world leaders, including those from Egypt and Turkey, and he had put forward proposals for making progress. "I am hopeful the basis on which an immediate ceasefire can take place can be found," he said.

He stressed that any deal would have to solve the issue of weapons being smuggled into the Gaza Strip through tunnels, as well as ensuring security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

The US state department said it wanted an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, but officials stressed they would not budge from their stance that it must be durable, sustainable and indefinite.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



chatroom

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

B - Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 28

Length: 1011 words

Body

TO the bodyboarder who helped my son who was in trouble at North Burleigh beach last Sunday around 6pm, thank you from the

bottom of my heart. - KK

THANK you Oz! I understand now. We label them terrorists - the 3000 Palestinians - & killing them is an acceptable solution. Reminds me of the Nazis. The magic word was Jews. Question: do we see the truth through the prism of our own individual bias? - Blonde

WENT 2 Miami Park on Sat 4 bbq. 2bbqs not working. Sent to another bbq only to be told it was his bbq and to remove ourselves from his area. Some1 should tell the idiot if u dont want 2 share our free parks and bbq to go back home. We did walk away because u are trouble. - Gaza

WELL done, Ricky Ponting. So much 4 the critics, what have u got 2 say now? Keep it up, Ricky. - Eil

TO the hoon who lost his sump on the traffic island near Seagulls, ha ha ha ha. - Haggar

HEY, Jez. It's not the hand of God that protects Israel, it's the zillions of US taxpayers' money and weapons. Without them, they are nothing. - Trev

THANK you to the lovely person that stole my bike from the Pines between Wed 7/1 and Friday 9/1. If anyone sees anyone riding a 1-of-a-kind, old white thin-framed bike with high blue handles, can you txt in to let me know or better yet get the bike back for me? Can't wait. Have to walk for half an hour before my hour bus trip to work now. - Jen

TO Bear, any dog can be dangerous, it depends on how it gets treated by its owners. Saying certain breeds should be banned is doggist and narrowminded. - Doglover

TO Jez at Cararra. The problem with all this war is the false idea of the existence of some kind of god. If they realised we all have to live life now and not worry about after life, we would all be better off. Looks silly to normal people to hurt and maim.

AS usual everyone is blaming the Jews. What would we do if Indonesia started lobbing bombs at us? - Caz

TOO much doom and gloom in Chatroom. Get rid of it.

chatroom

TO Super Human & E, with 4 people on earth, didn't Adam die from eating the apple & Cain killed Abel, so how did the world get populated? Isn't that incest? Abel had children with Eve? - Element

CAIN must have either married his sister or a **female** ape. - Wol

REFER back to a news story in 95 or 96 (can't remember what channel), the news crew were taken out off Cape Moreton and shown on the sounder where the Centaur lay. As a deckhand at the time we (the east coast prawn fishing fleet) all knew it was there, some having trawled up dinner plates from the ship. Its not far from the WWII ammunition dump. - Scuba

I THINK i know the Israeli cause, that is 2 b left alone, but can someone tell me what the Palestinian cause is? To eradicate the Israelis? - SJ

WHO cares about religious wars? *Hamas*, Israel, Iraq, Afganistan, who cares? Certainly not this Aussie duck. Let them go for it until there is nothing left but peace.

HOW good was the surf at the Alley on sunday the 11th, with the surf around 4 feet all you kooks on your mals were nowhere to be seen. - The Alley Magician

TO GB, you tell me 2 get some common sense yet u want council 2 fence lakes and rivers. If u cant swim stay at home and sook.

- Mr Rea

POMS, who needs em, especially those Chelsea supporters? - Hawkman

WB, i have done my research, in fact i was still goin 2 church last year. It all makes no sense, all the church wants is my money. Noah's ark, do u know how many types of animals, insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians and dinosaurs there are and how much food and water they need and the ark was not big enuf. Dont 4get the 2 new species they find in east asia every week and i think everything would b inbred. I can go on all day about the ark and whats wrong with it and dont get me started on other Bible stories. - Superhuman

TO all the shark experts and big tough trawlermen, a bit of shark carnage and no mention of old mate the hammerhead. They were probably stuck in your nets with all the bycatch. - David O

STEVE, Bilambil, European zionist Jews agitated for over 50 years for a `homeland' and then stole land from the Palestinians who they proceeded to brutally suppress for 60 years. - Mel

2009, the year other people discover evolution. It's about time. There's never been any unrest because of cavemen has there? Ha ha, think about it. - Knottdogg

ALL u people crapn on about <u>Hamas</u> & Israel, u losers, start protesting about important stuff like the broadwater needs dredgn n immigrants catching n eatin undersize fish & crabs & the supermarkets rippn the local Aussie farmers off. Cmon, people, start aimn up! - Mudcrab Mute, Hope Island

WHY is everyone putting crap on the Jews? Just like world war 2 again. Blaming the Jews for everything. Down with

Hamas! - Manny

TO all u people going on about whether God's real or not, if u were bought up - I mean brainwashed - u would believe 2 kids should be brought up with no religion until 18 and then make up own mind. They are all hypocrites. Israel is a bigger country and has more guns so why pick a fight with em? I know i wouldnt go picking a fight with a bloke who is 6ft 5ins and built like a brick outhouse. No-brainer. - BJ, Nerang

LONG live *Hamas* and all its freedom fighters. - Stirrer

chatroom

HEY, Mark, u reckon only 18 Israelis have died in the last 8 years by <u>Hamas</u>. What about the hundreds of Israelis killed by Palestine's human bombers in crowded buses and shopping centres. Read The Bulletin more often and learn the real truth u naive idiot. - Ramrod

DK, are you trying to be funny? Cos you are not mate. Soft Diggers eh? You wouldnt get through the first week at Kapooka. Do you know where that is? Thought not. - Lewy

RE Superhuman. You can't. Soon, they will get help to set up their own borders. In the end you will be fighting to live on the council strip.

TOTALLY agree with lomax. i wonder when the oz cricket team will wear blue 2 support prostate cancer. - Cowboy up

ANY country that harms or kills innocent <u>women</u> and children definitely does not have God's backing. It's a shame they dont

find that out until afterlife. - SOS

TOADKILL, just spray dettol on them and they're gone. - Jag

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

University Wire

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reveille via U-Wire

Length: 1053 words

Byline: By Xerxes A. Wilson, The Daily Reveille; SOURCE: LSU

Dateline: BATON ROUGE, La.

Body

Fady Hussein feels helpless as he watches televised reports of bombs blanketing the region where he spent his childhood.

For more than two weeks, Hussein has somberly followed the unfolding hostility. Day after day, he anxiously refreshes his Internet browser hoping to read about a cease-fire, but he more realistically anticipates far worse.

"Sometimes you feel like Israel doesn't have to care about anybody," said Hussein, a Louisiana State University graduate student and Gaza native. "Sometimes you feel like they just want to ruin your life. Gaza is very crowded. If you're bombarded by tanks, it's nothing but killing innocent people."

Billowing smoke from war-torn structures fills the Gaza skies where Hussein's family and home are deep in the middle of a dangerous conflict. Hussein's cousin was killed and his brother was injured during Israel's daily attacks on Gaza.

The escalation of violence began Dec. 27 when Israeli forces launched an air assault on the Gaza Strip to end rocket attacks the Gaza leadership group <u>Hamas</u> made against Israel. The current conflict has taken the lives of 13 Israelis, three of whom were civilians.

The death toll on the Palestinian side has reached an estimated 970, half of which are <u>women</u> and children. There have also been an estimated 4,300 injured as Israeli forces continue airstrikes and press further into the Israeli occupied Gaza strip.

A week ago, Hussein's cousin, Ahmed Hussein, attempted to rescue survivors inside a building recently hit by Israeli rockets. Soon after, Israeli F-16s pummeled the building, this time destroying the entire structure and killing Ahmed.

"On Al Jazeera I saw pictures of an injured guy, and I was like, 'Who is this guy? Who is this guy?'" Hussein said. "I didn't know my own brother. His face had been swollen from the strike."Â

Fady Hussein then called his mother, who told him of their family's loss. Nedal Hussein was injured by a rocket and was transferred to Egypt for surgery.

Stories like Hussein's are common throughout Gaza as the current conflict enters its 19th day. "I am very worried," Hussein said. "Thirty percent of Gaza has been destroyed so far."

Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

The war in Gaza is a controversial topic among students and professors, because they disagree over who is to blame for this eruption of violence.

Krista Allen, history junior and representative of the Tigers for Israel group, blames the <u>Hamas</u> rockets for terrorizing and provoking defensive measures from Israel. "When you are being fired on at your population centers, you have the right to defend yourself from what is happening," Allen said.

Mark Gasiorowski, political science and international studies professor, said Israel has created a humanitarian situation in Gaza, leading to rockets being fired from Gaza.

During the last few months, Israel has restricted humanitarian support and supplies from entering Gaza, letting only about 20 percent of supplies into the region. About half of Gaza's population is eating only one meal daily because of these restrictions. This refusal to lift the blockade on goods and trade in and out of Gaza seems to be the reason for *Hamas* rocket attacks, Gasiorowski said.

Edward Shihadeh, sociology professor, blames Israel for "one of the most deplorable stories of colonialism remaining today" and provoking the attacks. "I've been to Gaza once," Shihadeh said. "It's a hell hole. It is one of the most crowded places on earth, and it is one of the poorest places on earth. For the people there, it is a prison."

Israel controls everything and everyone going in and out of Gaza because Israel has blockaded every border with Gaza, Shihadeh said. "Imagine if someone hemmed the United States in and started starving us," Shihadeh said. "We would be launching missiles, too. If you were living there, you would be doing the same damn thing."

Barry Weinstein, B'nai Israel Synagogue Rabbi emeritus and former university professor, said any blockade on Gaza is not the reason for the conflict, claiming Israel has sent humanitarian aid into the region. The reason rockets are falling is because *Hamas* denies Israel the right to exist, Weinstein said. The cease-fire will happen when rockets stop falling on Israel, and there is no way Israel can allow its population to be subject to these attacks, he said.

Hussein feels this escalation in violence is a harsh reaction and the wrong solution to the conflict.

"If you curse me, can I kill you?" Hussein asked. "No, because it has to be proportionate. They [Israel] cannot stop the rockets. *Hamas* stopping the rockets and Israel stopping the blockade Â-- that is the solution."

Gaza's dense population creates a lethal situation for Hussein's family and Gaza civilians during this Israeli offensive, Hussein said. There are more than 1.5 million people living in Gaza's 140 square miles, according to the CIA. An average household has 15 to 20 people, so any rocket fired or bomb dropped by Israel will kill people, Hussein said.

About 15 people live in two rooms at Hussein's home in Gaza with no other place to take refuge from the violence.

"The whole neighborhood got threatened that the airforce will hit the area," Hussein said. "At the same time, you have no place to go. Any target that moves, they throw rockets at it. You can't drive a car. You can't go to your neighbors. You can't do anything ... Now my family starts to run out of many things."

University students are continents removed from the conflict but are still affected by this continuing turmoil in the Middle East. America spends billions of dollars in the Middle East, and oil prices are higher now than when the Middle East is calm, Gasiorowski said.

Shihadeh said the average American should care more about the conflict because they are financing it. "We pour billions of dollars into Israel, arming it to the teeth to keep this imperfect system going," Shihadeh said. "We should create a system where we don't have to prop it up with billions of dollars in weapons every year for the last six decades."

Hussein is set to graduate in May, but he has no place to go after. He can't return home because he will not be let in.

Louisiana State U. student loses family to fighting in Gaza

"Everything in Gaza is destroyed," Hussein said. "My passport expired. And to make a new one you have to go the Interior Ministry, and it is not anymore."

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Load-Date: January 14, 2009



Wherever I go, I hear the same tired Middle East comparisons; Robert Fisk's World

The Independent (London)
January 10, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. 44

Length: 968 words **Byline:** Robert Fisk

Body

It all depends where you live. That was the geography of Israel's propaganda, designed to demonstrate that we softies - we little baby-coddling liberals living in our secure Western homes - don't realise the horror of 12 (now 20) Israeli deaths in 10 years and thousands of rockets and the unimaginable trauma and stress of living near Gaza. Forget the 600 Palestinian dead; travelling on both sides of the Atlantic these past couple of weeks has been an instructive - not to say weirdly repetitive - experience.

Here's how it goes. I was in Toronto when I opened the right-wing National Post and found Lorne Gunter trying to explain to readers what it felt like to come under Palestinian rocket attack. "Suppose you lived in the Toronto suburb of Don Mills," writes Gunter, "and people from the suburb of Scarborough - about 10 kilometres away - were firing as many as 100 rockets a day into your yard, your kid's school, the strip mall down the street and your dentist's office..."

Getting the message? It just so happens, of course, that the people of Scarborough are underprivileged, often new immigrants - many from Afghanistan - while the people of Don Mills are largely middle class with a fair number of Muslims. Nothing like digging a knife into Canada's multicultural society to show how Israel is all too justified in smashing back at the Palestinians.

Now a trip down Montreal way and a glance at the French-language newspaper La Presse two days later. And sure enough, there's an article signed by 16 pro-Israeli writers, economists and academics who are trying to explain what it feels like to come under Palestinian rocket attack. "Imagine for a moment that the children of Longueuil live day and night in terror, that businesses, shops, hospitals, schools are the targets of terrorists located in Brossard." Longueuil, it should be added, is a community of blacks and Muslim immigrants, Afghans, Iranians. But who are the "terrorists" in Brossard?

Two days later and I am in Dublin. I open The Irish Times to find a letter from the local Israeli ambassador, trying to explain to the people of the Irish Republic what it feels like to come under Palestinian rocket attack. Know what's coming? Of course you do. "What would you do," Zion Evrony asks readers, "if Dublin were subjected to a

bombardment of 8,000 rockets and mortars..." And so it goes on and on and on. Needless to say, I'm waiting for the same writers to ask how we'd feel if we lived in Don Mills or Brossard or Dublin and came under sustained attack from supersonic aircraft and Merkava tanks and thousands of troops whose shells and bombs tore 40 <u>women</u> and children to pieces outside a school, shredded whole families in their beds and who, after nearly a week, had killed almost 200 civilians out of 600 fatalities.

In Ireland, my favourite journalistic justification for this bloodbath came from my old mate Kevin Myers. "The death toll from Gaza is, of course, shocking, dreadful, unspeakable," he mourned. "Though it does not compare with the death toll amongst Israelis if *Hamas* had its way." Get it? The massacre in Gaza is justified because *Hamas* would have done the same if they could, even though they didn't do it because they couldn't. It took Fintan O'Toole, The Irish Times's resident philosopher-in-chief, to speak the unspeakable. "When does the mandate of victimhood expire?" he asked. "At what point does the Nazi genocide of Europe's Jews cease to excuse the state of Israel from the demands of international law and of common humanity?"

I had an interesting time giving the Tip O'Neill peace lecture in Derry when one of the audience asked, as did a member of the Trinity College Dublin Historical Society a day later, whether the Northern Ireland Good Friday peace agreement - or, indeed, any aspect of the recent Irish conflict - contained lessons for the Middle East. I suggested that local peace agreements didn't travel well and that the idea advanced by John Hume (my host in Derry) - that it was all about compromise - didn't work since the Israeli seizure of Arab land in the West Bank had more in common with the 17th-century Irish Catholic dispossession than sectarianism in Belfast.

What I do suspect, however, is that the split and near civil war between <u>Hamas</u> and the Palestinian Authority has a lot in common with the division between the Irish Free State and anti-treaty forces that led to the 1922-3 Irish civil war; that <u>Hamas</u>'s refusal to recognise Israel - and the enemies of Michael Collins who refused to recognise the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the border with Northern Ireland - are tragedies that have a lot in common, Israel now playing the role of Britain, urging the pro-treaty men (Mahmoud Abbas) to destroy the anti-treaty men (Hamas).

I ended the week in one of those BBC World Service discussions in which a guy from The Jerusalem Post, a man from al-Jazeera, a British academic and Fisk danced the usual steps around the catastrophe in Gaza. The moment I mentioned that 600 Palestinian dead for 20 Israeli dead around Gaza in 10 years was grotesque, pro-Israeli listeners condemned me for suggesting (which I did not) that only 20 Israelis had been killed in all of Israel in 10 years. Of course, hundreds of Israelis outside Gaza have died in that time - but so have thousands of Palestinians.

My favourite moment came when I pointed out that journalists should be on the side of those who suffer. If we were reporting the 18th-century slave trade, I said, we wouldn't give equal time to the slave ship captain in our dispatches. If we were reporting the liberation of a Nazi concentration camp, we wouldn't give equal time to the SS spokesman. At which point a journalist from the Jewish Telegraph in Prague responded that "the IDF are not Hitler". Of course not. But who said they were?

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



International law is not a suicide pact

The Jerusalem Post January 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 1153 words

Byline: LOUIS RENE BERES

Highlight: The writer, a professor of political science at Purdue University, is the author of many books dealing with

terrorism and international law.

Body

It is easy to feel sorry for the Palestinians in Gaza. Televised and print images of their apparently unrelieved misery suggest Israeli cruelty in the creation of shortages and in the use of armed force. Exactly the opposite is true. The moment that flagrantly illegal *Hamas* rocket attacks upon Israeli noncombatants cease, no harms of any kind will be imposed by Israel.

<u>Hamas</u> commits other egregious violations of international law. It is always a codified war crime to use civilians as "human shields." This cowardly act even has a precise legal name - "perfidy." By persistently placing their most impoverished <u>women</u> and children in harm's way - especially in those areas from which they launch terrorist rockets into Israel - Palestinian terrorist leaders deliberately create Palestinian casualties.

There is more here than meets the eye. Several Palestinian terror groups, including <u>Hamas</u>, are forging conceptual and tactical bonds with al-Qaeda. These criminal organizations are now actively planning for mega-terror operations against Israel. If they cannot be stopped, such attacks would involve (at a minimum) chemical and/or biological weapons of mass destruction. Over time, especially if Iran should begin to transfer portions of its growing inventory of nuclear materials to selected terror groups, Israel could also face Palestinian-directed nuclear terrorism.

What government could be expected to sit back passively and render its population vulnerable to instantaneous mass-slaughter? Would we, in the United States, sit quietly by as rockets rained down upon American cities from terrorist sanctuaries somewhere on our southern borders? Would we allow such carnage to continue with impunity? Can capitulation and surrender ever be the proper or excusable reaction of a sovereign state sworn to protect its populations? For as long as political philosophers have written about the essential obligations of sovereignty, no state responsibility has been as important as the fundamental assurance of protection.

ALTHOUGH NOT widely recognized, Israel has always been willing to keep its counter terrorism operations in Gaza consistent with the settled standards of humanitarian international law. Palestinian violence, on the other hand, still remains in violation of all civilized rules of engagement. And all this after Israel very painfully "disengaged" from Gaza on the US-backed promise that the Palestinians - finally - would put an end to their relentless barrage of terror. Significantly, this barrage also remains strategically senseless, as it does absolutely nothing to advance any vital Palestinian interests.

International law is not a suicide pact. Rather, it offers an authoritative body of rules and procedures that permits states to express their inherent right of self- defense. When terrorist organizations celebrate the explosive

"martyrdom" of Palestinian children, and when Palestinian leaders unashamedly seek religious redemption through the mass-murder of Jewish children, the terrorists have no legal right to demand sanctuary. Anywhere.

Under international law terrorists are always hostes humani generis, "Common enemies of humankind." Even according to the most ancient sources of international law, such murderers must be severely punished wherever they are found. For their arrest and prosecution, jurisdiction is "universal." Palestinian terrorism, even during its present "slow" period (when contending *Hamas* and Fatah factions are too busy attacking each other), is far worse than most people ever imagine. Using bombs filled with nails, razor blades and screws dipped in rat poison; the killers maim and burn Israeli civilians with abundant cheers from their neighbors and with warmest blessings from local clergy. As for those "commanders" who actually direct and control the suicide-bombers, they typically cower for protection in assorted hiding places. At times they issue loud calls for their wives, mothers and daughters to stand between themselves and the Israelis.

This is the documented "heroism" of Palestinian terrorism. What is unknown to most observers is that carefully trained IDF counter-terrorism units operate in exactly the opposite fashion. These Israeli soldiers always identify and target only the terrorist leaders. Always they seek to minimize collateral harms. There are times, of course, when such harms simply can't be avoided. Even the IDF, which follows its code of "Purity of Arms" far more stringently than any other nation's army, including our own, cannot undo the deliberate barbarism of Palestinian perfidy.

Deception can be legally acceptable in armed conflict, but The Hague Regulations forbid placement of military assets or personnel in heavily populated civilian areas. Further prohibition of perfidy is found at Protocol I of 1977 additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. It is widely recognized that these rules are also binding on the basis of customary international law. Perfidy represents an especially serious violation of the Law of War, one identified as a "grave breach" at Article 147 of Geneva Convention IV. The critical legal effect of perfidy committed by Palestinian terrorist leaders is to immunize Israel from any responsibility for inadvertent counterterrorist harms done to Arab civilians. Even if *Hamas* and Fatah and Islamic Jihad and their several sister terror groups did not deliberately engage in perfidy, any Palestinian-created link between civilians and terrorist activities would always give Israel full legal justification for defensive military action.

