

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:31:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223446981

Documents (100)

1. The death of so many children in Gaza MIDEAST: Mourn the Cat That Died</

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

2. Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

3. DIGEST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

4. Israel readies postwar battle for public opinion; Officials brace for onslaught of global criticism

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

5. 'My daughter's birth is the first light in this darkness' The Independent's reporter in Gaza, Fares Akram, has lost his father and home to Israeli bombs - but today he is celebrating

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

6._THE WORLD WATCHES WITH HOPE, SKEPTICISM

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

7. Sending in the blue helmets won't help The United Nations shouldn't protect terrorist actors

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

8. Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

9. Close US bases call by MPs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

10. UN base hit despite talk of truce Israel considers Egypt ceasefire plan

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

11. Yusuf Islam, once Cat Stevens, releases song for Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

12. World - Protests in solidarity with Gaza continue

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

13. A question of compensation

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

14. UN worker kidnapped, driver killed in Pakistan

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

15. Yusuf Islam, once Cat Stevens, releases song for Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

16. Saks ' piece is false Zionist propaganda

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

17. <u>'I ask for your trust in this time of crisis'</u>. As government sworn in, Netanyahu promises action on Iran and economy, vows to bring Schalit home

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

18. Palestinian Killed In Israeli Air Strike In Southern Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

19. The personal code of the IDF soldier: 'May our camp be pure'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

20. DIGEST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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21. <u>Guardian Weekly: International news: Obama offers olive branch to Muslims: Observers praise craft of Cairo</u> speech but question the substance

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

22. The ties that bind

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

23. Our readers' views

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

24. Scarred youngsters return to life

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

25. Letter from Emma Bushell

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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26. Israel started dispute by breaking truce

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

27. Female judges help women get justice in Islamic courts

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

28. DIGEST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

29. Home truths about Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

30. <u>US congressmen, in first visit to Gaza in eight years, push for political progress. Unclear if trip, coordinated</u> with Israel, signals a changed American approach

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

31. Charade goes on while Gaza buries its dead



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

32. Jewish group angry over Gaza cartoon

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

33. Friends of sabeel are working hard to bring peace in gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

34. Friends of sabeel are working hard to bring peace in gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

35. UNRWA School Not Hit By Israel: U.N.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

36. Letter: Your Say - No winners in Gaza

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

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

37. Turkish PM Storms Off WEF Stage Over Gaza Argument

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

38. New power emerging...

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

39. Papal visit inspires Gaza Catholics

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

40. <u>Turkey as a crucial bridge between the western and Muslim worlds POLITICS: At East-West Crossroads,</u> Turkey Presses Ambitious Agenda&t;

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

41. Column: Israel - Palestine on campus debate calls for activism that matters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

42. Letter: Israel on the way to genocide

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

43. Time to speak up

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

44. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

45. Livni on trail of a hawk

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

46. Israel to shield soldiers from prosecution; Reaction to claims of illegal activities by the defence force

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

47. MEP broadside for broadcasters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

48. Hundreds join Gaza peace march

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

49. The War on Terror goes on, whatever we call it Binyam Mohamed may have been maltreated, but that doesn't mean that the threat from Islamic theocracies is not real

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

50. chatroom

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

51. World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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52. Israeli bombs silence Gaza music school

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

53. Human rights groups accuse Israelis of war crimes Civilian casualties

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

54. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

55. Posturing and laughter as victims rot Comment

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

56. WOMEN DESERVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

57. <u>HOW THEY VOTED: MAINE 'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, JAN. 9-15, 2009 ECONOMIC</u> BAILOUT, GAZA CAMPAIGN, PRESIDENTIAL RECORDS IN SPOTLIGHT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

58. <u>Turk- Israeli rift growing; The war in Gaza has severely damaged the good relations between Israel and</u>

<u>Turkey</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

59. Palestinians have the key

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

60. Beware of the nerds

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

61. Sheba director bemoans deaths of Palestinian colleague's relatives in Gaza by IDF fire

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

62. Where the Still Flourishing Underground Economy Is the Only Economy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