International law is not a suicide pact. All combatants, including Palestinian terrorists, are bound by the Law of War of international law. This requirement is found at Article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and at the two protocols to these Conventions. Protocol I applies humanitarian international law to all conflicts fought for "self-determination," the stated objective of all Palestinian fighters. A product of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts (1977), this Protocol brings all irregular forces within the full scope of international law. In this connection, the terms "fighter" and "irregular" are charitable in describing Palestinian terrorists. These fanatics are plainly criminals who intentionally target civilians, and whose characteristic mode of "battle" is not purposeful military engagement, but primal religious sacrifice.

In the final analysis, Israel faces a Palestinian terrorist enemy who embraces violence not for land, and not for national self-determination, but for God. For this determined Jihadist enemy, terrorism is now a plainly sacred expression of worship. Israel, like every other state, has the indisputable right and obligation under international law to protect its citizens from such an enemy.

Graphic

Photo: WOUNDED BOYS following an Israeli missile strike on Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip. By persistently placing <u>women</u> and children in areas from which they launch rockets, Palestinian terrorist leaders deliberately create Palestinian casualties. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Clinton, friend to Israel, must now be broker, too

The International Herald Tribune January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4 Length: 1011 words

Byline: Mark Landler - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

When Hillary Rodham Clinton ran for a New York Senate seat nine years ago, she labored to persuade skeptical Jewish voters of her support for Israel, after an incident in which she stood by as the wife of Yasser Arafat delivered an inflammatory attack on Israeli policies.

Now, having secured her standing as a friend of Israel, Clinton must show a new audience that she can also be a mediator in her next role as U.S. secretary of state, when her first challenge may well be the renewed violence in Gaza. Given Clinton's once troubled history with Arab-Israeli issues, that could be a tricky task.

Clinton brings several strengths, according to current and former aides and Middle East experts, including her knowledge of the region and experience in navigating it, as well as lingering good will among Arabs and Israelis won by her husband, former President Bill Clinton, for his efforts to broker a peace deal in the waning days of his presidency.

But Hillary Clinton will have to reassure the Palestinians that she, too, can be a broker, working with Egypt and other Arab neighbors, and putting pressure on the Israeli government, when needed.

"She's going to have to demonstrate her independence from Israel," said Aaron David Miller, a public policy analyst at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. "Our interests are inevitably going to diverge from their interests. We cannot be an 'amen corner' for them."

The diplomatic tightrope was evident this week, as the departing secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, condemned <u>Hamas</u> for firing rockets into southern Israel, while she privately urged Israeli leaders to agree to a cease-fire, after days of escalating airstrikes against <u>Hamas</u> militants in Gaza.

Clinton has not commented on the latest violence; a spokesman said she would abide by the principle that "there is one secretary of state at a time." But as New York's junior senator, she strongly condemned a round of <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks on Israeli towns in May 2007.

"I stand with the people of Israel who live in fear as their homes are besieged, and maintain my unwavering commitment to the welfare and survival of the state of Israel," Clinton said in a statement at the time.

In a speech to an Israeli lobbying group shortly after she lost the Democratic nomination to President-elect Barack Obama, Clinton said the next president should shun direct negotiations with <u>Hamas</u> because it was a terrorist group, equipped by Iran and bent on destroying Israel.

Earlier, Clinton declared that the United States could "obliterate" Iran if it attacked Israel with nuclear weapons - a far more strident tone than that of Obama.

Most experts believe that Clinton's support of Israel is heartfelt, even if it is also smart politics in New York.

But when she was first lady, Clinton made waves on two occasions for seeming to tilt toward Palestinian interests. In 1998, she told a gathering of Israeli and Arab teenagers that creating a state of Palestine was "very important for the broader goal of peace in the Middle East."

The White House disavowed her comments, saying they did not reflect the administration's policy. Today, the two-state solution is a central part of the U.S. blueprint for a peace deal.

More trouble loomed in November 1999, when Clinton, by then a Senate hopeful, visited the West Bank town of Ramallah. At a ceremony with Palestinian health officials, the first lady did not react when Suha Arafat accused Israeli forces of using "toxic gases" against Palestinians, causing cancer in **women** and children.

At the end of the ceremony, Clinton gave Arafat a polite kiss - a gesture that angered Jewish groups and earned the first lady critical newspaper editorials in New York.

Clinton attributed her silence to the fact that the translation of Arafat's remarks was incomplete. An aide who was with her said Arafat's accusations appeared to be standard boilerplate, to those listening. The full import of her words set in only hours later.

The tempest briefly threatened Clinton's Senate bid in New York, though she managed to put it behind her through a fence-mending tour with Jewish leaders. After eight years of her steadfast support for Israel, the incident is viewed by most analysts as ancient history.

In one way, Clinton's baggage may carry a silver lining. Some Palestinians point out that she was ahead of the curve, as an American public figure, in calling for a Palestinian state.

Her marriage to Bill Clinton also gives her a valuable calling card. Though his efforts to forge a peace deal fell apart, Middle East experts say that people on both sides credit him for trying longer and harder than other presidents.

"People don't just perceive her as a senator from New York who was very close to Israel," said Ziad Asali, the president of the American Task Force on Palestine, an Arab-American advocacy group that favors a Palestinian state. "They perceive her as a Clinton."

Being a Clinton also gives the next secretary of state ready access to Bill Clinton's Middle East brain trust. Hillary Clinton is being advised by Martin Indyk, who was a senior State Department official and U.S. ambassador to Israel during the Clinton administration.

Indyk is among those mentioned as a potential special envoy to the Middle East. Given the gravity of the crisis, however, experts say Clinton may well have to tackle Gaza herself.

Some predict that Clinton will be given the benefit of the doubt merely because she represents a new White House. While Obama's response to the Israeli assault on <u>Hamas</u> has not differed much from that of President George W. Bush, Asali said the Bush administration would bear the brunt of any anti-American feeling that bubbled up as a result of the attacks.

The challenge for Clinton, experts said, will be reaffirming her support for Israel while establishing strong relations with Egypt.

Clinton , friend to Israel , must now be broker, too

But given the pace and fluidity of events in the Middle East, some experts say that the Gaza crisis may end up as a footnote in Clinton's diplomatic tenure, even if it now looms as a huge early test.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Lifeline smuggling tunnels destroyed in Gaza bombings

The New Zealand Herald January 1, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; World Length: 1068 words

Body

The Gaza Strip has lost its last lifeline after five days of Israeli bombing raids that destroyed dozens of smuggling tunnels under the sandy border with Egypt.

The passages did not just supply *Hamas* with arms, but brought in flour, fuel and baby milk.

For Gazans, already used to blackouts and shortages from an 18-month border blockade, the daily hunt for basics is ever more desperate - though there are no reports of outright hunger.

"I fed the children cooked tomatoes today, I can't find bread," Nima Burdeini, a mother of 11, said on Wednesday at the Rafah refugee camp on the Gaza-Egypt border.

Israeli warplanes pounded the illicit tunnels as a part of the heavy bombardment of <u>Hamas</u> targets in Gaza that began on Saturday. The hundreds of tunnels were seen as key to keeping <u>Hamas</u> in power.

After the Islamic militants seized Gaza by force in June 2007, Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade on the territory, allowing in only basic goods and humanitarian supplies.

Most of Gaza's 3,900 factories have closed, unable to import raw materials or export products. Construction halted and thousands of people were thrown out of work, deepening poverty in an area where most of the 1.4 million residents rely on UN food aid to get by.

At times, Israel tightened the closure, restricting the inflow of fuel, cash and other key supplies. The blockade caused frequent power outages and interruptions in the water supply.

In the two months leading up to Israel's offensive, Israel kept Gaza tightly sealed in an attempt to force Gaza militants to stop firing rockets at southern Israeli towns.

The tunnels became a lifesaver for <u>Hamas</u> - and for Gaza. Some were used to sneak in arms, including rockets that militants are now firing into Israel. But most of the underground passages were used to haul in consumer goods, from motor bikes to goats, refrigerators, flour and chocolates.

The tunnel area that residents once jokingly referred to as Gaza's "duty-free zone" is now a wasteland of smashed concrete and deep craters, churned up by Israeli bombs.

Late on Wednesday, the tunnel area was struck by 19 times within a half hour period, residents said.

Lifeline smuggling tunnels destroyed in Gaza bombings

A Gaza health official, Moawiya Hassanain, said two people were killed and 16 people, including six <u>women</u> and four children.

Before that report, Israeli air force officials said the bombing campaign had demolished more than 80 tunnels. Egyptian officials said the number was at least 120.

Residents say there are several hundred tunnels under the 9-mile border. Owners said they believe many tunnels are badly damaged, but tunnel workers fear going near the area to check because of the attacks.

The tunnels are not visible from the air, but their locations are well known - brazen owners put up colourful tents over tunnel entrances.

Economist Omar Shaban estimated some two-thirds of goods sold in Gaza came through the tunnels. From diggers, drivers and haulers, the passages employed around 12,000 Gazans, Shaban said.

"It was Gaza's new economy, even if it was just importing commercial goods," Shaban said.

Tunnel owner Abu Sufian said he and his colleagues lost millions of dollars in merchandise that they had paid for, but that cannot be delivered now from the Egyptian side.

Shaban said destroying the tunnels would bruise, but not bloody <u>Hamas</u>' Gaza rule. The militant group also funds itself through local taxes and a network of businesses controlled by loyalists, he said.

But demolishing the tunnels has deepened civilian suffering.

Throughout Gaza, Israel's bombings have brought Gaza's dwindling economic activity to a halt. For fear of getting caught in an air strike, wholesalers aren't distributing their goods and many shopkeepers stay home.

Shelves are emptying at grocery stores. In most areas, the few shops open are those whose owners live nearby. People don't venture beyond their own streets, leaving them hostage to shortages and rising prices. Flour for baking is in short supply, and there is little cash to buy goods because banks are closed.

Burdeni, 45, the mother of 11, relies on UN aid to feed her children, but officials halted food distribution on December 18, citing shortages caused by the border closure.

"People are doing pretty badly. Everyone we know is sharing whatever they have, not just with their families but with their neighbours," said Karen Abu Zayd, commissioner of the UN Relief and Works Agency, which helps needy Palestinians.

"We haven't seen widespread hunger. We do see for the very first time - I've been here for eight years and seeing new things nowadays - people going through the rubbish dumps looking for things, people begging, which is quite a new phenomenon as well," she said by video link to reporters at UN headquarters in New York.

Chris Gunness, a UN spokesman, said aid distribution should resume Thursday as Israel allows humanitarian aid into Gaza. The United Nations issued a new emergency appeal on Wednesday for \$34US million (\$58NZ.6m) to deal with the new crisis.

Burdeni's brother gives her small amounts of cash, but the search for food is becoming tougher. Burdeni found tomatoes on Wednesday, cooking them when electricity flickered on in her area.

"My children ate it with spoons," she said bitterly.

In Gaza City, Hiba Dahshan, 22, said the price for a 110-pound (50kg) bag of flour had jumped from \$30 to \$100. Her family can't afford it, but the local shop still has cheese and canned meat - their menu the past three days. She can't find vegetables on her street.

Lifeline smuggling tunnels destroyed in Gaza bombings

Despite the shortages, some people said they are eating more than usual - because they're pinned down at home and gripped with anxiety from the sounds of bombs exploding around them.

"I'm eating like a savage," Dahshan said.

Bader Tulbeh, 46, described his eight children as "locusts" with newly enlarged appetites.

"They are an army," Tulbeh said while purchasing vegetables from a vendor in central Gaza City.

Maher Lubad, 45, a salaried worker in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahiya, bought lentils on credit from his cousin's grocery shop because he couldn't withdraw any money from the bank.

Meanwhile, tunnel owners watch and wait.

"Even as they bomb us, we are thinking of how to make new tunnels. Maybe we'll try go under the sea," said tunnel owner Abu Sufian.

Associated Press writers Ibrahim Barzak reported from Gaza City and Diaa Hadid from Jerusalem. AP writer Edith M. Lederer in New York contributed to this report.

- AP

Load-Date: January 1, 2009



chatroom

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

January 9, 2009 Friday

B - Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 18

Length: 1014 words

Body

TO D. J. Fraser, so let's be clear on this, you support terrorists (*Hamas*) on their indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel civilians (including kids). But you don't support a sovereign state protecting its citizens from terrorists?

WHY doesn't The Bully let us know each day what Paris is doing. I love to know what she's up to. I love her she's hot. - Zodiac

WATCH SBS news and see inocent kids killed by the Israel terrorists. - Craig

PROUD Aussie, confusing past and present? #2 in league (come back in 4 years) #2 in cricket after 2day. Won nothing in union 4 more than 5 years! Any honest soccer referee would have done same, (deliberate foul). Got no saucers? Got no cups either bro! Keep sucking out your long neck, loser. - Pounamu

TO Bernie, sounds like ya made good use of the Bulletin's front page photos of Paris Hilton. Hope you can still see her after that. Good work gb miami on the dna comment. Paris, the girl with the personality of a roof tile, and the looks of a dehydrated Barbie doll on mushrooms. - The Real Deal

WENT 2 BigW n got charged twice for 1 item that was \$15.97. Went back in immediately as I always check my dockets n only got refund of \$15.95 even tho ttl went on card. Y should they profit on their mistake n my extra time. - Ripped Off

WHO'S the wise guy who changed the lights in 2n out of Silver Bridle Estate off S'port Nerang Rd. It can take up to 7 mins 2 get out even when the traffic is non existent goin Wst. N havin red arrow 2 turn in 2 estate when u cld turn safely on grn lite as u used 2 is so time wasteful tht ppl now turn illegally. - Time Poor

TWO coat plasterer, if u changed your name to Two carton plastered, some of the ugly <u>women</u> u claim live in Palm Beach could start 2 look a little better in your eyes. - YM

I WOULD rather have the innocent children of Israel re-located 2 Aus b4 they're killed by <u>Hamas</u> bombs than the detainees of Guantanamo Bay. - Peace Lover

POUNAMU. Why dont you go back to where ever you came from. You're not wanted, please leave! - Matt. Palm beach

AMAZING how we pick on the Yanks at every opportunity, but if we were invaded tomorrow we would be squealing to them for help. How we forget how they saved Australia from certain Japanese invasion by winning the WW2

chatroom

Battle of the Coral Sea with their aircraft carriers and military might. Yes they can at times be lound n brash chest-beaters and annoying, but their our big brother allies and we need them more than ever in this world of global uncertainty and terrorism. - Observer

PATRICK & Kaz since ur so wise on ur statments on the USA & WW II history Y don't U write 2 the US State Dept in Washington with ur views, concerns, & solutions. May B Oprah's Boy will make U cabinet members. ur as good a choice as any.

THE 40 year old orchestrated Israeli expansionist land grab, aimed at restoring their ancient land borders, no matter how many millions are killed or made stateless, continues. - G. W. Gatton

TYPICAL Ron Clarke wants the person who painted a crossing on the road to pay for the re-painting. But he will not pay for my fence that a council tree fell on. Double standards, Ron. - Steve, Coombabah

PROUD Aussie. nz is number 1 in union and league. everyone knows we r not as good as we think we r. as 4 our rugby world cups. that was last century. go kiwis. we could learn a thing or 2 about humility from them. - Kez the proud Aussie.

MESSAGE for Pounamu re Aussies being pussies. Go back to whatever hole you came from. We are sick of your whingeing. Ps we are proud of all our sporting heroes win lose or draw! Maybe you are used to knocking your teams when they are down! - Proud Aussie Girl

KEEN local golfer totally agree with large heaps of rubish and uncut weeds not to mention the mud particularly on the 8th tee im going to helensvale if not fixed soon. - Another golf lover

OH come on Reg, 1 cop does the wrong thing, yes disgraceful and throw the book at him & any others who do wrong? But unfair 2 generalise and call all cops hypocritical. Most r normal people doing a job where they r overworked, underpaid, and dont get much support 4 what they put up with. People like u would be unable 2 work a day in their shoes and put your life on the line 2 serve and protect the community. - Thankful

TREEMAN so yes not enough police. The majority were probably attending 2 domestics or drunken drug induced brawls with crime on the rise. Maybe they were trying 2 keep us safe at home and keep some of these idiots off the road. - Cheryl

HAS anyone else had problems with local coffee franchise not honouring gift vouchers. was buying coffee in local elanora coffee shop when lady produced voucher and was made to jump thru hoops by non aussie behind counter. same thing happened to me 2 weeks earlier like the lady walked out only reason i went back was friend shouted but wont be back. - Chrissy

TWO coat plasterer. man aint that the truth. was down palmy way recently the scenery pretty average and bordering on a war torn country - Bulldog1man

ISRAEL will win this war against <u>Hamas</u>, why? Because the hand of God is behind Israel! Not <u>hamas</u> like they think. They had it coming to them 4 years. I have lived in Israel and know to well what <u>hamas</u> is like. They would kill everyone if they had the chance. Israel show the world your not to be messed with again! - Jez, Carrara

WAKE up pounamu have a look at the overall record of aus v nz in the sports u mentioned and c who is in front. Get on ur boat and head home. - Cabman

GEE, Lisa, keep that hoovering up and you too could be walking around with a comb in your hair looking like a brainless try-hard idiot.

JUST cause the name changed it's still whelan and dealin street to me. cant fix the image by changing the name. make the back packers pay for rubbish removal as its their residents who dump it. - Wog

chatroom

I AGREE with a recent comment abt work place health n safety. the job I wrk on at helensvale is a deathtrap waiting to happen. the only reason no bad accident or injury is the wrkrs awereness of the untidy mess.

HOW can i keep canetoads out of my yard I'm sick of killing them. - Superhuman

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



THE Week; THAT Was

The Sunday Telegraph (London)

January 4, 2009

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The Sunday Telegraph

Section: NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 1137 words

Byline: Compiled by CERI RADFORD and ALEX SINGLETON

Body

ISRAEL GOES FOR *HAMAS* IN GAZA

War in the Middle East made for a grim transition into 2009. Israel launched air strikes on the Gaza Strip for seven consecutive days in an attempt to stop *Hamas* firing rockets across the border.

The attacks on the densely populated area killed more than 400 Palestinians, including many children and civilians, and injured thousands. Three Israeli civilians and one soldier died.

International leaders condemned the ferocity of the attacks, but Israel vowed to continue in order to "change the reality" in Gaza. Some 450 targets have been destroyed and two senior *Hamas* leaders killed.

At the end of the week Israel was considering mounting a ground offensive, which <u>Hamas</u> said would spell a "black destiny".

DEMOCRACY WINS THE DAY

Bangladesh has voted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina back into power, ending two years of military rule in an election praised as free and fair by international observers.

Ms Hasina, 61, should be reinstated by Tuesday after her Awami party gained 250 out of 300 seats.

It was a shakier week for democracy in Ghana, where a closely fought election was marred by violence and the ruling party attempted to block the final constituency from voting.

Meanwhile, in Thailand, prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva was twice forced to delay his maiden speech because of protesters blockading parliament.

HIGH STREET FEELS THE CHILL

THE Week THAT Was

It was a chilly start to the year in more ways than one for Britain. Revellers defied sub-zero temperatures to greet 2009 with firework displays, street parties and champagne, but the economic ill-winds may be more difficult to withstand.

The fashion chain USC became the latest high-street retailer to collapse, joining the ranks of Woolworths, the tea retailer Whittards, menswair chain The Officers Club and childrenswear label Adams.

Employers' groups predicted that 600,000 people - or 1,600 every day - would be made redundant in 2009, whch would make it the worst year for job losses in two decades. The heaviest losses will occur in the first few months of the year, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Gordon Brown spoke of his optimism for the economy in his new year message, but the nation was not conspicuously reassured.

RECYCLING CAN'T BE RECYCLED

Bad news for anyone hoping to clear up after Christmas and the new year with a clean conscience: hundreds of thousands of tons of rubbish are being stockpiled as global demand for recycled material drops.

WINTER OF DISCONTENT (PT 1)

For those feeling that we are entering a new winter of discontent, the release of files to the National Archives provided an insight into the events of 1978/9.

Previously unpublished Downing Street papers showed that James Callaghan delayed an election that he might have won because he was convinced that his popularity would survive the winter. Mr Callaghan declined to go the country in October 1978 in favour of the following year. After months of uncollected rubbish, striking car workers and bread queues, he lost to Margaret Thatcher. The documents also revealed that Britain was only days away from a state of emergency by early 1979.

More disturbingly, papers showed that Britain had just three days of ammunition to fight off any attack by the Soviet Union, prompting Mr Callaghan to scribble on the margin of one secret memo: "Heaven help us if there is a war!"