63. Israel and the devious timing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

64. Ceasefire allows Gazans to search for loved ones

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

65. The mideast - in Montreal

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

66._TODAY IN HISTORY

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

67. U.S. Envoy Reassures and Presses a Wary Israel

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

68. Laudable sentiments, now for action COMMENT & DEBATE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

69. International: The US and Islam: The speech no other president could make

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

70. World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

71. In Cairo, Barack Obama had it both ways on Palestine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

72. <u>Mideast gets mediator in the form of an ex-spy Former British agent uses backdoor meetings to reach out to</u> *Islamists*

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

73. Contrary viewpoints on Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

74. TODAY IN HISTORY

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

75. Israel 's actions in Gaza have killed any chance for peace; Gazans are confident they can build prosperous

country if given a chance

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

76. Drunk blamed for deadly fire

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

77. Ryan's university ban against civil liberties

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

78. Drunk blamed for deadly fire

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

79. your say

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

80. Turkey 's friendship is in doubt TURKEY: Long Friendship with Israel in Peril

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

81. World & nation in 60 seconds The nation The world

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

82. Support people who live in terror LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

83. Israel 's rare opportunity

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

84. Can the Koran be compared to 'Mein Kampf'?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

85. My message to the West - Israel must stop the slaughter Comment

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

86. <u>International: Obama presidency: Quest begins for peace between Israel and the Palestinians: Veteran</u> peacemaker to be special Middle East envoy: Clinton follows Obama and calls regional leaders

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

87. MY TURN: 'WHATEVER THE SOLUTION, VIOLENCE WILL NOT LEAD THE WAY'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to



88. <u>International: Gaza: Amid dust and death, a family's story speaks for the terror of war: 48 members of the</u>
Samouni family were killed in one day when Israel 's battle with Hamas suddenly centred on their homes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

89. Obama reaches out

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

90. The deaths of children - and sense

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

91. Feature - The die is cast How far-right Israeli politician Avigdor Lieberman could rip away any pretence of

moderate democracy
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

92. Mothers of martyrdom

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

93. Health conditions worsening in Gaza as borders remain closed: UN agency

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

94. 3-D cell phones become Japanese eye-catchers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

95. Commission takes a charitable view of terrorism

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

96. <u>EU aid has been given to an Israeli oil company recognised as illegal MIDEAST: 'EU Paying for Gaza</u> Blockade'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

97. Untold stories lie buried in the rubble

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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98. It's not about symmetry; it's about being locked in the same paradigms

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

99. We, the people, must define our future

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

100. <u>How Britain 's mosques foster extremism Sectarian, conservative leadership is driving confused young</u> Muslims into the arms of radicals

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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The death of so many children in Gaza; MIDEAST: Mourn the Cat That Died</

IPS (Latin America)
January 19, 2009 Monday

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Length: 583 words

Byline: Mohammed Omer

Body

After a pause she says, 'At least the cat did not die hungry, like the children in Gaza.'

Zahrah Salem, 64, has four children and 15 grandchildren to worry about. Day after day of bombing brings blessing they are still there. 'We all sleep in one room,' she says. 'So if we die, we die together. What if we die and the children don't, we don't want to leave them behind to suffer.'

These days the injuries suffered by this IPS correspondent at the hands of the Israelis on trying to return home to Gaza seem trivial in the face of what is going on in Gaza. And in the face of the fears over the fate of family and friends back home.

From the comfort of a hospital in Amsterdam, thoughts seem focussed day and night on survivors, on who might perhaps be in hospital in Gaza? lucky enough to make it to hospital, lucky enough perhaps to be still there. And on what a very different place a hospital in Gaza can be from one in Amsterdam.

'We do not receive patients, we receive remains,' says Ahmed Abdelrahman, a staff nurse at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. The sound of ambulance sirens screams into the phone as we speak. 'It is a job sometimes to put limbs together in the morgue, to find out which body part belongs to who.'

Staff risk their lives to save the injured. 'We have been shot at many times as we evacuate injured people or collect bodies,' says Abdelrahman. 'I have as we speak eight calls from the east side from people who are bleeding, including two <u>women</u>. But our ambulance crew was fired on by the Israelis as they went to help.'