Other revelations included the

fact that the former prime minister, Harold Wilson, ordered the BBC to do something about the "hippies" within its ranks; that Downing Street considered dropping the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi in retaliation for its "Labour isn't working" campaign for the Conservative Party, and that Margaret Thatcher requested a hairdresser and a set of rollers during a visit to Iran.

RESOLUTIONS ARE BAD

If you have already broken your new year resolutions, or failed to make any, fear not. The annual attempts at self-improvement are bad for our mental health, according to the charity Mind.

Focusing on physical imperfections - such as vowing

to lose weight - apparently lead

to feelings of hopelessness, low

self-esteem and even mild depression.

Perhaps it is just as well that gyms are becoming unaffordable. A price comparison website reported that the majority of gym-goers plan to abandon their habit in the new year

to save money.

THE Week THAT Was

For those aspiring to improve their physical and financial health, the consumer magazine Which? offered this sage advice: "Why pay up to pounds 700 to join a gym for a year when you can get a Best Buy exercise bike for around pounds 250?"

KEEP IT IN SIMPLE ENGLISH

"Predictors of beaconicity" may shine no more after a council leader launched a campaign against gibberish.

David Lee, the leader of Wokingham borough council in Berkshire, made a list of woolly and baffling terms which he wishes to ban from official documents.

These include conditionality, worklessness, cross-fertilisation, double devolution,

edge-fit, fulcrum, incentivising, municipalities, network model, lowlights, paradigm, provider vehicles, seedbed and shell developments.

Also waging war against the language of bureaucratic obfuscation was the Centre for Policy Studies.

The think tank published The 2009 Lexicon, a guide to contemporary Newspeak, which berates today's politicians for abusing terms such as "an incompetence", "scope" and "best practice".

'Those beasts would kill us if they could'

KARL LAGERFELD

The 75-year-old fashion designer defended the fur industry on the grounds that hunters were merely launching a pre-emptive attack on deadly animals. "In a meat-eating world, wearing leather for shoes, the discussion of fur is childish."

IT WAS A GOOD WEEK FOR...

Chris Hoy, who received a knighthood in the New Year's honours list, topping a year of achievement that included three gold medals in the Beijing Olympics, being named BBC sports personality of the year, and, last but not least, the accolade of The Daily Telegraph's Great Briton of the year 2008.

The cyclist's mother Carol, a recently retired nurse in Glasgow, received the MBE for services to health care. They will go to Buckingham Palace together to receive their awards.

Cheryl Cole, the X-Factor judge, was named "coolest **female** celebrity" among teenagers, and Superdrug's beauty icon of the year.

Josef Stalin, who scooped third place in a Russian opinion poll to find the greatest Russian of all time, showing that killing millions of your compatriots in gulags is no obstacle to lasting patriotic veneration.

AND A BAD

ONE FOR...

Steven Gerrard, the Liverpool footballer who was charged with assault and affray in connection with an alleged

late-night

bar brawl.

Barack Obama, who will face an even tougher start to his presidency following the outbreak

of hostilities

THE Week THAT Was

between

Israel and

Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



A terrible beginning for 2009

New Straits Times (Malaysia)
January 11, 2009 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 21; LOCAL

Length: 1051 words

Byline: Zaini Mohd Said

Body

I WOULD have started the year writing about something pleasant if not for the unending siege on the Gaza strip and the terrible carnage and destruction brought by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) on the Palestinians on that small piece of God's earth.

Two weeks of merciless pounding and attacks on infrastructure, public services systems, homes, men, <u>women</u>, children, mosques, schools and even an aid truck can only be described as criminal and barbaric. It is surprising that the human toll on the Palestinians has not been even greater than the 800 killed and over 3,000 wounded already.

How could the IDF be so heartless as to bring down so much firepower and destruction to bear upon the civilian Palestinian population who have no place to hide, and to the <u>Hamas</u> militants who had only hit them with pin-prick rocket fire?

They have already made over 500 sorties of F16 bombing runs, with heavy artillery fire from mammoth Self-Propelled (SP) 155mm howitzers, tank gunfire from hundreds of US-made Abrams, deadly area saturation munitions, uncountable missile and cannon fire from helicopter gunships as well as mortar and small arms fire from thousands of infantry soldiers.

It is as if they are engaging and fighting a complete <u>Hamas</u> regular armoured division, entrenched in some heavily fortified defensive positions protected by air defence guns and anti-air missile when in fact there is none.

I suppose that is how Israel deals with its enemies, especially the Palestinians, who only want back their honour and dignity, their legitimate rights, their land and their way of life.

All of these were snatched away from them through 50 years of mainly one-sided Israeli military action, political deceit and manipulation, and relentless economic and social strangulation.

The fact that Israel did not exist before 1947 makes the whole distasteful scenario even more galling, if not surreal. They were implanted by the West onto that part of the world, at the expense of the Palestinians who had lived there for centuries, the rightful owners of the land.

The Palestinians naturally fought back but only to see more of their land lost, and occupied, through more use of military force and arbitrary action backed uncompromisingly by the US, ostensibly to ensure the security of Israel.

A terrible beginning for 2009

The Palestinian homeland promised 50 years ago by the major powers, as a small favour in return, remains a distant dream.

Instead, most of them are confined in two ignominious enclaves called the West Bank and the minute Gaza strip. Millions of others wishing for a better life have chanced it by scattering themselves across the four corners of the globe as stateless refugees.

The timing of this onslaught can be a subject of interesting study. The Israeli general election is around the corner and on Jan 20, Barack Obama will become the first US black president with his philosophy of change.

Could these be the real reasons, rather than the <u>Hamas</u> rockets, that triggered the Israeli blockade and subsequent military onslaught on Gaza?

Eight years of rocket attacks, according to some sources, have only killed three or four Israelis. The small number is certainly made possible by their excellent detection and warning systems.

One can only speculate, but what is certain is that the party which is expected to form the next government is already getting very strong Israeli public support due to the IDF's action and, of course, the government's propaganda executed in fine tandem with it.

What is also now certain is that Israel will maintain its grip on the Gaza Strip to see which way Obama goes and to wring continued guarantees of support or even more concessions from the US before the IDF's necessary and eventual withdrawal.

Meanwhile, the Palestinians can wait, for another 50 years if need be. And during all this time there shall not be any more rockets launched, any attack on Israel and any form of Palestinian resistance against any measure meant for the security of Israeli whatsoever - the permanent and durable "asking for the moon" kind of peace they always demand as a criteria for the Palestinians to get some decent treatment and consideration over their case of statehood.

It is like imagining an already harassed, disorganised and demoralised New York Police Department being asked to ensure a crime free city as a condition for not getting the department dissolved and all of its personnel fired.

Actually, for a brief insane moment, I had felt some pity for President George W. Bush. He had missed a singular chance of putting back some small shine on his dismal two-term presidency.

It was a remote chance, but I had hoped that he would have the wisdom and courage to tell Israel to cease the slaughter and withdraw unconditionally.

Of course, Israel would not have complied and instead Bush would have incurred the wrath of the Jewish community in the US and the world over, but at least he would have earned that bit of respect for himself and the US from many quarters before he leaves in 10 days time.

Instead, all that he was capable of doing was to voice concern over the unfolding events and to blame <u>Hamas</u> for starting the fight. He failed to realise that the kind of responses he gave had been surpassed by graver events and that the imperatives are now focused on humanitarian considerations, decisions and actions that the situation calls for.

He is now in a fix and surely cannot keep on publicly blaming <u>Hamas</u> after Israeli forces, with their smart and sophisticated weaponry, killed scores of civilians, including children at two schools, and the mother of four children, all of whom stayed around her rotting body without food and water for days. But then again, he must leave his legacy for the next US president to unravel.

I realise that I have been rather emotional and unashamedly biased about this distressing matter.

A terrible beginning for 2009

But when the laws of war are not being observed by a professional military, when human slaughter is condoned and committed by soldiers riding steeds of steel and shooting explosive firepower against the defenceless and the wretched, and when I see my infant grandchildren sleeping peacefully and even snoring softly in their comfortable cots, who dare say that I should not be?

The writer is a former army field commander. He can be contacted at panglima_sauk70@hotmail.com

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



The Courier Mail (Australia)
January 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 - First with the news Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 16

Length: 1830 words

Body

We must strive hard for a just peace for both Israel and Palestine. Violence will not solve this problem

A. Guinane, of St Lucia, expresses hopes for an end to the conflict in the Middle East

It's not only hoons who flout road laws designed to protect them and us but also so-called average people

Joe Moore, of Highfields, recommends zero tolerance of motorists who break the speed limit

Protests, prayers and calls for peace

I DON'T quite understand the number of people protesting outside Israeli embassies. <u>Hamas</u> started lobbing missiles on Israel, which makes Israel the victim. If someone started hurling things into my back yard, I'd want it stopped pretty quickly. I'd be out in force trying to do everything in my power to give myself a bit of peace and quiet.

What have we got here? Let's kick-the-victim year?

Rhoda Hall, Strathpine

MUCH is made of the alleged refusal of the elected *Hamas* Government to recognise Israel and renounce violence.

In a spirit of equality, could we not ask Israel to recognise Palestine and renounce violence?

State violence, with its vast resources of tanks, planes and bullets, is much more potent than stones and B-grade rockets.

Israel cannot win, however brutal its behaviour or how much support it gets from the US.

Journalist Rami G. Khouri wrote in 2006 that peace in the Middle East required three things: equal treatment of Arabs and Israelis, application of the rule of law to actions of governments and all members of society and resolution of the conflict between Palestine and Israel in a fair, legal and sustainable manner.

Ignoring the sufferings of the Palestinians and the injustices they suffer daily while Israel is supported will guarantee that the Palestinians will continue to resist the occupation and the colonisation of their land. Wouldn't we do the same? We must strive hard for a just peace for both Israel and Palestine. Violence will not solve this problem.

A. Guinane, St Lucia

ONE has to marvel at the duplicity of people in this country noisily protesting about Israeli troops moving into the Gaza Strip, without consideration of victims killed by endless barrages of rockets fired day and night into Israel. Muslims are holding prayers for Palestinians killed by air strikes. *Hamas* indiscriminately fired rockets into Israel and retaliatory air raids were an inevitable consequence.

<u>Hamas</u> is solely responsible for the deaths of many Palestinians who would be alive today but for the <u>Hamas</u> decision to open hostilities. What about innocent men, <u>women</u> and children killed in Israeli towns by rockets raining down with almost no warning?

The posturing of groups sympathetic to the Palestinians will not have the slightest impact on events unfolding between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>. While the right to protest is part of our culture, protesting about events in another country is a waste of time.

Prayers, on the other hand, are a gesture of faith and goodwill never wasted, but why not pray that Australia remains a free, peaceful and tolerant society, and pray for all victims in this meaningless war in Gaza? Pray that <u>Hamas</u> has the sense to cease indiscriminate rocket attacks and to rescind their manifesto calling for the annihilation of Israel.

Ian Loft, Postmans Ridge

ISRAEL has been accused of using ``disproportionate force". Isn't wiping Israel off the face of the Earth a disproportionate aim? *Hamas* importing, manufacturing and firing rockets and mortars into Israel from Gaza also may be disproportionate, especially after one recalls that Israel recently unilaterally vacated Gaza.

One does not start a war as if it's some sort of sport. In war the combatants have only one aim and that is to win, especially when annihilation is the stated aim of the aggressor and their shadowy supporters.

Donald Hendry, Lawnton

Men, <u>women</u>

about house

IT IS sad that, in this day and age, any woman who shows an interest in cooking, gardening and sewing is still given the ``housewife" tag (C-M, Jan 3-4).

While there's no shame in being a domestic goddess, all people who want to grow fruit and vegetables and make a decent meal instead of opting for take-away deserve to be treated as the intelligent individuals that they are. Have no men started vegie gardens or are cooking more in recent times? Oh wait, unless you're Gordon Ramsay it doesn't seem worth reporting on all the men who are flocking to the kitchen and garden.

Susan Hicks, Carseldine

Teaching

long-term

EXPERTS say recruitment and retention of quality teachers is pivotal to students' success (C-M, Jan 5). No one would argue with that. However, many schools (state and private) employ a large number of short-term contract teachers. If teachers are not valued enough to be given fully tenured positions, how can they be expected to provide the quality teaching they were trained to deliver? This sends the wrong message to parents and students that the school/teachers are not committed to the long-term view. In many cases they are battling a flawed system.

Roseanne Schneider, Yeronga

Refund

on water

STORM runoff is blamed for the poor quality of Brisbane water. Southeast Queensland has a long history of summer storms and I cannot remember six weeks of foul water in previous years. The water is safe to drink but the foul taste cannot be hidden, even in a cup of tea. If I were buying it from a retail outlet, I would return it. Perhaps Brisbane Water should discount our rates for failure to deliver a quality product.

Verlie Lloyd, Kenmore

Life beyond cricket

GOOD on Cricket Australia's national selection chairman Andrew Hilditch for having the necessary self-belief to live a life beyond the bounds of cricket.

Hilditch sitting at home watching Matthew Hayden on TV, rather than taking a walk on the beach with his family and his dog, wouldn't have helped Hayden play a better innings.

As Robert Craddock in his column (Sport, Jan 5) points out, Hilditch is well paid to undertake the role of chairman of selectors, but even \$100,000 a year doesn't buy a 24-hour-a-day slave.

I suggest those journalists who haven't had ready access to Hilditch's mobile phone get out and investigate the real causes of Australia's fall from grace in the cricket world, rather than taking the soft option of quoting someone else's words.

Finally, let's all occasionally turn off the mobile phone, learn to delegate responsibility to our colleagues and go for long walks so that we can free our minds from the distractions of modern life. Having confidence in others doesn't mean neglect.

Gary Munks, Childers

Committed to housing

I REFER to the article on Brisbane City Council's incentives package for affordable housing (C-M, Dec 29).

As a provider of affordable rental housing to those on low incomes and at risk of homelessness, it is a source of frustration to me that responsibility for helping those in housing need is shared in a confusing way between various levels of government.

Direct provision of services is a state responsibility with the Federal Government taking the role of principal funder. The level of government with the least direct responsibility for these issues (and no specific income source to fund responses) is local government.

In this context, it is therefore remarkable that BCC has adopted (over the past seven years) a bipartisan strategy for addressing housing stress. This has been a first for Australia.

I refer to the creation, funding and ongoing support for the Brisbane Housing Company. With the State Government, the council has enabled us to develop more than 700 homes over the past six years in well-located and well-serviced neighbourhoods

The recently announced affordable housing incentives package is a further enhancement to the unique commitment shown by Brisbane City.

David Cant, chief executive, Brisbane Housing Company,

Spring Hill

Experience differs

WE are becoming a nation of whingers. We went to the new Queensland Tennis Centre on Sunday, arrived at 9.30am and were through the gates and the security check and seated in the show court area by 10am. It was the best entry to any tennis tournament we have attended (we waited four hours to get into Wimbledon). We thought the process was smooth, considering it was the first day.

It was sad to hear that so many people whinged about it. We should be considering how lucky we are to have such a wonderful centre and that we can attend safely in these troubled times.

Lynette Walkin,

Seventeen Mile Rocks

HAVING looked forward to the Brisbane International Tennis Tournament, I was disappointed at how poorly the event was run on the opening day.

There was a line a kilometre long to get into the stadium because there was only one point of entry. Standing in line seemed to be the theme of the day. Leaving your seat to get a drink or go to the toilet meant waiting up to 20 minutes to get back into centre court.

The attendants insisted on checking tickets every time people entered. There is a limited amount of time between end changes to take your seat so they could have kept the line moving by letting in everyone with a ticket in his or her hand.

Food queues were three times longer at lunch time than I have seen at the Australian Open and the order of play on centre court was not available on the main noticeboard in the morning or on the website the night before the tournament commenced. The organisers should take a trip to Melbourne later this month to see how such an event should be run.

Mick Preston, Morningside

Speed and

go to jail

THE state's 2008 road toll was lower than the previous year's. How wonderful. Only 327 fatalities and 2000 serious injuries last year.

It sounds like a casualty list after an invasion by an enemy force -- and it is The force is apathy, an insane acceptance of death and destruction year after year. Fines and loss of licence do not deter speeding and disregard of road rules and it's not only hoons who flout laws designed to protect them and us but also so-called average people.

The speed limit often is treated as the minimum. I propose zero tolerance. Speed is the most frequent cause of accidents. We should forget the fines and impose a penalty of a day in jail for every kilometre over the limit.

The savings in costs and lives would greatly outweigh the revenue from fines. It's time for meaningful action.

Joe Moore, Highfields

Letters

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The winner of Letter of the Month wins a zippered A4 leather compendium, valued at \$80, courtesy of The Courier-Mail

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



SA urged to use its influnce to bring Palestinians to table

Cape Times (South Africa)
January 09, 2009 Friday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5 **Length:** 350 words

Body

ambassador be expelled and South Africa's be recalled.

The government's call for a cessation of hostilities was not enough, the organisers said.

Van der Merwe said the protest was testimony to how serious Capetonians were about the Gaza conflict.

She undertook to give the memo to Foreign Affairs Minster Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

The ANC's provincial secretary, Sipho Kroma, Cope's Leonard Ramatlakane, Soraya Jawodien of Cosatu, and ANC *Women*'s League representatives were among those who expressed support for the Palestinian cause.

Jawodien called for a boycott of Israeli products, while Anti-War Coalition leader Shaheed Mohamed appealed to workers and unions to arrange an international strike.

Former intelligence minister Ronnie Kasrils said that in the run-up to the election, South Africans should question parties about their attitudes to the Palestinian crisis.

Building <u>Women</u>'s Activism, the Anti-War Coalition and the Workers' International Vanguard League saluted the Palestinians' resistance and said the offensive in Gaza had nothing to do with self-defence by Israel.

The protesters chanted anti-Israel slogans as they marched from Keizersgracht in District Six to the Houses of Parliament. At one stage, the procession stretched from Spin Street to the City Hall in Darling Street..

The SA Zionist Federation and SA Jewish Board of Deputies said they supported Israel's decision to launch a military operation against *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip.

Israel had tried to avoid the conflict, but *Hamas*'s action in continuing to fire rockets into Israel had compelled it to act to protect its citizens, they said.

They called on the South African government and the ANC to adopt a balanced approach and to use their special relationship with Palestinian leaders to persuade them|to enter negotiations with|Israel.

"Many South African citizens have strong ties to participants in the Gaza conflict, and we urge (them) to join the Jewish community in ensuring the conflict in the Middle East is not imported ... and allowed to disrupt the excellent relationships between communities."

aziz.hartley@inl.co.za

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



Widows' grim plight

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 302 words

Byline: MAI YAGHI, AFP

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

Khaled Kahlut just popped out with his sons to buy some bread. Hit by an Israeli missile, they never came home. Now his widow Manal must learn to navigate through life in patriarchal Gaza with no men by her side.

The 32-year-old has joined a grim contingent growing by the hour in Gaza - widows who must now feed their families and live their lives alone in the conservative Palestinian enclave run by the Islamist *Hamas* movement.

"What am I going to do with my daughters, who is going to take care of us?" she said, wringing her hands.

In Gaza, where social trends have leaned toward the conservative even before the Islamist *Hamas* took control, the prospect of living alone as a woman is not a cheerful one.

Most <u>women</u> in the territory, where more than half of the 1.5 million population are children, do not work.

Tradition in Gaza holds that widows of "martyrs" do not remarry, so the prospect of finding another breadwinner is not a viable one - even if you are just 20 years old like Nidaa Hammuda.

She lost her husband and two brothers the same day Manal's husband and sons were killed.

The widow of her brother, Duaa Hammuda, 27, says she will educate their four children "in the mosques, like their father would have wanted to."

Zakiyeh al-Madhun became a widow the same day as her 24-year-old daughter-in-law Riham after an Israeli strike near a UN school in Jabaliya killed 43 people. "They were hit by shrapnel when they passed the school in the street," said 60-year-old Madhun.

Many Gaza widows suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder several weeks after the loss of their husbands.

"As long as the widow does not know what the future brings, she can lose the will to carry on living and this generally gives way to depression," said Samir Zaqut, a psychologist at the Gaza Community Mental Health Program.

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



The Australian

December 29, 2008 Monday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 11

Length: 2569 words

Body

MOST TALKED ABOUT

ISRAELVHAMAS

Both sides incapable of breaking cycle of violence

THE retaliatory bombing of Gaza by Israel with reports of large casualities has all the hallmarks of another tactical and strategic disaster for Israel and <u>Hamas</u> -- and of a war that can't be won militarily.

The script is predictable: more rockets from <u>Hamas</u>, suicide bombings, direct invasion from Israel, more collective punishment and an outbreak of virulent anti-Israel feeling in the rest of the world, seguing into unforgivable anti-Semitism.

Why? The Israeli and Palestinian leaderships have, in recent years, proved themselves incapable of breaking this terrible cycle of ethnic violence and increased prejudice, and Israel, in particular, has proven that it wishes to knee-cap anything other than a Bantustan-like relationship with deprived Palestinian ghettos. Only international leadership can help the warring sides, and for this the world will turn to the incoming administration of US President-elect Barack Obama.

It is a huge task, but one for which, with his background, Obama can hit the ground running and take on the nostrums and prejudices of both sides, including the right-wing Israel lobby in the US, to end this unwinnable madness. Unless this happens, Palestinians will suffer even more, embrace religious extremism further, and Israel will become more cocooned and heartbreakingly devoid of any moral connection with Jews whose lives have been intertwined with its destiny.

Larry Stillman

Elwood, Vic

AS 2008 draws to a close, the people of Sderot in southern Israel have endured almost 3000 rocket and mortar attacks this year alone from a neighbour sworn to the destruction of both their town and their country, and yet as recently as a week ago, the Israeli government authorised the transport of essential food and other supplies into this hotbed of hatred.

Israel was finally forced to act in protection of its citizens, but it is the international community which must carry much of the blame for prolonging this conflict. Providing succour to a violent regime with no interest in making peace has only given *Hamas* the strength to carry on.

What would Israel's critics propose that it do to safeguard its people? Talk to <u>Hamas</u>? About what, exactly? Israel has shown great restraint despite the persistent rocket attacks from Gaza, but enough is enough.

Alan Freedman

East St Kilda, Vic

ISRAEL should be congratulated for showing tenacity in protecting its citizens from years of intimidation by the <u>Hamas</u> terrorist infrastructure. It is amusing that Russia, which has dealt brutally with its own problems, should audaciously seek to condemn Israel.

Doron Samuell

Bondi Junction, NSW

THE day <u>Hamas</u> was elected 18 months ago Israel started the blockade of Gaza as a collective punishment of the Palestinians there for voting the wrong way. The mainly feeble rocket attacks then began. The West has been silent on Israel's method of dealing with a legitimately elected government it does not like and the punishment of innocents. It is now time for the UN or others to control the borders of Palestinian lands so that Israel can get back to controlling itself.

Paul Stephen

Yamba, NSW

THE world should condemn the US for blaming <u>Hamas</u> for provoking Israeli air strikes on Saturday without the US, in the same breath, condemning Israel for provoking the Palestinians by its occupation of Palestinian territory for the past 60 years, which is the real reason for Palestinian belligerence towards Israel. Until the US breaks away from its slavishly pro-Israel foreign policy and takes an even-handed approach, there will never be peace in the Middle East.

Bob Brock

Chapel Hill, Qld

<u>HAMAS</u> was elected by the Palestinians in Gaza and one thing, probably the only thing, one can say in its favour is that it's open about its absolute commitment to destroying Israel.

To understand the present Israeli defensive operations in Gaza, we have to recognise that <u>Hamas</u> are not Palestinian nationalists (one of their first acts on winning the election was to pull down Palestinian flags and replace them with Islamist flags) and that their publicly stated goal is not only the destruction of Israel but the creation of a pan-Arab Middle East under sharia law.

Israel has been subjected to rocket attacks from Gaza on a daily basis. Just like every other sovereign nation, Israel is entitled to do all within its power to defend itself. Would we expect any less of our own Government?

Bill Anderson

Surrey Hills, Vic

HAVING blockaded Gaza to the point where UN human rights organisations predicted a catastrophe, Israel now compounds the injustice by launching air attacks that in the initial stages have killed more than 200 people, most of them civilians.

Israel is by far the most powerful military nation in the Middle East and is prepared to use that power whenever it feels the urge to do so, as it demonstrated, tragically, in Lebanon. The rest of the world, Arab nations included, have looked away as Israel has imposed terrible suffering on the Palestinians in Gaza.

The madness of the <u>Hamas</u> militants who fired rockets into Israel's remote border area is now apparent. One Israeli has died but hundreds of Palestinians. And peace and sanity are as distant as ever in the region.

Vincent Matthews

Forestville, NSW

Kevin Andrews' `first-rate

intellect' will surprise ASIO

THE appointment of Kevin Andrews to head the Coalition's policy unit must have been a much appreciated Christmas present for the other Kevin, the one who periodically visits Australia (``Andrews dusted off to think policy", 27-28/12). The description of Andrews by Malcolm Turnbull as ``a first-class intellect with an impressive capacity to get across a huge amount of policy detail" will seem somewhat surprising to ASIO.

The role of Andrews in the Haneef affair, his bungling of Work Choices and his vigorous opposition to the 80 per cent popular support for legal euthanasia should enable the Coalition to enjoy more than one term in opposition. Sadly for the Opposition, Turnbull's praise of Andrews's ``first-class intellect" must surely have been made in a comparative sense.

Art Raiche

Killara, NSW

IF Malcolm turnbull has reached the stage of recycling failed Howard government ministers to rejuvenate his party, then the Liberals should prepare themselves fo a long stay on the opposition benches.

Norm Neill

Darlinghurst, NSW

IT has been reported that former NSW Supreme Court judge John Clarke QC criticised Kevin Andrews for ``not reflecting deeply enough" on his department's report on the arrest of Mohamed Haneef, for not asking to see ASIO's assessment and for his ``mystifying timing" in the cancellation of Haneef's visa. If that is the case, he would appear to be a perfect choice to head the Coalition's policy unit.

Malcolm Turnbull reportedly praised Andrews for his ``first-class intellect". Is the Opposition Leader also suggesting that the year 2009 should be of nine months duration commencing on April 1?

Gordon Hopkins

East Bowral, NSW

HAVING lived and experienced the need for personal security elsewhere in the world, I never cease to be amazed at the naivety of Australians about terrorism. With the benefit of hindsight Mohamed Haneef was only guilty by association, but whether the procedures followed in Haneef's case were an overreaction or not is, to my thinking, moot.

I would infinitely prefer to have the likes of Mick Keelty and Kevin Andrews protecting our safety and security than some half-baked, it-will-never-happen-to-us system that appears to be current ALP policy. It is because of men of this strength of character that we enjoy the freedoms we have been given.

Colin Gourley

Doncaster, Vic

Promises but no `activating'

I READ the article by George Megalogenis (`Last one standing", Inquirer, 27-28/12) with interest. Wayne Swan's views on the economy have some merit, I admit, but one comment, regarding the fact that the Coalition had not looked to the future when ``the money was rolling in from the commodities boom" and ``begun some serious long-term planning for the infrastructure for the future", set me thinking. Swan says that most of those plans could have by now been sitting in somebody's drawer and ``we could start activating them". Watching the Rudd Government over the past 12 months, I feel that there has been a lot of talk on various policies and there have been promises but not much activating as yet. Perhaps there are plans sitting in somebody's drawer somewhere?

Sylvia Becker

Victoria Park, Qld

Free ride for car makers

DURING the last half of the 20th century, as politicians and economists universally embraced globalisation, the number of countries manufacturing automobiles greatly increased. Competition saw great advances in technology, quality, choice and affordability. Put into practice, economic theory worked.

With recession a reality or threatening worldwide, many industries are now facing severe difficulties. When compared with many resource industries, which have seen product prices cut by well over 50 per cent, the problems of the auto industry pale into insignificance. And yet leaders of many countries, against the proven success of globalisation, have rushed to the aid of the automobile industry while other industries have been left to fail.

This generosity will not result in one more car being sold. It's a form of protectionism that will not see the production of cars any more efficient than would have been the case had true competition prevailed. It may have short-term appeal but the cost will be far more than the few billion dollars being tossed around now.

Peter Lane

Margaret River, WA

Consider the alternatives

JAMES Allan (``Yes, we're more US than them", 27-28/12) is absolutely right. For all its faults many of us who are critical of the US love her still, (as we do what's left of Britannia). But obvious dependency inevitably produces resentment, often disproportionately. In the individual family, as in the world family of nations.

The corrective we need to apply, as Allan says, is to consider the alternatives on display throughout the world. For example, the Taliban's treatment of <u>women</u>'s rights in Afghanistan (in education, for example) is a far less attractive alternative, even though many sweeping attacks on the US, as such, rarely make the comparison. The ongoing destruction of girls' schools and violent threats to <u>women</u> in Afghanistan should give us pause, when our troops and those of our allies are seeking to give stability in a coun-

try whose warlordism and corruption

are endemic.

Bruce Dawe

Caloundra, Qld

National service anyone?

JIM Molan's call for a 6000-strong Australian troop deployment to Afghanistan (``Assessing Australia's Afghanistan effort", Editorial, 27-28/12) would involve a larger commitment than we had supporting the US in Vietnam, where our maximum deployment at one time was about 5000.

The only way the Australian Defence Force could mount such an operation for any period of time would be for the Government to reintroduce conscription.

The ADF and federal governments of both persuasions have consistently shown that they are incapable of attracting the required troop numbers to the ADF through voluntary recruitment. Each year, on a per-capita basis, our military strength actually declines. Considering our current wealth and population, we have probably not been so militarily weak since the 1930s.

The failure of successive governments to adequately equip our service personnel and to provide for their meaningful ongoing training, along with low salaries and other problems associated with disability benefits and adequate indexation of veterans' superannuation, is enough to discourage many of our young people from engaging with the ADF.

Only the reintroduction of national service would overcome the ADF's operational manning problems. What political party in Australia is game enough to grasp the nettle and initiate that?

John Goold

Mudgeeraba, Qld

Be careful in Pinterland

YOUR editorial (``Artists to remember", 27-28/12) yokes together two creative people the world lost at Christmas in rather unfair terms. You suggest that where Harold Pinter pontificated, Eartha Kitt entertained. But Pinter's plays, in the right hands, are gloriously entertaining and darkly funny.

Similarly, Louis Nowra's generalisations are most unhelpful (``Williamson farewells Pinter, who `recast' humans'', 27-28/12). He says that he disliked the macho posturing of Pinter's male characters and their attitudes towards <u>women</u>. But which plays? Old Times? A Kind of Alaska? The Lover? It's always worth being very careful and very specific in Pinterland!

Carl Caulfield

Cooks Hill, NSW

VALE, Harold Pinter, feisty literary iconoclast. Too ill to attend his Nobel Prize-winning ceremony, he was still gutsy enough to use it to launch a scarifying attack by video on US/British policy in Iraq. Amongst his many memorable literary creations, who could forget the menacing strangers of plays like The Birthday Party who suddenly appear and jolt our complaceny with cryptic dialogue punctuated by long ... laden ... pauses?

Ron Sinclair

Bathurst, NSW

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

It would seem that, even in the current economic conditions, the union movement is more concerned with increasing their own pay and improving their own conditions than they are in preserving jobs for as many as possible (``Unions to go global on Rudd'', 27-28/12).

K.M. Gunn

Lower Mitcham, SA

The idea of Australia accepting Guantanamo Bay inmates is outrageous (``Rudd may take Gitmo inmates", 27-28/12). We don't accept other countries' toxic waste, so why should

we accept their toxic people?

Nick Byrne

Alice Springs, NT

His tills runneth over so the world according to Gerry Harvey is as it should be (``Retail gloom recedes as wallets get lighter", 24/12).

Bruce Mullinger

Kurnell, NSW

Well, that should stiffen their resolve! ("Viagra the way to a warlord's heart," 27-28/12).

Dave Robinson

Gladesville, NSW

News that airlines are reducing or eliminating fuel surcharges is cold comfort to those of us who have paid for our tickets but are yet to travel. Singapore Airlines has reduced its surcharges by \$164 on my fully paid flights to/from Istanbul in May, but has told me that I won't be getting

a refund.

Trevor Hay

Nannup, WA

THE next state election in NSW is more than two years away, so the Liberal Party should not be thinking already they have it won (``Liberals preparing for power", 27-28/12). Anything can happen between now and March 2011.

Con Vaitsas

Ashbury, NSW

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: December 28, 2008



SA urged to use its influnce to bring Palestinians to table

Cape Times (South Africa)
January 09, 2009 Friday
e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5 **Length:** 349 words

Body

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The SA Zionist Federation and SA Jewish Board of Deputies said they supported Israel's decision to launch a military operation against *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip.

Israel had tried to avoid the conflict, but *Hamas*'s action in continuing to fire rockets into Israel had compelled it to act to protect its citizens, they said.

They called on the South African government and the ANC to adopt a balanced approach and to use their special relationship with Palestinian leaders to persuade them to enter negotiations with Israel.

"Many South African citizens have strong ties to participants in the Gaza conflict, and we urge (them) to join the Jewish community in ensuring the conflict in the Middle East is not imported ... and allowed to disrupt the excellent relationships between communities."

aziz.hartley@inl.co.za

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



Israeli government shows it has no respect for human dignity

The Herald (South Africa)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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THE HERALD

Section: OPINION & EDITORIAL

Length: 353 words

Byline: Gift Siphiwo Ngqondi

Body

Israeli government shows it has no respect for human dignity

I AM disgusted by the serious crimes committed by the Zionist regime of Israel. I have never seen a government that has no respect for human dignity, a government that has killed more than 450 innocent <u>women</u> and children of Palestine for the past 10 days.

This government is behaving like the past racist and oppressive regime of the Nats, a regime that killed and maimed political and social activists. The actions of that regime did not detract from the path to freedom of South Africans and revolution led to the political breakthrough of 1994.

By the same token, the actions of the racist and Zionist regime of Israel won't stop the march to the total liberation of the people of Palestine.

Secondly, I find strange the reaction of the cruel regime that it is the <u>Hamas</u> that have incited violence when in fact it is the Israeli government that blockaded aid on health, infrastructure, sanitation and transport to the people of Gaza and the West Bank. It is the Israeli government that has not recognised an elected government of <u>Hamas</u>, portraying it as a terrorist government.

Thirdly, the Bush administration must also take the blame of supplying arms to Israel so as to kill Palestinians. It is high time the United Nations, European Union and the Arab League take serious action against this racist government.

Our government should also withdraw relations with Israel. Our government must also consider economic and trade sanctions.

We cannot fold our arms as South Africans when our brothers and sisters are being killed like flies in their own country by aggressors. One of our pillars of the struggle was international solidarity, and we must reflect this and pledge solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Mass democratic movements, labour federations and progressive formations of our country must stand up to the evil deeds by this Zionist regime of Israel. Enough is enough.

Down with the imperialist agenda, down. Down with the Zionist government of Israel, down.

Forward to the total liberation of Palestine.

, New Brighton, Port Elizabeth

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



International: Gaza: Voices from the frontline: 'It's a living hell and my children are petrified'

The Guardian - Final Edition

January 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 3

Length: 731 words

Body

Faysal Shawal, businessman in Gaza City

We haven't been outside in a week. We have no electricity, we have no water. There is shelling and air raids and they

don't stop, especially last night. There were raids everywhere +Ai from the sea, air and ground. They destroyed the school that my kids go to, the American school. What did this school do to the Israeli army? They are bombing everything. It's a living hell. My children are petriOAed. I feel responsible for them, they are innocent but I can't help them. The OAve of us sleep together but we don't sleep. The noise is terrifying. I feel like a 100-year-old man. My

business has been shut down now for 20 months because of the siege. We don't know where we are going. There's no justice in this world.

Narnin Serraj, works for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and lives in Gaza city with her three children and husband

For eight days we've lived in fear. No place in Gaza is safe. My kids are scared. I have three children. Adam, who is nine, has asthma. We don't have electricity so whenever he has an asthma attack we have to put the generator on so he can use the ventilator. Then we turn the generator oOA

again because there's very little fuel. We sleep in the hallway where it's a bit safer because when the bombs drop,

the whole building shakes. If anything happens, I hope it happens to me. I feel guilty for having children here.

Gaza has never been safe or healthy, and now I have three children whom I cannot protect. My youngest son is three and all the time he's telling stories about bombing. It's hard for my children to see me falling to pieces. I have lost all attachment to this place. What you see on the television is the physical devastation but you don't see what it's doing to our emotions. The only thing I think about is where they

are going to bomb again.

International: Gaza: Voices from the frontline: 'It's a living hell and my children are petrified'

Ahmed Al Dabba, 26, lives in eastern Gaza

Last night about 9pm we heard the tanks starting to cross into Gaza. I jumped up on to the roof, I saw them entering through Karni crossing. They started OAring artillery shells, it was very heavy, hundreds of shells. Eight landed on my uncle's house nearby. A neighbour's house was burnt. They

called the OAre service but no one came because the trucks were destroyed in raids. I spent most of the night counting the shells. In one hour I counted 200 shells. There

was shooting but I don't know where. Now there are two

tanks stationed at the end my street. From 9pm till 5am I was unable to sleep. I'm tired and exhausted.

Majeda Al Sagga, community worker at the Culture and Free Thought Association, in Khan Yunis

Every single night we hear explosions everywhere then all of a sudden the town goes quiet and you don't know what's happening. We don't have electricity most of the time and the phones often don't work.

My brother lives in Gaza City in front of the port where there+Aos a lot of action. It's very hard to call him. I manage to call him every 12 hours, sometimes every 24 hours. We watch the television to see what's going on. (The children) don't sleep at all and they are scared all the time. They ask us questions and we really don't know what to say. The smallest boy keeps asking why the birds keep OAying

away and why the planes are targeting them. They ask why the planes bomb our neighbours and why they bomb the mosque. They've never seen Israelis, they don't know who they are.

We don't want them to grow up with hatred. It's very, very diOCcult and we are really tired of this.

Asma Al Ghoul, a journalist, working for the Palestinian paper Al Ayyam which *Hamas* banned from Gaza

The planes attack everything that moves in the streets, nothing is safe in Gaza. When I see the children in the

hospitals I start crying. The children lie there without arms, without legs, without speaking, they don+Aot even cry.

In my work as a journalist everything is happening too quickly, we don't have time to write about it. It's all

crazy. <u>Hamas</u> keeps spreading rumours, that it has kidnapped soldiers, to lift the people's spirits like Hezbollah did during the Lebanon war.

The victim here isn't *Hamas* or Israel. *Hamas* has become

more popular. The victims here are the civilians, the

ordinary men, women and children.

At night I try to sing to my son and to create new stories for him to distract him from the bombs. Yesterday he told me

that he didn't want to hear the stories any more. He's just four years old.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Bloodshed that puts lasting peace in peril; COMMENT

Daily Mail (London)

January 5, 2009 Monday

1ST Edition

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Section: Pg. 14

Length: 551 words

Body

AS Melanie Phillips argues so powerfully on this page, the Israelis were sorely provoked into launching their assault on Gaza, from which <u>Hamas</u> terrorists have been bombarding them with thousands of rockets for more than seven years.

After all, wouldn't we expect our own ministers to take action if we were under almost relentless attack from a terroristcontrolled coastal strip? Ours was the Government, remember, which invaded faraway Iraq on the strength of vague rumours - which turned out to be false - that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, ready for use against us within 45 minutes.

So who are we to condemn the Israelis for invading neighbouring Gaza, in response to murderous attacks launched with all-too-real weapons? And yet...and yet...

Like so many of our readers, the Mail is horrified by the suffering now being endured by innocent men, <u>women</u> and children in an assault that many will see as out of proportion to the *Hamas* threat.

We have grave doubts, too, over the likely consequences of the invasion for the Israeli people themselves.

Isn't there a strong risk that, far from making them safer, it will subject them to even greater danger in the long term, by heightening tensions in the region? Yes, <u>Hamas</u> is wholly to blame for provoking the Israeli offensive. But the longer the bloodshed goes on, the more perilous it will be for a lasting peace..

Ever the electioneer APPEARING to rule out an early election, Gordon Brown tells the BBC's Andrew Marr: 'It's the furthest thing from my mind.' Forgive us if we sound a note of scepticism.

There may be many reasons why the Prime Minister is inclined to put off polling day - not least, his fear of losing.

But in a democracy, elections are never far from any politician's mind.

Look at the way Mr Brown stagemanaged his interview, inviting Mr Marr to present the whole show from the fireside at Number 10 - including unconnected contributions from Anne Robinson and actor Michael Sheen.

Wasn't this the action of a man thinking hard about potential votes? (Since when, anyway, was the Prime Minister's official residence meant to double as a BBC studio? The corporation should be wary of cosying up to a party leader like this.) Then there's Mr Brown's plan to spend taxpayers' money on creating 100,000 jobs, in imitation of Roosevelt's New Deal of the 1930s.

Bloodshed that puts lasting peace in peril COMMENT

Leave aside that America's recovery owed more to the Second World War than to the president's initiative.

Can we be sure Mr Brown's job creation scheme will be tailored to Britain's economic interests - or is he thinking more of his party's electoral needs? The Mail will be watching closely to see where, if they do indeed materialise, these 100,000 jobs are to be located. If the bulk of them go to Labour-held marginals, our worst suspicions will be confirmed..

Duty takes a break

A FULL week after the bombardment of Gaza began, Tony Blair finally arrives in Jerusalem to resume his duties as special envoy to the Middle East.

So what's been keeping him? Nothing more pressing, so Gordon Brown informs us, than a family holiday in the UK.