Dr. Mawia Hassanien, head of emergency services at Shifa Hospital says at least 12 emergency workers have been killed and 32 injured. Eleven ambulances have been destroyed.

The injured who are brought to hospital successfully find little treatment possible. The Egyptian authorities have opened the Rafah crossing briefly on a few occasions to allow in medical supplies. But that is a small fraction of what Gaza needs.

Many in Gaza, including <u>Hamas</u> members, say they do not know what to do to stop this. Some scattered groups not under <u>Hamas</u> control continue to fire rockets into Israel. These rockets have killed four and injured 40, and spread serious anxiety among Israelis in Ashkelon, Ashdod, Beersheba, Sderot and some other towns in western Negev.

But the rockets are only an excuse for Israel to destroy the Palestinian structure, Gazans say. An Israeli military spokesman has said the Israeli Defence Forces trained for the attack 18 months at a model of the main city on a desert army base. 'Our soldiers know all the back streets where the targets are,' he said.

The death of so many children in Gaza MIDEAST: Mourn the Cat That Died</

Abu Ghasam, 42, of Buriej refugee camp, says he cannot understand the Israeli assault, and 'why the people being killed are the civilians here, and not the ones launching the rockets.'

Ghasam, father of six, has little time to worry about these questions, though. His main concern is to use a few hours of ceasefire to buy bread for his children. He usually finds bakeries closed. For the safe, hunger is now becoming a greater problem, by the hour.

Zahrah Salem knew people close by who have been killed. She can see the mourning tents. 'But I am afraid to go and pay condolences,' she says. 'The Israeli planes are hitting us everywhere.'

She can hear them again and again, and she can hear the bombs and missiles come screaming down. But she does not close the window. If the bomb just misses you, there will be the glass splinters.<p © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: January 19, 2009

End of Document



Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

The Irish Times

January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 10

Length: 596 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN in Jerusalem

Body

THE SITUATION in the Gaza Strip was unsettled yesterday in spite of Israel s unilateral ceasefire and <u>Hamas</u> s declaration of a conditional week-long truce. Israeli F-16s struck a house and tanks engaged fighters in northern Gaza after Palestinian fighters fired rockets into southern Israel.

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Hospitals remained under severe pressure although a group of 40 doctors entered from Egypt on Saturday. A few critically wounded Palestinians left the Strip through the southern Rafah crossing for treatment in hospitals in Egypt which was insisting that only its ambulances could make the transfer. At the Erez crossing in the north Israel reportedly opened a field hospital to treat the wounded.

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Australian volunteer Sharon Locke took part in the Red Crescent effort to extract 27 bodies through a hole in the roof of a house in the Zeitoun neighbourhood of Gaza city where Israeli troops had rounded up 70 members of the Sammouni family on January 4th.

Twenty-four hours later the house received direct hits from Israeli bombs. Ms Locke saw the corpses of four **women** extracted before the Red Cross warned ambulance crews and local people that they should flee because Israeli tanks were advancing. Later rescuers returned and lifted out another 14 bodies. Heavy equipment had been brought in to do the job. The whole area is crushed, Ms Locke stated.

Salah Sakka, a former member of the Gaza city municipality, which serves 500,000 people, said: Planes, drones and helicopters are overhead [creating tension]. Water and sanitation are a catastrophe. Water and sewage pipes have been destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of people do not have tap water, 220,000 in Jabaliya alone.

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Israel has rejected accusations by human rights experts and agencies, including, on Saturday, Human Rights Watch, that it has committed war crimes by attacking densely populated urban areas with a variety of highly destructive and toxic munitions. UNRWA s Gaza operations chief, Irish national John Ging, asked: Were they war crimes that resulted in the deaths of the innocent during the conflict? The question has to be answered.

Load-Date: January 19, 2009

End of Document



DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 1, 2009 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 1024 words

Byline: FROM NEWS SERVICES

Dateline: 0

Body

CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Chavez orders takeover of rice businesses

President Hugo Chavez on Saturday ordered troops to intervene in Venezuelan rice processing businesses, saying some have balked at producing under regulated prices.