You might think Mr Blair would have put his Christmas celebrations on hold at this dark hour for the peace process he is supposed to oversee. But no.Was he too exhausted by his moneygrubbing slog round the American lecture circuit?

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Protesters decry invasion of Gaza

The Courier Mail (Australia)
January 5, 2009 Monday

1 - First with the news Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 366 words

Byline: Michael Madigan CANBERRA

Body

"I've made clear... our very deep concern'

Acting Prime Minister Julia Gillard

ISRAEL is defying worldwide opinion, warning its war in the Gaza strip will be prolonged.

As thousands of protesters turned out in Sydney, Melbourne and around the world yesterday to condemn the escalating violence, the Israeli Government signalled it was prepared to call up tens of thousands more troops.

And Defence Minister Ehud Barak told Israelis the conflict "will not be easy, will not

be short".

By late yesterday at least 463 Palestinians had been killed, prompting emotional antiwar rallies.

In Sydney, parts of the inner city were blocked, as thousands of people protested against what they said was an Israeli military assault.

"We are here today to express our solidarity with the people in Gaza and tell them that we are with them," spokeswoman Rihab Charida told the crowd. One protester burnt an Israeli flag and others carried coffins.

The protests in Melbourne were more subdued, with both pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian supporters holding separate demonstrations.

World leaders have also condemned Israel's offensive in Gaza, with Britain calling for an immediate ceasefire and France describing the military escalation as ``dangerous''.

But acting Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard has so far refused to criticise Israel, while again condemning *Hamas*'s rocket attacks over the border.

"I've made clear on behalf of the Australian Government our very deep concern about the resumption of violence;

Protesters decry invasion of Gaza

our condemnation of the actions of <u>Hamas</u> in shelling into southern Israel; our concern about civilian casualties; our concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza," Ms Gillard said on the weekend.

Australian Greens Leader Bob Brown has repeatedly called on the Australian Government to speak out against Israel's actions.

"We call on the acting Prime Minister to speak out against the violent and disproportionate action by Israeli leaders which has lead to the death of 400 Palestinians including many **women**, children and innocent men," he said.

``Australia's voice should also be raised against the threat of an imminent invasion of Gaza by the Israeli army and instead push for . . . peace talks."

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



Old graves dug up to bury new dead in Gaza

The New Zealand Herald

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 794 words

Body

GAZA CITY - After three infants from the Samouni family were killed in shelling, relatives bundled up the boys' tiny bodies and hastily buried them in the grave of a long-dead aunt.

There was no space in the crammed Gaza City graveyard and it was too dangerous to reach the area's only cemetery with space to dig fresh graves.

More than two weeks into a blistering Israeli offensive that has killed more than 900 Palestinians, Gazans are struggling to find places to bury their dead. One family buried their slain son with his grandfather. Another man was buried with his cousin. Cemeteries throughout Gaza City that were closed for burial have now reopened.

"Gaza is all a graveyard," said gravedigger Salman Omar, who said he has been busy since Israel's operation began.

The densely populated Gaza Strip, just 40 kilometres long by about 10 kilometres wide, has always suffered from a shortage of burial space. But Israel's shelling and deep ground incursion has made it impossible for residents to reach Martyrs Cemetery - the only open graveyard in eastern Gaza City - at a time when there's a rush of people needing burial.

Israel's offensive is aimed at crushing Gaza's rulers, the militant group <u>Hamas</u>. But Palestinian medical officials believe roughly half of the dead, including the Samouni cousins, are civilians.

"We buried them quickly," said Iyad Samouni, 26, from al-Awda hospital in Gaza City, where he was being treated for shrapnel wounds. "We were afraid we'd be shelled. My relatives were trying to open other graves to prepare for the other dead but we didn't get time."

Samouni said the family fled the graveyard after they came under fire from a warplane.

The children were killed in what the family and the UN says was an Israeli shelling attack on a house in eastern Gaza where soldiers had ordered them to stay to avoid nearby fighting.

A whole part of the clan was wiped out. The exact number is unknown - figures vary from 14 to 30 people. Medics believe there are still bodies they have not been able to recover more bodies under the rubble because of fighting in the area.

Israel's military denies the account, but says the house may have come under attack in a crossfire with <u>Hamas</u> militants.

Old graves dug up to bury new dead in Gaza

Muslim tradition allows for graves to be reused when needed. Old graves conceal small underground rooms used in Muslim tradition to bury the dead. Mourners pull away a covering slab, push the bones of long-deceased relatives aside and lower in the newly dead.

" You have a martyr: you need an immediate solution, " said Salman Omar, 24, a gravedigger at Gaza City's Sheik Ridwan cemetery, meant to be closed to new burials, but filled with men carrying in bodies for burial. In Muslim tradition, **women** rarely attend to graves.

"You look for where your grandmother, uncle or mother was buried, and bury them there. If there's three or four, bury them in the same grave," said Omar, who spoke while shovelling earth and smoking a cigarette. Like most Gazans, he calls slain Palestinians martyrs.

At Sheik Ridwan on Tuesday, relatives hammered away at the concrete tomb of Moyhideen Sarhi, killed last May in an Israeli strike against *Hamas* militants. His brother Kamel, 22, another *Hamas* militant, was killed on Tuesday in another airstrike. The family feared approaching Martyrs Cemetery and made do by laying Kamel next to his brother.

" As they were in life they are in death, " said their cousin, Salim, 28.

Before they lowered the body, the men pushed aside the slab protecting Mohyideen's remains from dirt and reverently kissed his shroud.

Even the pathways in the hilly cemetery are littered with graves.

Older graves have marble slabs, when Gazans buried their dead in more affluent times. Relatives of the more recently buried make do with a small tile, or a name etched in concrete. For others, there's no name at all, just the tombstone of the older relative whose grave was reoccupied with the newly dead.

One family arrived with their son, 14, who they said died of wounds in an Israeli strike.

A gravedigger approached, asking if the family had a deceased relative whose grave they could reopen. Street children hoping for small change scrambled to look for the graves of relatives the family could use.

Another group of men in jeans dug up their grandfather's grave. The loud crashing sound of an Israeli airstrike nearby made some of them wearily look up. Their relative, Mohammed Abu Leila, was a militant killed in a strike.

"I've buried a policeman in his mother's grave," said Omar, the gravedigger. "I buried three brothers in one hole. I buried children with their mothers, you don't ask questions: it's just important to find a place and bury them.":

- AP

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



Israeli bombardment of Gaza

The Irish Times

January 2, 2009 Friday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 892 words

Body

Madam, How much more evidence do we require that Israel does not seriously want peace with the Palestinians? The attacks on the Gaza Strip in recent days are further testament to its desire to do whatever the hell it likes regardless of international opinion and of what could be considered rational thinking and action.

The fact that elections are due to take place shortly in Israel adds another grotesque twist to its actions.

Yes, Palestinian militants have fired home-made rockets into Israel and Israel has the right to protect its citizens. But the incredibly disproportionate nature of its response suggests that Israel does not value the lives of Palestinian citizens, and most certainly not on an equal basis with its own.

Seventeen Israeli civilians have been killed in seven years by these home-made rockets. In contrast, over 340 Palestinians have been killed in the past couple of days. Estimates suggest that since its withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Israel has killed 150 Palestinians in Gaza for every Israeli killed.

Why exactly does Israel not send in its vaunted Mossad to take out the rocket-launching terrorists? The answer is simple: it doesn t wish to risk its own people. It is safer, from an Israeli casualty perspective, to drop bombs from US-made fighter planes thousands of feet in the sky. The resultant high civilian casualty rate doesn t matter.

Would we allow any other Western state to carry out such barbaric and grotesque action? Israel, it seems, can do as it wishes—all because of events that occurred over 60 years ago in Germany, in which the Palestinians played no part. Yet they have become the indirect victims of the Holocaust, with the oppressed now the playing the part of oppressor. Yours, etc,

TOM WARD,

Monastery Road,

Dublin 22.

Madam, The death of non-combatants in the current conflagration, whether Palestinian or Israeli, is deeply depressing. What is even more depressing is that many of the Palestinian non-combatants, including children, are buried wrapped in the green flag of *Hamas*, the terrorist organisation that has precipitated the latest conflict.

When will the ordinary, decent Palestinian people recognise the folly of nihilistic terrorism and reject those who propose violence and terrorism against Israel as a way forward? The Palestinians need a new leadership that is committed to a just and lasting peace with Israel that will eventually lead to a two-state solution where both Israeli

Israeli bombardment of Gaza

and Palestinian parity of esteem is allowed to flourish. If peace is possible, then it is necessary, because it is the greatest hope of every human heart. Yours, etc,

MICHAEL KELLY,

Kilmainham,

Dublin 8.

Madam, Reading some of the contributions to your Letters page, I cannot help but wonder what planet some writers are on. Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip three-and-a-half years ago, removing all military presence and civilian settlements. Palestinian terrorists viewed this action as a sign of weakness and exploited it for their own ends. In the face of escalating provocation, Israel has abided by the ceasefire agreement facilitated by the Egyptians.

<u>Hamas</u>, on the other hand has continued to fire rockets into Israeli towns of Sderot and latterly Ashkelon. <u>Hamas</u> has refused to renegotiate a renewal of the ceasefire in spite of encouragement from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority. It has continued to call for the destruction of Israel and its replacement with an Islamic state.

Israel continues to seek out partners for negotiations of a full settlement with the aim of establishing a two-state solution. For how long will the Palestinian leadership grasp defeat from the jaws of victory? How long will they live in the shadow of the failed legacy of Arafat? As the Egyptian foreign minister declared last Sunday, they have only themselves to blame.

Israel has conducted this war with impeccable precision. Yes, more than 300 have died, but the overwhelming majority were combatants. I defy any military force to conduct an operation in this type of setting without some civilian casualties, all of which are regretted.

Perhaps all those who are jumping to condemn Israeli actions should pause for a moment and think: why were they not so vocal when *Hamas* was attacking innocent Israeli civilians over the past few months?

Progress will not be achieved until all sides recognise that both Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate rights to nationhood. Demonising only Israel is not a constructive contribution. Yours, etc,

ANDREW J. SHAW,

Locksley Grange,

Belfast.

Madam, What is all this disproportionate rubbish, when speaking of Israel s response to continual terrorist aggression? In a war situation, one wins by superior firepower not by playing for a draw. Yours, etc,

ÉAMONN GAVIN,

Terenure,

Dublin 6w.

A chara, The deaths of over 300 men <u>women</u> and children in Gaza in one day last Sunday must cause the world to pause. We must now say to Israel that enough slaughter is enough. As a democrat I do not support violent Palestinian attacks on Israel, however their perpetrators justify them. Equally, however, I believe the international community cannot stand by and watch the mass murder of Palestinians by the government of a people who surely know more than enough about the effects of genocide. Is mise,

CIIr SEAN Ó hARGÁIN

Israeli bombardment of Gaza

(Labour Party),

Kilkenny.

Load-Date: January 2, 2009



From Tel Aviv to Teheran, with love

The Jerusalem Post
November 11, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1933 words

Byline: Caroline B. Glick

Highlight: Our World. The number of right-wingers who take the law into their own hands is tiny, politically isolated, and they have no money; the anti-Zionist Left is part of a well-funded international movement engaged in political

warfare against Israel

Body

Two weeks ago, the Palestinians and their anti-Zionist Israeli and international partners finally produced a smoking gun. They had a videotape of evil settlers brutally attacking poor, defenseless Palestinians as they innocently picked olives with their enlightened supporters in a grove by the Tel Rumeida neighborhood in Hebron.

The local media went into a feeding frenzy. The footage led the television news broadcasts. Photos taken from the video were plastered across the front pages of the newspapers. Radio talk show hosts denounced the criminal settlers and celebrated the guileless Palestinians and their heroic Israeli supporters. The Olmert-Livni-Barak government was quick to weigh in, promising stiff punishment for the Jewish fascists involved and a curtailment of their supporters' civil rights.

In the weeks that have followed, and with elections looming, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak have stepped up their attacks on the evil right- wing extremists. At Saturday night's memorial ceremony/political rally for slain prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv, Barak called right-wing activists "cancers." He claimed that they are a "threat to democracy." And he pledged, "We will uproot this evil from within us."

The crowd loved Barak's statement. The few audience members who might have booed him had already been beaten and arrested by police for disturbing the peace. A handful of anti-leftist activists from the student group Im Tirtzu came to Kikar Rabin carrying signs decrying leftist demonization of the Right. The police beat them and carted them off before the rally began.

If it were true that settlers are marauding around Judea and Samaria beating innocent Palestinians, perhaps it would be possible to understand this assault against the Right. But as it works out, the videotape that was supposed to be the definitive proof that settlers are violent criminals was a fabrication. It was simply the latest anti-Israel snuff film brought to us by our friends at Pallywood Productions. These are the same creative filmmakers whose previous credits include the fabricated IDF shooting of Muhammad al-Dura, the Jenin massacre that wasn't, the Kafr Kana massacre that wasn't and a host of other notable blood libels.

The inconvenient truth that these activists remain liars was exposed at the remand hearings of the settlers accused of beating the Palestinian olive harvesters. As the NFC news Web site reported exclusively on Sunday, the Palestinians showed their film as evidence against the arrested offenders in two separate hearings before two different judges at the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court. And at each hearing, after viewing the film the judges

From Tel Aviv to Teheran, with love

concluded that through heavy editing, the video had inverted reality. Both stated that it was impossible to know who began the fight - the Palestinians and their Israeli and foreign supporters who beat the settlers, or the settlers who walked to the grove on Shabbat carrying nothing but their prayer shawls and hit them back.

The judges also noted that one of the Palestinians threw a large rock at the back of one of the settlers after he and his friends had disengaged from the fight. The judges expressed anger and amazement at the police for failing to arrest the Palestinian who had clearly attacked the Jewish defendant without provocation.

IT GOES without saying that the local media have chosen to ignore the court's exposure of the latest hoax. The truth doesn't fit their anti-right-wing narrative and so it isn't being covered.

What the local media and politicians such as Barak and Livni who seek to criminalize the Right for political gain refuse to acknowledge is that their embrace of these lies not only harms the settlers, it harms the country as a whole.

Although from the rap they've gotten from the political Left and its supporters in the media, it seems like right-wing extremists are both numerous and powerful, the fact of the matter is that the number of right-wingers who reject the authority of the state or would take the law into their own hands is tiny. And they are politically isolated both at home and abroad and have no money.

In stark contrast, the anti-Zionist, Israeli Left is an integral part of a well-funded international movement actively engaged in waging political warfare not against the settlers, but against Israel as a whole. The end of this political war is Israel's destruction. The anti- Zionist Israeli Left advances this destruction both by directly assisting terror groups and by indirectly assisting terror groups through activities aimed at delegitimizing Israel's right to defend itself.

The clear collusion between both Israeli and international anti-Israel leftist activists with terrorist groups like <u>Hamas</u> is nowhere more evident than in the terror-supporting International Solidarity Movement's newest spin-off, the Free Gaza campaign. On Saturday, this group broke the IDF's sea blockade of the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gazan coast for the third time in recent months by sailing a ship filled with rabidly pro-jihadist and anti-Israel European politicians from Cyprus to Gaza.

According to a credible source with close ties to the operation, the Free Gaza campaign works closely with Israeli far-left groups including Anarchists against the Wall, Gush Shalom, Gisha, Machsom Watch, New Profile and **Women** in Black. These organizations are generously funded by the US-based New Israel Fund, by European governments and by anti-Israel church groups like the Quakers. The Free Gaza campaign's first ship, which arrived in Gaza in late August, was led by Israeli anti-Zionist activist and former lecturer at Ben-Gurion University Jeff Halper.

The Free Gaza campaign is a clear assault on Israel's national security. Under the banner of "human rights," this new ferry service between Cyprus and Gaza is meant to compromise the country's ability to combat terror operations and to provide political support for *Hamas*. Crew members and passengers on board these boats meet with *Hamas* terror commanders in Gaza and coordinate future missions.

Their newest campaign is to prevent the navy from interdicting fishing boats. <u>Hamas</u> and other terror groups make wide use of fishing boats to import weapons and transport terror personnel from abroad into Gaza. By demonizing the navy for interdicting fishing boats, and in open collusion with <u>Hamas</u>, the activists provide political cover for weapons transfers and jihadist maritime traffic into and out of Gaza.

To date, Israel has chosen not to intercept the Free Gaza campaign's boats out of concern that taking such necessary action will prove a public relations disaster both at home and abroad. And this concern is reasonable. But by taking no diplomatic or military steps to prevent this terror-supporting traffic from continuing and expanding, the government allows these Israeli and European terror supporters to strengthen *Hamas*'s war machine and legitimize *Hamas*'s objective of destroying Israel.

From Tel Aviv to Teheran, with love

Official Israel's failure to act against this breach of its security is directly related to its support of Israeli anti-Zionist groups when they direct their guns at the Israeli Right - rather than Israel as a whole. As a practical matter, it is difficult for the government to show that the Free Gaza campaign actively supports the war against Israel when it willingly embraces the bona fides of the Free Gaza campaign's supporters when they attack settlers, or when the government adopts these organizations' false assertion that the Right is the greatest threat to the country.

By the same token, it is difficult for the government to discredit films purporting to demonstrate the human rights plight of Gazans as Pallywood propaganda flicks when the government accepts these films as accurate when their culprits are right-wing activists.

BUT WHILE the domestic Left sees a distinction between its right-wing opponents and the country as a whole, the international community sees no distinction between the two. Indeed, the international community has used the cover that official Israel provides anti-Zionist activists for their settler vilifying activities in order to advance the cause of criminalizing Israel as a whole.

Case in point is what has become known as the Durban II conference in Geneva. Durban I, it will be recalled, was the UN's 2001 "anti-racism" conference in Durban, South Africa. The conference, which took place the week before the jihadist attacks on the US, was an anti-Semitic hate- fest. The American and Israeli delegations walked out as Israel and the Jewish people were castigated as the greatest human rights abusers, genocide committers, apartheid propagators and general all purpose bad guys in the entire world.

The Nazi-like propaganda emanating from the conference led to violent attacks against Jews all over the world. Durban I's resolutions also provided the policy blueprint for much of political warfare that has been waged against Israel by so-called human rights groups ever since. These include the violent demonstrations against the security fence organized by anti-Zionist Israeli groups, the Free Gaza campaign they support and the international boycotts against Israeli exports and academics they advocate.

Today, the UN is busily organizing its follow-up conference that will be held next year in Geneva. As the watchdog group Eye on the UN reported over the weekend, the conference's organizing committee just met and approved most of the resolutions it is set to adopt at Geneva. These resolutions again castigate Israel as the chief violator of human rights in the world. Israel is accused of committing genocide, crimes against humanity and being an apartheid state. It is also condemned as the most serious threat to international peace and security.

But of course, what starts with Israel doesn't end with Israel. The conference organizers have used the basic unanimity about Israel's criminal nature to launch an assault against the foundations of Western civilization. In addition to the numerous and repetitious attacks against Israel and Jews, the conference organizers passed multiple resolutions calling for the abrogation of freedom of expression and the criminalization of political speech in order to outlaw discussion of Islamic terrorism and block counterterror efforts in the West.

Among the conference's chief organizers are Iran, Libya, Egypt and Cuba. Iran is the vice-chairman of the executive committee responsible for planning Durban II. Much of the language in the proposed resolutions is taken directly from resolutions passed at a planning session last year in Teheran.

Israel had no hand in organizing this conference, which, following Canada, it announced it will boycott. But over the years, it could have taken actions that might have tempered or weakened the international coalition arrayed against it

If the government had outlawed anti-Israel groups like Machsom Watch, New Profile, Gisha, Gush Shalom, <u>Women</u> in Black and Anarchists against the Wall, rather than tolerate them on account of their activities against settlers, it could at least have weakened their efforts. Had they been disbanded, they would have had less capacity to legitimize and assist Palestinians and Europeans who engage in political warfare against Israel on the ground.

By refusing to recognize the international consequences of their domestic battle against their political opponents on the Right, the Olmert-Livni-Barak government and the local media have strengthened Israel's enemies in their battle to destroy the country.

Graphic

Photo: THE FREE Gaza campaign, whose third boat is seen here landing last week, is generously funded by the US-based New Israel Fund, by European governments and by anti-Israel church groups like the Quakers. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



<u>Children die in Israeli bombing near school in 'shocked' Gaza; 'There is</u> nowhere safe. Everyone is terrorised and traumatised'

The Western Mail

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 1196 words

Byline: Western Mail reporter

Body

INTERNATIONAL outrage grew over civilian deaths in Gaza last night after an Israeli bombardment killed at least 34 people, many of them children, near a UN school.

Hundreds of Palestinians had sought safety at the school after fleeing from a refugee camp in the face of Israeli advances.

It was the second deadly attack nearaUNschool in hours, and the worst since Israel sent ground forces into Gaza last weekend.

Nearly 600 Palestinians, including dozens of civilians, have now died in the onslaught.

Ignoring international calls for a ceasefire, Israeli soldiers edged closer to Gaza's major population centres. A total of 58 Palestinians were killed in fighting yesterday with just two confirmed as militants.

The rising civilian death toll has drawn international condemnation and raised concerns of a looming humanitarian disaster.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown last night warned the Middle East was facing its "darkest moment yet".

Many Gazans are without electricity or running water, thousands have been displaced from their homes and residents say that with distribution disrupted, food supplies are running thin.

"There's nowhere safe in Gaza. Everyone here is terrorised and traumatised," John Ging, the top UN official in Gaza, said after the first strike on the compound of a UN school killed three people.

The United Nations said three civilians were killed in the first airstrike.

The second airstrike landed about 10 yards outside the school in the northern Gaza town of Jebaliya.

Dr Bassam Abu Warda, director of Kamal Radwan Hospital, said 34 people were killed.

Majed Hamdan, a news photographer, said he reached the scene shortly after the attacks. He said many children were among the dead.

Children die in Israeli bombing near school in 'shocked' Gaza 'There is nowhere safe. Everyone is terrorised and traumatised'

"I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said. "In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there was not enough space for the wounded."

UN officials say they provided their location co-ordinates to Israel's army to ensure that their buildings in Gaza were not targeted. The army declined to comment, but said <u>Hamas</u> often used schools, mosques and civilian areas for cover.

The International Red Cross said an ambulance post was hit as well yesterday, injuring one medical worker.

Ten Israelis have died since the operation began, including a soldier who was shot yesterday.

"I am appealing to political leaders here and in the region and the world to get their act together and stop this," Mr Ging said, speaking at Gaza's largest hospital. "They are responsible for these deaths."

United Nations staff estimate around 15,000 people have fled to 23 UN-run schools they have turned into makeshift refuges. UN food aid has halted in the northern Gaza Strip because officials fear residents would risk their lives to reach distribution centres.

Israel says it will not stop the assault until its southern towns are freed of the threat of Palestinian rocket fire and it receives international guarantees that <u>Hamas</u>, a militant group backed by Iran and Syria, will not restock its weapons stockpile.

It blames *Hamas* for the civilian casualties, saying the group intentionally seeks cover in crowded residential areas.

"The battle is bitter but unavoidable. We set out on this operation in order to deal <u>Hamas</u> a heavy blow and to alter living conditions in the south of the country and to block smuggling into the Gaza Strip," Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak.

The army says it has dealt a harsh blow to <u>Hamas</u>, killing 130 militants in the past two days and greatly reducing the rocket fire. At least 15 rockets were fired yesterday and one landed in the town of Gadera, about 25 miles from the Gaza border, lightly wounding a three-month-old baby, police said. At the outset of the fighting, militants launched dozens of rockets each day.

In Geneva, the International Red Cross said Gaza was in a "full-blown" humanitarian crisis. Its head of operations, Pierre Kraehenbuehl, said the few remaining power supplies could collapse at any moment.

Israeli leaders say there is no humanitarian crisis and that they have allowed the delivery of vital supplies.

It was a view contradicted by Gordon Brown who yesterday said the situation was a humanitarian crisis.

"This is the darkest moment yet for the Middle East and it affects the whole of the world," he said.

"It's because of that that we must get humanitarian aid that we are promising in."

Mr Brown said he had been discussing the situation with fellow world leaders, including from Egypt and Turkey, and has put forward proposals for making progress.

"I am hopeful that the basis on which an immediate ceasefire can take place can be found," he told reporters in Downing Street.

The Premier said any deal would have to solve issues of weapons being smuggled into the Gaza Strip through tunnels, as well as ensuring security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Mr Brown added: "It's also because of the violence of war that we must work as hard as possible over the next few hours, and days if necessary, so that there is an immediate ceasefire.

Children die in Israeli bombing near school in 'shocked' Gaza 'There is nowhere safe. Everyone is terrorised and traumatised'

"I believe that the proposals that would achieve that are first of all an immediate ceasefire, which means of course no rocket attacks into Gaza as well as no Israeli troops in Gaza.

"It also means an end to the tunnels and the arms trafficking. And it also means something else that is necessary to complete that: the opening up of the borders under international supervision."

Asked what form the international supervision should take, the Prime Minister replied: "We will need international engagement.

"It is not possible to see a solution to this without some kind of international engagement that will protect the security of the Israeli people and will create the viability for open borders to be given to the Palestinian area in Gaza."

Rise in anti-Semitic attacks in Britain

Anti-Semitic attacks in Britain have risen since the upsurge of hostilities in Gaza, a group which protects Jewish people said yesterday.

The Community Security Trust has noted 24 incidents since December 29, mainly in London.

They included an arson attack on a synagogue in north west London on Sunday night.

CST spokesman Mark Gardner said: "There has been a significant rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents, especially when compared with what is usually a very quiet time of year for racist, anti-Jewish attacks.

"It is a pattern with which we and the police are now sadly familiar, whereby hysteria is whipped up against Israel, and British Jews then suffer a wave of anti-Semitism.

"This is how racist attacks work. You have a grinding level of however many you expect in a year, then these trigger events lead to a sudden surge."

In the attack on the synagogue in Brondesbury, arsonists tried to smash a window, but failed because of the toughened protective glass.

Mr Gardner said: "Having been thwarted they then appear to have attempted to set the front door alight with petrol, causing some damage to the exterior of the premises. Police, CST and fire brigade attended the scene."

Graphic

ATTACKS: Israeli soldiers take cover as a mobile artillery weapon fires towards the southern Gaza Strip, on the Israel side of the border with Gaza, yesterday

CASUALTY: Palestinians carry a boy who, according to Palestinian medical sources, was injured in Israeli attacks

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Government contortions, public anger

Guardian.com January 3, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 1496 words

Highlight: Jack Shenker: Egyptian complicity in Israel's Gaza bloodbath is giving fresh impetus to struggles against

the Mubarak regime

Body

Doublespeak absurdity is plentiful at the moment; I thought I'd had more than my fair share of it in the West Bank this week, watching Israel's brazen PR zealots deliver soundbite after soundbite into television cameras, each of them notable only for their heart-stopping audacity. But that was before I returned to Cairo to hear the Mubarak government's breathtaking contortions as it tried to justify its complicity in Israel's Gazan bloodbath.

The pages of Egypt's state-owned newspapers are an inky testament to George Orwell's claim that "Political language ... is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind." A few brief examples: Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni visits President Mubarak on the eve of the military offensive to secure his approval; her Egyptian counterpart claims that Mubarak had got wind of what was about to happen and had summoned "that woman" to Cairo to persuade her to stop the attack.* Egypt leaves the Rafah border largely sealed as bombs fall on Gazans, citing in its defence an expired treaty to which it is not even a signatory; government spokesmen insist that Egypt is acting in the Palestinian national interest by thwarting Israel's plan to annex Gaza to its Arab neighbour. * Protecting his own fast-melting political skin, Mubarak spends months helping to isolate *Hamas* and maintains a brutal crackdown on its Egyptian colleagues, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood; as Israeli missiles seek out *Hamas* targets, he keeps a straight face while telling the Egyptian people that Zionist leaders have blood on their hands and that the Palestinians must stand united.Orwell also said that "During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." When deceit is so pervasive though, it's hard to know where to begin the revolution. One good place to start is the prism through which Egypt's role in the Gazan mess is viewed by the domestic and international media. It's a prism that distorts and misdirects, both masking and deepening the most important dividing line in the Middle East today ¬- the one between neoliberal regimes and their people. Egypt's beleaguered politicians have come under sustained fire since the Gazan assault began, and are smarting from the verbal volleys. Hassan Nasrallah's call on the Egyptian masses to rise up in their millions to force open the Rafah border gate received short shrift from Mubarak minister Aboul Gheit, who told the Hizbullah leader that his country's armed forces were ready, if necessary, "to protect Egypt from people like you". And resentment at Egypt's growing pariah status in the eyes of the Arab world is not limited to regime acolytes. Demonstrations outside Egypt's international embassies, the shooting of an Egyptian border guard by Hamas gunmen, and finally a widely-circulated article by the Independent's Robert Fisk which attacked Egypt's national "disgrace" and "malaise" have provoked a backlash even among trenchant government critics. "I'm sick of the sudden 'let's blame Egypt' mentality," wrote "Fattractive woman", a female Muslim blogger. The blogger known as Sandmonkey went further in a post about Jordanian, Lebanese and Syrian responses to Egypt's position, laying into "all of you f*****s who are badmouthing my country, which - by the way - fought four f*****g wars for the Palestinian cause and lost more people than all of you."The international press has largely sought to explain and frame these clashes between Egypt and its critics in one of two ways. The first is geopolitical, lining up the prowestern governments of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia against the counter-alignment of Libya, Syria, Iran and its proxies, Hizbullah and Hamas. The second is domestic, ranging the forces of moderation and reason (personified by Mubarak and his party, the NDP) against the darker recesses of political Islam in Egypt (embodied by the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters). Either way, the critical distinction is drawn between the calm and sensible mindset of a US and Israeli-allied Egyptian government and its irrational and hate-filled detractors, be they terrorist mouthpieces in the Arab League or Egypt's own Islamists marching in their thousands in support of *Hamas*. The emphasis on this distinction is deliberate and wrong. Certainly there are two regional political blocs in the Middle East and this has helped fuel the diplomatic war of words over Egypt's stance on Gaza. And yes, the Muslim Brotherhood has been out in force in the streets here, using Palestinian deaths in Gaza to energise its support base. But the key to unlocking the complex Egyptian response to Gaza is the battle between the Egyptian people and its crony-capitalist regime. It's a battle that largely goes unreported in the western press, not least because it doesn't fit comfortably with pre-existing stereotypes about the political dynamics of the region. These focus on religious and sectarian division or high-level spats between autocratic leaders; there is no space for supposedly banal news about the impact Washington-imposed economic orthodoxy is having on citizens, or the popular fightbacks that break out daily against it. As many Egyptian activists have shown me, the Palestinian cause has always been inextricably linked in Egyptian eyes to Egypt's own home-grown struggle against corruption, repression and the naked looting of state assets by a western-propped business and political glitterati. Early demonstrations against Mubarak's dictatorship in the 1990s rallied around the slogan "The road to Jerusalem lies through Cairo"; those attending understood that the status guo in Palestine was reinforced by the financial interests of their own regime and the security apparatus that supported it. The aggressive new privatisation programme pursued by the Mubarak regime since 2004, and the corruption scandals and spiralling unemployment and inflation accompanying it (even as the country delivers IMF "poster-boy" figures on economic growth) is seen as part and parcel of the global interests that keep Gaza under siege and consign Palestinian self-determination to a pipe dream. Despite internal disunity, opposition movements often understood that forces of money and power governments in America, Europe, Israel and their Arab-regime cheerleaders, plus the local and international corporate entities profiting from economic liberalisation in the region - acted as a coherent and effective cabal, and resistance to it in Egypt could not be isolated from resistance in Palestine. Mubarak and the ruling NDP party understood this too, which is why it has been so quick to shut down any popular expressions of support for the Palestinian people within its own borders and why it is so nervous about the latest wave of protests. The Gazan crisis has emerged just as popular actions to subvert the systems of social repression that keep Egyptians alienated from their own economic and political processes are snowballing. The previous two years have seen more strikes and sit-ins than at any time since the second world war; a second major industrial sector has managed to break free of the five-decade state monopoly on trade unions; over 2,000 police officers have just resigned en masse over the use of torture as a security tactic and woeful working conditions. As ever, developments across the border help to give fresh impetus to these anti-regime struggles and provide a wide range of opposition political interests - from socialists to liberals, secularists to Islamists - with an opportunity to unite around a potent and effective political symbol which advances their cause. And as ever, the regime reacts brutally, putting Cairo University under siege even as its figurehead publicly bemoans the fate of the besieged Palestinians of Gaza. The students struggling to make themselves heard on campus behind the batons and riot shields of Mubarak's law enforcers are not pawns in the geopolitical fissures that the media obsess over, nor are they blind footsoldiers of *Hamas* and the Muslim Brotherhood. They are, for the most part, simply fired by the Gazan catastrophe into giving voice to the simmering anger felt by much of the population at the twisted and tragic policies of an Egyptian government which, as the author Alaa al-Aswani recently wrote, has created its own generation of martyrs killed by "corruption and abuse of power" - through accidents and negligence and the poisonous grip of poverty - a government also colluding in the subjugation and destruction of Palestinians on Egypt's border. Unable and unwilling to break free of its well-worn preconceptions, most of the media prefers to ignore this crucial fault-line in the Arab world's largest state when "explaining" the Gazan assault. By throwing attention elsewhere instead, they are carrying out a dangerous conjuring trick which insults and undermines Egyptians and Palestinians alike.

Load-Date: January 3, 2009



World unites in anger

New Straits Times (Malaysia)
January 11, 2009 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 36; LOCAL

Length: 387 words

Body

TENS of thousands of people took to the streets from Kuala Lumpur to Nouakchott to demonstrate their anger at the Israeli action in Gaza, with the biggest protest taking place in neighbouring egypt.

More than 50,000 Egyptians rallied after Friday prayers to condemn the assault against <u>Hamas</u> as protests, sometimes violent, took place in other parts of the Muslim world.

Legislators affiliated with the opposition Muslim Brotherhood led the demonstration in the ancient Mediterranean port city of Alexandria, which echoed to such slogans as "Down with Israel and with every collaborator". The anger was directed not only at the Jewish state, but at arab regimes deemed to be complicit in the ongoing Israeli blockade of Gaza that has stopped refugees from getting out and humanitarian aid from getting in.

"Gaza, excuse us - opening Rafah is not in our hands," went another slogan, referring to the Gaza-Egyptian border crossing that President Hosni Mubarak's government in Cairo is refusing to keep open permanently.

A security official put the turnout at 50,000. Riot police were seen trying to prevent the demonstration from taking place - only to give up because of the sheer numbers of protesters.

In the West Bank City of Ramallah, fights broke out between supporters of <u>Hamas</u> and the rival Fatah faction during a "day of wrath" protest, prompting police to intervene with tear gas and baton charges.

Thousands rallied in Doha, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Police fired tear gas at more than 2,000 angry protesters on Friday to prevent them from approaching the Israeli embassy in the Jordanian capital Amman.

Thousands took to the streets of Algiers to show solidarity with the Palestinians. Clashes broke out between police and demonstrators in the city centre and in the upper districts of the seaside city. Arrests were made and there were injuries on both sides.

Demonstrators and riot police clashed in the Mauritanian capital Nouakchott as protestors called for diplomatic ties with Israel to be cut.

In Asia, thousands of people rallied in southwest Pakistan, near the Afghan border, cheering support for al-Qaeda's Osama bin Laden, police said.

About 200 <u>women</u> protested outside the Egyptian embassy in Jakarta, brandishing posters of dead and wounded Palestinian children and urging Egypt to open its border with Gaza.

World unites in anger

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



200 rally in Kitchener against Israeli bombs

therecord.com

January 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A5

Length: 329 words

Byline: April Robinson, RECORD STAFF

Dateline: KITCHENER

Body

Nebil Eli held a red sign high in front of Kitchener City Hall yesterday, as nearly 200 people waved Palestinian flags and called for peace in Gaza.

The 11-year-old moved to Kitchener from his Palestinian homeland with his family just seven months ago and doesn't speak much English.

But he smiled shyly as he held up the sign with two photos of an urban area of Gaza, with the words "before" and "after" below them. One showed buildings intact, the other showed utter destruction.

"Even if I am safe here, I still suffer because my fellow countrymen have been killed," said Nebil's father, Cannam Eli, whose wife and four children were at the rally. "The people in Gaza are being slaughtered like animals. And I wonder why the world is supporting this state terrorism."

A University of Waterloo group, Students for Palestinian Rights, organized the peace march. "We're trying to put aside religion and politics and show people there is a humanitarian issue: people are dying," said Yousif Faraawi, 17, a member of the UW group. "Human blood is one colour."

Another rally in support of Palestinians will be held at Kitchener City Hall today at 1 p.m.

Ernie Ginsler, an active member of the Jewish community, said the situation is too complicated to expect peace.

"I think the civilian population in Gaza has to realize <u>Hamas</u> is not acting in their best interest," Ginsler said in a phone interview yesterday. He said if Israel stops the attacks, <u>Hamas</u> would use the time to rebuild its arms.

At the rally, however, the concern was for the Palestinian people.

"People had no food, no medicine and now they're being bombed," said Laura Ashfield, 22, who visited Gaza last summer. "I was distraught with what I saw then, so I couldn't even imagine what it's like now."

For Nadeen Kawash, who moved to Kitchener from the Mideast nine months ago, the message from the rally was simple.

"I want to say stop killing people to get their land. Stop killing kids and women."

arobinson@therecord.com

Graphic

Photo: David Bebee, record staff, Nadeen Kawash takes part in a march and rally for peace in Gaza, held yesterday in downtown Kitchener. Another rally is planned today.

Load-Date: January 3, 2009



Comment & Debate: Israel has yet to learn the US lesson, that the war on terror was a failure: Americans now realise that aggression fuels extremism. This offers Obama the chance for a new Middle East policy

The Guardian - Final Edition

January 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES; Pg. 28

Length: 1169 words **Byline:** Gary Younge

Body

On New Year's Day Atif Irfan boarded an AirTran flight at Reagan National Airport in Washington with seven members of his family. Edging his way down the aisle, he wondered out loud to his wife whether the back of the plane was the best place to be. As they took their seats, his sister-in-law said she thought it was the safest part, rather than being close to the engine or wings "in case something happened".

The conversation was overheard by two teenage girls, who took one look at the mens' dark skin and beards and the <u>women</u>'s headscarves and saw a family of suicide bombers, including three small children aged between two and seven. The girls told their parents; their parents told the flight attendant; the flight attendant told the air marshals and then the captain; the air marshals called the FBI and the airport police.

The pilot asked the marshals to remove the entire family from the plane. Then officials asked everybody else to get off so they could perform a thorough sweep. The family (as well as a family friend who happened to be on the same flight) was surrounded by armed guards, detained for questioning and then released. The plane eventually took off without them. When they tried to get on a later AirTran flight the airline refused to book them, even though they had been cleared (it has since apologised).

The Irfan family's ordeal escalated according to its own humiliating logic. And yet seven years after 9/11 it was no isolated incident. Pre-emptive, presumptive, disproportionate and discriminatory, it speaks volumes about the prevailing values those two American teenagers have lived with for much of their lives. A world that confuses Muslim and terrorist, and conflates the civilian and combatant by taking popular fear and prejudice and handing them over to state power. Driven by the maxim that you are better safe than sorry, it leaves nobody safe and everybody sorry. The only thing that prevented this particular incident from becoming yet another ideal metaphor for the war on terror is that nobody was killed or disappeared.

There is nothing particularly American about this. Like Nike or McDonald's, the war on terror may have started here but it quickly got branded and went global. In the months after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, everybody wanted a piece of the action. President George Bush found himself in illustrious company.

Comment & Debate: Israel has yet to learn the US lesson, that the war on terror was a failure: Americans now realise that aggression fuels extremism. This offer....

Among others, Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, and India's former prime minster Atal Bihari Vajpayee sought to ride his coattails to their own version of violent despotism.

However, few nations pursued it with such consistent zeal as Israel. "You in America are in a war against terror," Ariel Sharon said after he left the White House following suicide bombings in Haifa and Jerusalem in December 2001. "We in Israel are in a war against terror - it's the same war."

The trouble is that over the last seven years, the war on terror has been thoroughly discredited - not only morally, but militarily and strategically. Nobody listens to moderates, let alone to reason, when bombs are falling and people are dying. That is as true for the rockets that have killed a handful of Israelis as it is for the barrage of bombs and now tanks that have killed hundreds of Palestinians.

By erasing any prospect of negotiation, the violence did not weaken extremists but emboldened them. Israel may want to boost the moderate Fatah faction which governs the West Bank now. But *Hamas*'s electoral rise was a direct result of the contempt the Israeli's showed them in the past.

Meanwhile, the Iraq war has left Iran - the primary sponsor of both Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> - with far more influence in the region than they would have had. On almost every front in almost every part of the world, including in the US, the war on terror is now seen as a colossal mistake. Only Israel did not get the memo. And it is now set to fail for the same reasons that America has.

Diplomatically, Israeli efforts to sell its bombardment and now invasion of Gaza as a straightforward extension of the war on terror have been fairly blatant. It has described the shelling of homes, mosques and police stations as the destruction of "the infrastructure of terror". Even as the rest of the world condemns it, Israel's foreign minister, and Kadima party leader, Tzipi Livni, has been telling anyone who will listen that her country's actions place it firmly within the community of nations and leaves Gazans and their democratically elected rulers outside.

"Israel is part of the free world and fights extremism and terrorism. <u>Hamas</u> is not," she said. And from there we are just one small step away from putting the world on notice that either "you're with us or you're with the terrorists". "These are the days when every individual in the region and in the world has to choose a side," Livni said.

Meanwhile, Israel has been busy implementing the very tenets of the war on terror that have served the US so badly, primarily that intractable political problems can be solved solely by military means with the aim of not simply bombing your enemies into submission, but eliminating them altogether and then creating resolution on your own terms from the rubble.

"What I think we need to do is to reach a situation in which we do not allow <u>Hamas</u> to govern," said Vice-Premier Haim Ramon. "That is the most important thing." Who he thinks should govern when <u>Hamas</u> has gone, and precisely what legitimacy they would have, does not seem to bother him. He does not want to change the government of Gaza, he wants to change the people.

On this matter Livni is right. People do have to choose sides. But, so far, it has not been her side. Seven years after 9/11 the world has a good idea of what's coming next and how widespread the ramifications might be - and they want no part of it. The war on terror is over. War lost. For the first time in a long time, that even appears to be true in America.

A recent Rasmussen poll shows the American public far less indulgent of Israeli aggression than many previously believed. Opinion on the bombing of Gaza is fairly evenly divided, showing 44% supporting Israel's military action against the Palestinians and 41% saying it should have tried to find a diplomatic solution to the problems.

Given the absence of any honest or informed debate about events in the Middle East, this suggests significant room for manoeuvre for President-elect Obama in pursuing a more even-handed policy towards the region, if he should chose to take it.

Comment & Debate: Israel has yet to learn the US lesson, that the war on terror was a failure: Americans now realise that aggression fuels extremism. This offer....

The benefits could strengthen America's hand throughout the region. Majorities in seven Arab nations say their opinion of the US would significantly improve if it put pressure on Israel to comply with international law in its treatment of Palestinians - generally more than say the same about closing Guantanamo Bay, according to Gallup.

That is the change both America and the Middle East need. It's also the change most of the rest of the world wants to believe in.

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Load-Date: January 5, 2009



International: Gaza Air Strikes: Profile: Ehud Barak: Soldier turned politician who spent his life fighting Arabs

The Guardian - Final Edition December 29, 2008 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 6

Length: 367 words **Byline:** Ian Black

Body

Ehud Barak, Israel's defence minister and the architect of the offensive against *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip, has been fighting Arabs since he was a young man.

Drafted in 1959, the teenage kibbutznik - the eldest child of parents who immigrated to British-ruled Palestine from eastern Europe - left the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) 36 years later as chief of staff and its most decorated soldier.

Nicknamed "Napoleon" by army friends, the young Barak (Hebrew for "lightning") made his reputation commanding the elite Sayeret Matkal, the reconnaissance unit, which often operates behind enemy lines.

In 1973, Barak, famously wearing a *female* wig and high heels, led a commando raid in Beirut in which three top PLO figures were killed in revenge for the terrorist massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics.

His fans speak of his "laser-like determination" which his critics have chided as a "lack of peripheral vision." Writing in Yediot Aharonot, the political columnist Nahum Barnea called Barak's decision to blockade the <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza Strip last year an example of the difference "between being smart and being a smartass".

He ran the operation to assassinate the PLO's military chief, Abu Jihad, in Tunisia in 1988 during the first Palestinian intifada. That was part of an Israeli strategy that assumed, then as now, that there is a military solution to the Palestinian question.

Barak became IDF chief of staff in 1991 but then, like many other generals, including his mentor Yitzhak Rabin, left the army to enter politics. He beat Shimon Peres to lead the Labour party and then defeated the Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu in the 1999 elections.

As prime minister, he sought to reach a conclusive peace agreement with Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority, an attempt that culminated in the failed 2000 Camp David summit. That led to the second intifada which in turn brought his resignation in 2001.

International: Gaza Air Strikes: Profile: Ehud Barak: Soldier turned politician who spent his life fighting Arabs

Israel's yearning for experienced military leaders brought him back to political life after the 2006 Lebanon war and he became minister of defence.

He seems to have a feel for what motivates his enemies and was widely quoted as saying: "If I were a Palestinian I would have joined a terrorist organisation."

Load-Date: December 29, 2008



50/50

Herald Sun (Australia)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: ED; Pg. 16 Length: 365 words

Body

IN my 40s, I didn't quite appreciate Doc Edelsten's achievements. But in my 60s, I am totally in awe of his latest conquest.

Ian Baggott, Greensborough

BLAIR Edgar of Bulleen (50/50, January 5), if you pay \$1.24 for a single apple, you are an idiot. Get down to your local greengrocer and buy yourself a bag of apples for \$3.95.

Jim Trewin, Rosebud West

THANK God for the ABC radio and its broadcast of the cricket, which means we don't have to listen to Channel 9's self-promoting commentators, Shane Warne and Ian Healy.

Kingy, Koo-wee-rup

THANK God for global warming. Without it, our two days of summer so far may not have happened at all.

A. Clarke, Shepparton.

SO the overpaid prima donnas are back in Australia for this season's tennis tournaments. These matches are so boring, especially the *women*'s.

G. Morrison, Keilor

IF <u>Hamas</u> wasn't so cowardly and didn't hide among civilians then Israel would not harm the civilian population. <u>Hamas</u> broke the ceasefire. Palestinians support them. Reap what you sow.

H. Harry, Ferntree Gully

MAYBE Premier Brumby's New Year resolution should not be to have shorter meetings but to spend 99 per cent less of taxpayers' money on spin doctors, consultants and advertising.

V. Guzzardi, Gowanbrae

WE know the entertainment industry has sunk to a new low when it produces a so-called ``family' musical filled with foul language.

50/50

R.A. Marks, Drouin

RON Barassi needs to be careful. If he continues to help innocent victims, the human rights lawyers will gang up on him.

Richard Cox, Griffith, NSW

ARE the scientists who predict the Great Barrier Reef will stop growing by 2050 the same ones who, 20 years ago, predicted the reef would not now exist because of the crown-of-thorns starfish? If so, we have nothing to worry about.

John Collins, South Oakleigh

SUPPORTERS of a republic should make up their minds. On one hand, they want to get rid of our convict heritage with England. On the other, they want Barack Obama to transport some of his prisoners here.

Tony Ferris, Caroline Springs

ROBBIE Maddison does death-defying stunts on a motor bike for a living -- misguided inspiration for our road hoons with brains the size of a split caraway seed.

Max Adams, Barwon Heads

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Residents scramble for safety; 'No one is safe now,' as Gazans move from place to place, trying to guess where next strikes will hit

The Toronto Star

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 776 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Nasser Barakat is quickly running out of places to hide.

Shortly after Israel launched its current aerial offensive in Gaza on Saturday, its warplanes struck and destroyed a Gaza City mosque, which the Israelis said had been used for meetings by members of the radical Islamist group *Hamas*.

Right away, Barakat fled his home, which was located next door to another Gaza City mosque.

He moved in with friends who lived close to the campus of the Islamic University - which was hit by Israeli air strikes on Sunday and again yesterday morning.

"Now I'm in another place," Barakat, 21, told the Star yesterday afternoon.

This time, he's hoping that danger will pass him by but, like other people in Gaza, he isn't counting on it.

"No one is safe now," he said. "Walking the streets, it's really dangerous."

Rocket fire, exploding bombs, and the crazed din of warplanes - none of this is exactly new to Gaza's 1.5 million long-suffering souls.

If it is possible to grow accustomed to such torments, then they have done so, after a long and deadly succession of Israeli attacks in recent years.

But this latest operation is something wholly different - louder, bloodier, and far more terrifying than any before.

"They've just gone overboard," Amani Abu-Ramadan, 33, a Canadian woman living in Gaza, said of the Israelis.

"They've gone over what is normal even for them to do."

With more than 360 dead and at least 1,400 wounded - a toll of casualties that seems likely to grow - the current campaign is among the deadliest ever inflicted by Israelis on Palestinians, and it seems far from over.

Residents scramble for safety 'No one is safe now,' as Gazans move from place to place, trying to guess where next strikes will hit

Somehow, Gaza's law-abiding peace-loving majority must find a way to survive what have suddenly become the very worst of times.

"Everywhere, there are attacks," said Talal Al-Shawish, head of a non-governmental organization that offers recreational programs for <u>women</u> and children in Nuseirat, a refugee camp in central Gaza. "Every 15 minutes, we have rockets and bombs. The situation is very terrible."

Just 500 metres from his home, a police post was bombed on Sunday and again yesterday.

Now he huddles in his house with his wife and six children - aged 4 to 18 - listening to the news on a battery-operated radio and hoping these troubles will end.

"I follow the news minute by minute," he said. "You need to be at home to hear the news."

Besides, there is nowhere outdoors to go, and it wouldn't be safe to do so anyway.

There is no electricity now in much of Gaza, and almost everything is closed, including schools and most shops and offices.

"Yesterday, we went out for 20 minutes, just to get the bare essentials," said Abu-Ramadan, who grew up in St. Catharines and has lived in Gaza since 2005.

"There was no milk, no eggs, no bread. There's no bread anywhere. I got mostly frozen things."

She was cooking rice pudding in her 10th-floor seafront apartment when she spoke to the Star late yesterday.

She, too, has been watching and listening to the destruction of war since the Israelis first attacked early Saturday. She has had no choice.

"There are rockets flying over our heads."

On Sunday, she said, the fishermen's market by the harbour was destroyed. Later, a police post located half a kilometre away went up in smoke and flames.

"It was just exploding like there was no tomorrow."

A huge number of people have died or been gravely wounded, including people she knows - friends of relatives or relatives of friends.

She says she's had enough and wants to return to Canada, to visit her sister and mother in St. Catharines.

"I want to go home," she said. "I want to see my mum. It's been too much."

But the border with Israel is closed. Like almost everyone else in Gaza, Abu-Ramadan is trapped.

Whom do she and other people in Gaza blame for this latest and worst in a long procession of ordeals they have suffered?

They blame Israel, of course. But, for many, the answer is more complicated than that.

"I want to be frank," said Al-Shawish.

"We have some people who feel *Hamas* should pay the price for what it did last year."

He was referring to supporters of the rival Palestinian faction Fatah, which was defeated by <u>Hamas</u> in a spasm of internecine fighting in June 2007. Bitter feelings continue to separate the two sides.

Page 3 of 3

Residents scramble for safety 'No one is safe now,' as Gazans move from place to place, trying to guess where next strikes will hit

"Sometimes you see small smiles," he said. "But most of the people sympathize with those who have been killed."

Besides, for many ordinary folk in Gaza, the misery and terror of war trump any thought of politics.

"I just want all of this to stop," said Barakat, who is studying for a degree in business administration, or would be if the fighting would end. "I don't care about *Hamas* or Israel or Fatah.

"I just don't want to see this any more. I just want peace."

Graphic

David Silverman getty images Israeli army tanks and armoured personnel carriers line up yesterday near Israel's border with the Gaza Strip as air strikes continue. Hundreds of people have been forced to leave their homes. ASHRAF AMRA ap A Palestinian takes his wounded child for aid in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza. Amani Abu-Ramadan, of St. Catharines, lives in Gaza. She cannot leave; the border is closed. ASHRAF AMRA ap A Palestinian takes his wounded child for aid in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza. Amani Abu-Ramadan, of St. Catharines, lives in Gaza. She cannot leave; the border is closed.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008



Is Clinton, Israel's ally, ready to be mediator?

The International Herald Tribune January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 874 words

Byline: Mark Landler - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

When Hillary Rodham Clinton ran for a New York Senate seat nine years ago, she labored to persuade skeptical Jewish voters of her support for Israel, after an incident in which she stood by as the wife of Yasser Arafat delivered an inflammatory attack on Israeli policies.

Now, having secured her standing as a friend of Israel, Clinton must show a new audience that she can also be a mediator in her next role as U.S. secretary of state, when her first challenge may well be the renewed violence in Gaza. Given Clinton's once troubled history with Arab-Israeli issues, that could be a tricky task.

Clinton brings several strengths, according to current and former aides and Middle East experts, including her knowledge of the region and experience in navigating it, as well as lingering good will among Arabs and Israelis won by her husband, former President Bill Clinton, for his efforts to broker a peace deal in the waning days of his presidency.

But Hillary Clinton will have to reassure the Palestinians that she, too, can be a broker, working with Egypt and other Arab neighbors, and putting pressure on the Israeli government when needed.

"She's going to have to demonstrate her independence from Israel," said Aaron David Miller, a public policy analyst at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. "Our interests are inevitably going to diverge from their interests. We cannot be an 'amen corner' for them."

The diplomatic tightrope was evident this week, as the departing secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, condemned <u>Hamas</u> for firing rockets into southern Israel, while she privately urged Israeli leaders to agree to a cease-fire, after days of escalating airstrikes against <u>Hamas</u> militants in Gaza.

Clinton has not commented on the latest violence; a spokesman said she would abide by the principle that "there is one secretary of state at a time." But as New York's junior senator, she strongly condemned a round of <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks on Israeli towns in May 2007.

"I stand with the people of Israel who live in fear as their homes are besieged, and maintain my unwavering commitment to the welfare and survival of the state of Israel," Clinton said in a statement at the time.

In a speech to an Israeli lobbying group shortly after she lost the Democratic nomination to President-elect Barack Obama, Clinton said the next president should shun direct negotiations with <u>Hamas</u> because it was a terrorist group, equipped by Iran and bent on destroying Israel.

Earlier, Clinton declared that the United States could "obliterate" Iran if it attacked Israel with nuclear weapons - a far more strident tone than that of Obama.

Most experts believe that Clinton's support of Israel is heartfelt, even if it is also smart politics in New York.

But when she was first lady, Clinton made waves on two occasions by seeming to tilt toward Palestinian interests. In 1998, she told a gathering of Israeli and Arab teenagers that creating a state of Palestine was "very important for the broader goal of peace in the Middle East."

The White House disavowed her comments, saying they did not reflect the administration's policy. Today, the two-state solution is a central part of the U.S. blueprint for a peace deal.

More trouble loomed in November 1999, when Clinton, by then a Senate hopeful, visited the West Bank town of Ramallah. At a ceremony with Palestinian health officials, the first lady did not react when Suha Arafat accused Israeli forces of using "toxic gases" against Palestinians, causing cancer in **women** and children.

At the end of the ceremony, Clinton gave Arafat a polite kiss - a gesture that angered Jewish groups and earned the first lady critical newspaper editorials in New York.

Clinton attributed her silence to the fact that the translation of Arafat's remarks was incomplete. An aide who was with her said Arafat's accusations appeared to be standard boilerplate to those listening. The full import of her words set in only hours later.

The tempest briefly threatened Clinton's Senate bid in New York, though she managed to put it behind her through a fence-mending tour with Jewish leaders. After eight years of her steadfast support for Israel, the incident is viewed by most analysts as ancient history.

In one way, Clinton's baggage may carry a silver lining. Some Palestinians point out that she was ahead of the curve in calling for a Palestinian state.

Her marriage to Bill Clinton also gives her a valuable calling card. Though his efforts to forge a peace deal fell apart, Middle East experts say that people on both sides credit him for trying longer and harder than other presidents.

"People don't just perceive her as a senator from New York who was very close to Israel," said Ziad Asali, the president of the American Task Force on Palestine, an Arab-American advocacy group that favors a Palestinian state. "They perceive her as a Clinton."

Being a Clinton also gives the next secretary of state ready access to Bill Clinton's Middle East brain trust. Hillary Clinton is being advised by Martin Indyk, who was a senior State Department official and U.S. ambassador to Israel during the Clinton administration. He is among those mentioned as a potential special envoy to the Middle East.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Soldier loses leg in mortar attack on western Negev base. We'll act in Gaza soon, Vilna'i vows

The Jerusalem Post November 30, 2008 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 353 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

Israel is quickly approaching a large-scale operation in the Gaza Strip, Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilna'i said Saturday, in response to a mortar attack the previous night on an IDF base that wounded eight soldiers.

Two soldiers - one of whom lost a leg - were in serious condition after a mortar shell fired from Gaza hit inside the base near Kibbutz Nahal Oz. *Hamas* and the Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility for the attack.

On Saturday afternoon, a Kassam rocket struck a field south of Ashkelon.

Sgt. Noam Nakash of Beersheba, a member of the base's C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence) team, was seriously wounded in the mortar attack. Doctors initially feared they would have to remove both of Nakash's legs but in the end they only amputated the right one.

Another soldier, who was initially reported to be in critical condition, underwent a number of operations overnight Friday, and on Saturday his condition was described as stable.

Six other soldiers, including two women, were lightly- to-moderately wounded.

In response to the Kassam and mortar attacks, Defense Minister Ehud Barak decided to close all the crossings into the Gaza Strip on Sunday.

"The cease-fire [which expires on December 19] is important to us and to them since we are in control of the crossings and the other side is afraid of the IDF's might," Vilna'i said during a public appearance in Beersheba.

"We must find the right time for action and their provocations do not leave us with many choices."

Vilna'i said there was no doubt "that we are getting close to launching a wide-scale operation in Gaza." He said it would be different than previous operations.

Turning to negotiations with the Palestinians, Vilna'i rejected <u>Hamas</u> as a viable partner since the terrorist group refused to recognize Israel's right to exist.

Earlier Friday, Palestinian gunmen clashed with IDF troops along the Gaza border. The IDF said troops spotted a group of gunmen trying to plant a bomb along the security fence. The Gazans opened fire as the patrol approached, and soldiers shot back, hitting one of the gunmen.

Graphic

Photo: A SOLDIER WOUNDED near Nahal Oz is sent to a hospital on Friday evening. (Credit: Channel 1)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The Toll On The Children Of Gaza

Intelligencer Journal (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

January 9, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A; Pg. 7 Length: 656 words

Byline: Letters

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

TO THE EDITOR:

I am a junior in high school, a time when, perhaps, I should be expected to focus entirely on preparing for college or to be having fun with my friends. I am doing these things but I am also paying attention to the news and trying to sort out why people my age are getting bombed as they huddle in schools, mosques and their homes in Gaza.

I lived in Turkey when my father was a Fulbright scholar, so I know that it is nonsense when some U.S. commentators say that all - or even the majority - of Muslims believe in terrorism, hate Christians and want to exterminate Jews. I have met lots of Muslims and, as a group, they are as nice and hospitable as my fellow Christians. I am sure there are some bad people among the Muslims, but we Christians aren't immune from sin, including violating the commandment about killing people.

As best as I can tell, there seem to be markedly fewer Israelis killed by the <u>Hamas</u> "terrorists" (who are an elected body of government) than Palestinians killed by Israelis in the new influx of violence that has swept over the Middle East. According to CNN's evening news on Jan. 6, <u>Hamas</u> rockets have killed 12 Israelis while more than 600 Palestinians are reported dead. Yet, according to popular American opinion, <u>Hamas</u> is to blame for the death of those 600 residents of Gaza - most of whom are <u>women</u>, children and older people - according to NPR's evening report.

"Israelis watch the fighting in Gaza from a hilly vantage point" declared a front-page article by the Wall Street Journal (Jan. 9) which compared watching the fighting from afar to sitting on the sidelines of a high school soccer game. In the same article a 43-year-old philosophy student named Sandra Koubi was quoted as saying that watching the violence "is a kind of catharsis for me, to get rid of all the anxiety we have inside us after years of rocket fire" on Israeli citizens. What about the anxiety of the Palestinians, who are unable to venture out of their homes, even to rush to overwhelmed hospitals, or to receive the relief supplies from the approximately 70 trucks just a fraction of what is needed - that Israel allows into Gaza daily?

Chris Hedges, a former New York Times reporter who is Jewish, wrote an article published on TruthDig.com: "This is an increasingly precarious condition. A recent study reports that 46 percent of all Gazan children suffer from acute anemia. There are reports that the sonic booms associated with Israeli overflights have caused widespread deafness, especially among children. Gazan children need thousands of hearing aids. Malnutrition is extremely high ... and affects 75 percent of Gazans."

The Toll On The Children Of Gaza

Hedges cited the findings of Richard Falk, a Jew and a U.N. special rapporteur for human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, who said that "over 50 percent of Gazan children under the age of 12 have been found to have no will to live." This is a crime against humanity, against the children of our world. "The violence unleashed on Palestinian children will, one day, be the violence unleashed on Israeli children," wrote Hedges. "This is the tragedy of Gaza. This is the tragedy of Israel."

I can't agree more. I am still young, but that just means it is I who will be living in the world with the shattered aftermath of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. What I plead for is an end to the violence and an end to U.S. support for the carnage. Without U.S. support the Israeli government would not have the resources to conduct aggression at their current scale of attack. Perhaps a peace agreement would then be able to be reached. I do not know the way out of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, but I do know nothing is worth the death of innocents caught in the place they call home. Whether Palestinian or Israeli, all have the right to life.

Kara Lofton, Mount Joy

Editor's note: Lofton is a resident of Harrisonburg, Va., who is attending Lancaster Mennonite High School.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



Cease firing to find truth

Herald Sun (Australia)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: ED; Pg. 24 **Length:** 664 words

Byline: Taimor Hazou

Body

IT is a bit of an understatement to claim that the first causality of war is truth.

To start a war you not only kill off the truth, but you maim democratic principles and finally you must disown justice to get the conflict going.

Israel's attack on the Palestinians illustrates this.

Israel has launched its all-out war under the justification that it is protecting its citizens from the 6000-plus missiles that have been launched from Gaza.

In the last week Israel has killed more than 500 Arabs, including at least 100 women and children. It has targeted and hit a United Nations school.

But ask the question: how many Israelis have been killed, not since Saturday's invasion but since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005?

The answer is closer to 20.

According to the international organisation Jewish Voices for Peace, since the Gaza withdrawal ``these poorly made rockets have been responsible for the deaths of 15 Israelis since 2004."

Compare this figure to the annual Israeli road toll of 400-plus, and you get a bit of perspective.

Surprised? You shouldn't be.

B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organisation, puts the number of Israeli minors killed since 2000 at 39 and the number of Palestinian children at 952.

Surely, the death of any child of any nationality is repugnant, and whoever commits the crime should be held to account.

Factual evidence has been ignored by most in this conflict for decades.

Cease firing to find truth

For example, the ever-expanding Jewish settlements rarely get a mention by world leaders, despite their illegality under international law and their being contrary to the immediate halt of expansion agreed to in the 1993 Oslo Accords.

Israel, not the Palestinians, has opposed international UN monitors in the conflict since Oslo. And it is Israel that prevents most independent journalists from entering Gaza.

Surely, if its claims about the Palestinians are true, Israel wants the world to see it? So why is Israel allowed to get away with all this?

Because nobody has the courage to take on the status quo and challenge the Israeli narrative that dominates mainstream news and politics.

The depressing part is not that most Australians would disagree with this, but that the majority think it is true.

Our acting PM Julia Gillard, who many may be surprised to learn used to be a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause, has with her elevation in politics unfortunately lost that courage.

On Monday, she said: ``*Hamas* has broken the ceasefire and engaged in an act of aggression against Israel. Israel has responded."

Unfortunately, that is incorrect.

O N November 4, the ceasefire ended when the Israeli military crossed into Gaza to destroy a tunnel and kill six Palestinians.

Their argument was that this was proof of <u>Hamas</u> ill-will and war preparation during the ceasefire.

This may be a valid point.

But the Israeli press has reported that the nation's Cabinet was considering air strikes and operations well before this last ceasefire was agreed to.

If democratic principles argue for the rule of law on the basis of evidence, then surely the world is failing both itself and the Arabs.

Despite the validity of the Palestinian poll that saw the hawkish <u>Hamas</u> elected, there is some warped sense that hawkish Israelis have some form of legitimacy over and above the Palestinians.

Both sides are advocating violence as the only response to the conflict and evidence, in crimes against humanity by both parties, stacks up clearly.

The attitude of accepting Israeli extremism as above the law is a real injustice of this conflict.

The sad consequence is that history will repeat itself, as more young Arabs take the extremist path and more Israelis claim their righteous place in the world.

This vicious cycle will end only when we return to looking at evidence, maintain the rule of law for all, and uphold the democratic principles we hold dear.

We can start by encouraging a ceasefire, as most world leaders advocate.

Taimor Hazou is a former deputy chair of the Australian Arabic Council.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



We'll do it the smart way, says Clinton

The Times (London)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Edition 1

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3 Length: 684 words Byline: Tom Baldwin

Body

Hillary Clinton indicated yesterday that she will put diplomacy back at the heart of a "smart power" strategy for the Middle East.

"We cannot give up on peace," the Secretary of State-designate said as she offered the first real declaration of intent from Barack Obama's incoming Administration that it will tackle the crisis in Gaza head-on.

She added that diplomatic engagement would include increased contact with former pariah nations such as Iran and Syria in an effort to broker a lasting settlement for the region.

Mrs Clinton stopped short of setting out specific measures when appearing on Capitol Hill for confirmation hearings vesterday.

She acknowledged, though, that many past presidents, including her husband, had tried and failed to solve seemingly "intractable" problems in the Middle East. "The President-elect and I understand and are deeply sympathetic to Israel's desire to defend itself under the current conditions, and to be free of shelling by *Hamas* rockets.

However, we have also been reminded of the tragic humanitarian costs of conflict in the Middle East, and pained by the suffering of Palestinian and Israeli civilians," she said.

"This must only increase our determination to seek a just and lasting peace agreement that brings real security to Israel, normal and positive relations with its neighbours and independence, economic progress and security to the Palestinians in their own state." Asked if she would be willing to engage directly with the Islamic extremists controlling Gaza,

Mrs Clinton replied: "You cannot negotiate with <u>Hamas</u> until it renounces violence, recognises Israel and agrees to abide by past agreements. That is an absolute. That is my position and the President-elect's position." The "smart power" strategy should go beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and address other issues, including Iran's nuclear programme and the "irresponsible behaviour" of other countries in region such as Syria.

We'll do it the smart way, says Clinton

Although insisting "we are not taking any option off the table at all", Mrs Clinton said the Obama Administration would follow "a new, perhaps different approach" to prevent the "unacceptable" prospect of Iran becoming a fully-fledged nuclear power.

Mrs Coverseas bonds that have been strained under President Bush."Today's security threats cannot be addressed in isolation," she said.

"Smart power requires reaching out to both friends and adversaries, to bolster old alliances and to forge new ones." Mrs Clinton underlined her commitment to <u>women</u>'s issues at yesterday's hearings as she attacked the trafficking of young <u>women</u> for prostitution.

"We have sex slavery; we have wage slavery. And it is primarily a slavery of girls and women," she said.

She also condemned the way the rights of <u>women</u> were being abused in Muslim countries such as Afghanistan.

"It is heartbreaking ... that young girls are attacked on their way to school by Taleban sympathisers and members who do not want young <u>women</u> to be educated. It's not complicated. They want to maintain an attitude that keeps <u>women</u> unhealthy, unfed, uneducated. This is not culture. This is not custom. This is criminal."

Smart power means a combination of "hard" power - the power to coerce, by military or other means - and "soft" power - the power to convince and persuade through trade, diplomacy, aid and the spread of values

The phrase "smart power" is a recent addition to the diplomatic phrasebook. It was coined after the invasion of Iraq and was presented as a liberal alternative to the neoconservatism of the Bush Administration and its leading disciples such as Donald Rumsfeld, right, and Dick Cheney

6 According to Joseph Nye, a Soft sell leading exponent of smart power, America must "learn to co-operate, and to listen" if it is to become a "welcomed world leader". Nye defines smart power as the power to persuade other countries to do what the US wants

Advocates of smart power invoke the creation of the UN, Nato, global free trade and the Marshall Plan as examples of the US in a central but not solo role

'You cannot negotiate with Hamas until it renounces violence'

Graphic

Hillary Clinton with her daughter, Chelsea, before giving testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during her confirmation hearing

KEVIN LAMARQUE / REUTERS

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



Israel shells near UN school, kills at least 30 Palestinians

Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 669 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser, The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza

Body

Israeli mortar shells exploded Tuesday near a UN school in Gaza that was sheltering hundreds of people displaced by Israel's onslaught against <u>Hamas</u> militants, killing at least 30 Palestinians, tearing bodies apart and staining streets with blood.

Israel's military said its shelling -- the deadliest single episode since Israeli ground forces invaded Gaza Saturday -- was a response to mortar fire from within the school and said *Hamas* militants were using civilians as cover.

Two residents of the area who spoke by telephone said they saw a small group of militants firing mortar rounds from a street near the school, where 350 people had gathered to get away from the shelling. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Majed Hamdan, an AP photographer, rushed to the scene shortly after the attacks. At the hospital, he said, many children were among the dead.

"I saw <u>women</u> and men -- parents -- slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said. "In the morgue, most of the killed appeared to be children. In the hospital, there wasn't enough space for the wounded."

He said there appeared to be marks on the pavement of five separate explosions in area of the school.

An Israeli defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to make the information public, said it appeared that the military used 120mm shells, among the largest mortar rounds.

UN officials demanded an investigation of the shelling. The carnage, which included 55 wounded, added to a surging civilian toll and drew mounting international pressure for Israel to end the offensive against *Hamas*.

President-elect Barack Obama broke his silence on the crisis Tuesday saying, "the loss of civilian life in Gaza and in Israel is a source of deep concern for me." He declined to go further reiterating his stance that the United States has only one president at a time.

At the UN in New York, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called the Israeli bombardment of the group's facilities in Gaza "totally unacceptable." Israel's shells have fallen around three schools, including the girls school hit Tuesday, and a health centre for Palestinian refugees.

Some 15,000 Palestinians have packed the UN's 23 Gaza schools because their homes were destroyed or to flee the violence. The UN provided the Israeli military with GPS co-ordinates for all of them.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met Tuesday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to lobby for a U.S.-backed ceasefire plan for Gaza. Arab countries were floating a revised UN resolution calling for an immediate end to all military action, and deployment of an international observer force to monitor a ceasefire and protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

In the wake of the criticism, Israel agreed to set up a "humanitarian corridor" to ship vital supplies to the Gaza Strip, an idea that had been floated by the UN Security Council. Under the plan, Israel will suspend attacks in certain areas to allow people to get supplies.

The three mortar shells that crashed down on the perimeter of the UN school struck at mid-afternoon, when many people in the densely populated camp were outside getting some fresh air, thinking an area around a school was safe.

Images recorded by a cameraman from AP Television News showed crowds fleeing the scene, pavements smeared with blood and battered bodies of the dead being carried off by medics and horrified bystanders. A youth who limped away from the scene was helped along by several others. Sandals were scattered on the pavement by a pock-marked wall.

World powers that tried but failed to get a truce in place before Israel sent in its ground forces warned of the potential for higher civilian casualties if the fighting moved onto Gaza's streets, and Gaza's main hospital has been overwhelmed with wounded innocents. Mortar fire, in particular, is far less accurate than the laser-guided bombs Israel has used throughout the campaign.

Graphic

Photo: Ashraf Amra, The associated press; A Palestinian woman reacts Tuesday outside Shifa hospital in Gaza City.;

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



China's Gaza role

South China Morning Post January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 11

Length: 704 words

Byline: Laurence Brahm, shambhalahouse@yahoo.com

Body

The year has opened with an international challenge for China. Following Israel's invasion of Gaza, how will China stand up for Arab and Islamic people? They are now wondering: where is China's historic and traditional solidarity with underdeveloped nations? In capitals across the world, massive protests have erupted against Israel's unilateralist invasion of Gaza - supported only by Washington. In Beijing, no voice is heard. China was quick to send protesters to boycott French businesses when French President Nicolas Sarkozy received the Dalai Lama, together with other Nobel Peace Prize laureates. Yet Mr Sarkozy is the one global leader who has taken the initiative in the Gaza conflict, flying to the Middle East to meet regional leaders and propose a ceasefire. In the world's eyes, does China have a credibility problem with its moral responsibility?

Ironically, China has mirrored Mr Sarkozy's example, sending a peace envoy to the Middle East - more than a week later. Palestinians remember how Arab and Islamic nations once stood steadfast behind China to support its seat on the UN Security Council. China should remember who its friends are. It has a responsibility to stand up for the developing world, and for global peace. But China cares only about mercantile interests, discarding any role that would require a moral or political stance. Some admire China's trade diplomacy of "doing business with everyone", seeing it as pragmatic. Others criticise it.

The Arab world is beginning to feel discouraged by China's lack of backbone. Every year, the semi-official Sino-Arab Friendship Association invites Palestinians living in China to lunch on November 29, recognised by the UN as Palestinian Solidarity Day. However, last November, few Palestinian expatriates living in Beijing attended. "We are not beggars and do not need to be invited to eat a lunch," said one representative. "China holds a seat on the UN Security Council. We Palestinians request China to be a true global leader and use its Security Council vote in a responsible way." Finally, China did.

Outrage is underscored by the fact that, following the tragic earthquake in Sichuan last year, Palestinian and Arab expatriates living in two cities alone - Guangzhou and Yiwu - donated more than US\$2 million. However, when Israel invaded Gaza, China - the world's fastest-growing economy and emerging superpower - gave a measly US\$1 million in humanitarian aid. As one Palestinian expatriate said: "You give such trifling aid at our time of need, but the real question is, will there be any <u>women</u> and children alive to use it? We need China's voice in the UN Security Council to order an Israeli ceasefire."

Yet China instead meekly calls for "both sides" to cease fire. Its media mirrors that of the US, simplifying events by accusing <u>Hamas</u> of instigating the invasion by firing rockets. Meanwhile, China's 70 million Muslims must sit by silently and watch Gaza's holy Islamic sites being blasted to smithereens.

China's Gaza role

The Arab world expects Beijing to stand by it. But China refuses to do anything, thinking money alone can buy off the Arab world. If China does not take a position of solidarity with Arab and Islamic people, it may be in for a rude awakening this year.

China should not underestimate the influence of <u>Hamas</u>. This year, Beijing will face a tremendous economic slowdown leading to greater unemployment and the potential for unrest. China also has an East Turkestan separatist movement that has not yet consolidated behind a leader. If <u>Hamas</u> leaders were to meet any aspiring Uygur, and give him the title of leader of the East Turkestan movement, they would then have a figurehead - and China would have a bigger problem than it anticipated.

Gaza presents a unique opportunity for China to rise as a global peacemaker. Two years ago, during a state visit to Beijing, Premier Wen Jiabao called Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (whose Russian Jewish parents fled to Harbin before emigrating to Israel) a "relative", not just a friend. Now it is China's opportunity to use its "family" influence for global peace.

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Thousands join Hizbullah rally against Israel's siege of Gaza

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

December 20, 2008 Saturday

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Byline: Andrew Wander

Body

Thousands of people took to the streets in Beirut's southern suburbs on Friday to join a Hizbullah-led protest against Israel's brutal blockade of the Gaza Strip. The demonstration was organized by the Shiite group after its leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, called earlier this week for action "until the Gaza siege is lifted."

HARET HREIK: Thousands of people took to the streets in Beirut's southern suburbs on Friday to join a Hizbullahled protest against Israel's brutal blockade of the Gaza Strip. The demonstration was organized by the Shiite group after its leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, called earlier this week for action "until the Gaza siege is lifted." Thousands of protesters waved Hizbullah, Amal and Palestinian flags as they marched through the party's stronghold of Haret Hreik.

Speakers blasted music and speeches as sections of the crowd chanted "Death to Israel, Death to America." Two enormous Palestinian flags were carried by <u>women</u> clad in black chadors, while uniformed members of Hizbullah's youth wing also joined the march.

Several demonstrators brandished their shoes above their heads in a tribute to Iraqi journalist Muntazer al-Zaidi, who threw his shoes at George W. Bush during the US president's visit to Iraq on Sunday.

Others said they considered it their duty to attend the protest. "I've been fighting the Israelis for more than 20 years," one middle-aged man said. "I'm here for my father, who is sick and can't come."

The demonstration was tightly run by Hizbullah security members, who shepherded protesters through the streets during the demonstration, ensuring that they did not deviate from the planned route.

The crowd gathered in front of a stage, where Hizbullah number two Sheikh Naim Qassem told them that it was their duty to reclaim land taken from Palestinians. "We are responsible, like all Arabs and Muslims, to completely liberate Palestine, from the river to the sea," he said. "The Palestinian cause is a just cause."

But Nasrallah himself did not make an appearance, nor did he address the crowd through a pre-recorded or televised speech as he has in the past. His absence sparked rumors that plans for him to speak had been abandoned because of a security threat, but Hizbullah officials denied this was the case, noting that Nasrallah had never announced that he would appear at the demonstration.

Thousands join Hizbullah rally against Israel 's siege of Gaza

Speaking to The Daily Star, Hizbullah spokesman Hussein Rahhal said: "Some journalists expected Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah to speak, but we had made no official announcement that he would. We decided that Naim Qassem would speak instead. There were no security problems."

A source close to the group said he was not surprised that Nasrallah had not appeared at the demonstration in person. "Because people thought this was important, they thought he might speak, but it was decided he would not," he said.

Simultaneous demonstrations were held across the country to protest against the blockade. At Nijmeh Square in Sidon, hundreds of protesters gathered and an effigy of Bush was punched and spat at by the crowd, who cursed the US president and other world leaders.

The Imam of Sidon's Al-Quds Mosque, Maher Hammoud, told the crowd that Arab leaders were also to blame for the suffering of people in the Gaza Strip: "The siege is not only a Zionist siege, it's a Saudi, Egyptian and Arab siege." He added that Nasrallah was "always right," prompting cheers from the crowd.

Nasrallah's call for protest was heeded as far away as Bahrain, where riot police broke up a massive rally using tear gas and rubber-coated bullets.

Meanwhile in Gaza the situation remained tense, as a six-month-old cease-fire between Israel and *Hamas* which was signed in June expired.

<u>Hamas</u> have said they will not renew the Egyptian-brokered truce, which had brought relative calm in and around Gaza since it was inked in June. The truce largely held until November 4, when Israel invaded Gaza in an offensive that killed seven <u>Hamas</u> members. - With additional reporting by Mohammed Zaatari and agencies

Load-Date: December 19, 2008



Muslims condemn attacks, worry about image

The Bismarck Tribune

December 1, 2008 Monday

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Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) - Muslims from the Middle East to Britain and Austria condemned Sunday the Mumbai shooting rampage by suspected Islamic militants as senseless terrorism, but also found themselves on the defensive once again about bloodshed linked to their religion.

Intellectuals and community leaders called for greater efforts to combat religious fanaticism.

Indian police said Sunday that the only surviving gunman told them he belongs to the Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba. The group is seen as a creation of Pakistani intelligence to help fight India in the disputed Kashmir region. Another group, Jaish-e-Mohammed, has also operated in Kashmir. Both are reported to be linked to al-Qaida.

Ten gunmen attacked 10 targets in the three-day assault including a Jewish community center and luxury hotels in India's commercial hub. More than 170 people were killed.

Many Muslims said they are worried such carnage is besmirching their religion.

"The occupation of the synagogue and killing people in hotels tarnishes the Muslim faith," said Kazim al-Muqdadi, a political science lecturer at Baghdad University. "Anyone who slaughters people and screams 'Allahu Akbar' (God is Great) is sick and ignorant."

In Britain, home to nearly two million Muslims, a spokesman for the Muslim Council of Britain, Inayat Bunglawala, said that "a handful of terrorists like this bring the entire faith into disrepute."

A previously unknown Muslim group, Deccan Mujahideen, claimed responsibility for the attacks. The name suggests origins in India.

Pakistan has denied involvement and demanding that India provide proof. In Pakistan, Jamaat-ud Dawa, an Islamist group believed to have ties to Lashkar-e-Taiba, denounced the killing of civilians.

In Islamic extremist Web forums, some praised the Mumbai attacks, including the targeting of Jews.

A man identified as Sheik Youssef al-Ayeri said the killings are in line with Islam.

"It's all right for Muslims to set the infidels' castles on fire, drown them with water and take some of them as prisoners, whether young or old, <u>women</u> or men, because it is one of many ways to beat them," he wrote in the al-Fallujah forum.

Muslims condemn attacks, worry about image

In the Gaza Strip, the territory's Islamic militant <u>Hamas</u> rulers declined comment. <u>Hamas</u> has carried out scores of suicide attacks in Israel, killing hundreds of civilians in recent years. However, <u>Hamas</u> has said it does not want to get involved in conflicts elsewhere.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad referred to the attacks as terrorism, but added that the violence is rooted in "unjust policies" aimed at destabilizing the region. He did not elaborate.

India is seen by many in the Arab and Muslim world as a Western ally. For example, Israel has become an important arms supplier to India, angering Muslim Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia said in a statement carried earlier this week by the Saudi Press Agency that it "strongly condemns and denounces this criminal act." An editorial Friday in Saudi's English-language Arab News said that "no civilized person ... can be anything but revolted and sickened by the terrorist attacks in Mumbai."

However, Jonathan Fighel, an Israeli counterterrorism expert, said Saudi organizations have been funneling money to Muslim militants in Kashmir.

"This demonstrates exactly the double game and, I would say, the hypocrisy of the Saudi regime," said Fighel of the Israel-based International Institute for Counter-Terrorism.

Throughout the Muslim world, the attacks set off soul-searching.

"I think that Muslims should raise their voice against such actions. They should forge a coalition to fight such phenomena, because it harms them and damages their image," said Ali Abdel Muhsen, 22, a Muslim engineering student in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Muslims and Arabs must confront the violence "that is taking place in our name and in the name of our (Islamic) tenets," wrote Khaled al-Jenfawi, a columnist for Kuwait's Al-Seyassah daily.

"Unfortunately, we have yet to see a distinguished popular condemnation in the traditional Arab or Muslim communities that strongly rejects what is happening in the name of Islam or Arab nationalism," wrote al-Jenfawi.

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