"This government is here to protect the people, not the bourgeoisie or the rich," said Chavez, ordering military authorities to "take control of and intervene in all of these businesses that process rice in Venezuela."

GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Hamas leader makes secret trip to Gaza

A top Syria-based <u>Hamas</u> leader secretly crossed into Gaza for his first visit in decades, an Egyptian security official on the border said.

Moussa Abu Marzouk entered the Gaza Strip late on Thursday with three other <u>Hamas</u> officials before returning to Egypt the following day, the official said.

DUBLIN

Police recover millions taken in bank robbery

Police recovered millions in stolen cash and interrogated seven suspected robbers Saturday, a day after a gang took a bank employee's family hostage and forced him to rob his own branch.

Police said that shortly before midnight they raided a house in Dublin and stopped a car on a highway ringing Dublin. A third of the stolen money has been recovered. Five men and a woman were arrested in the house and one man was arrested in the car.

BAGHDAD

DIGEST

Dropping oil prices slow budget process

Iraq's parliament pushed back voting Saturday on this year's budget and could be forced to make further cuts because of falling oil prices.

The latest delay in trying to ratify the current \$64 billion budget proposal highlights the financial squeeze facing Iraq as declining oil revenues cut into reconstruction plans such as new roads and improved utilities - which the Shiiteled government hopes to use as showcases in national elections later this year.

ALGIERS, ALGERIA

Farmers' debts will be canceled, president says

Weeks before his re-election bid, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced that the government will cancel billions of dollars worth of debt owed by farmers and livestock raisers, the state-run news agency reported.

Voters in the gas-rich north African country go to the polls for presidential elections on April 9. Bouteflika is running for a third term, an option that parliament gave him recently by changing the constitution.

CAIRO

Police arrest man for attacking an American

Police arrested an Egyptian man who attacked an American teacher in the same Cairo tourist site where a bomb killed a French teenager a week earlier, said local media.

Abdel-Rahman Taher, 46, used a pocket knife to leave a 1-inch cut on the teacher's face when he attacked him Friday near the famous Khan el-Khalili bazaar. Taher told police he hated foreigners because of Israel's recent offensive against the Gaza Strip, the paper reported.

GROZNY, RUSSIA

Chechnya president defends honor killings

Chechnya President Ramzan Kadyrov said seven <u>women</u> who were shot in the head and dumped by the roadside deserved to die because they had "loose morals" and were rightfully shot by male relatives in honor killings.

"If a woman runs around and if a man runs around with her, both of them are killed," Kadyrov told journalists in the capital of this Russian republic.

BEIJING

U.S. praises talks with military leaders

Two days of military consultations between the United States and China ended Saturday with glowing reviews from the senior Pentagon official at the talks, who said that high-level meetings between the nations on military issues, suspended last year, would resume soon.

The official, David Sedney, the undersecretary of defense for East Asia, described the talks as the best he had conducted in 18 years of military negotiations with officials in Beijing.

KHAR, PAKISTAN

Commanders upbeat in war with Taliban

Pakistan has beaten the Taliban in a major stronghold close to the Afghan border, is close to victory in another and expects to pacify most of the remaining tribal areas before the end of the year, commanders said Saturday.

DIGEST

The upbeat assessment follows criticism of Pakistan for accepting a cease-fire with militants in Swat Valley, just next to the tribal regions.

TIMISOARA, ROMANIA

Plane makes safe emergency landing

A Romanian plane carrying 51 people made a safe emergency landing in western Romania and all the occupants escaped injury, officials said.

The Carpatair flight's front landing gear became stuck and the plane circled Timisoara International Airport for almost two hours, using up its fuel to avoid a potential fire before it landed on a 200-yard long bed of foam laid out by firefighters, officials said.

VATICAN CITY

Number of priests rising, Vatican says

The Vatican says the number of priests worldwide is slowly but steadily rising.

Since 2000, the number of priests has gone up by several hundred each year. The two decades before that had witnessed a marked decline.

The percentage of Catholics worldwide remains stable, at about 17.3 percent.

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

North Korea warns U.S. about moves on border

North Korea accused the U.S. military of making provocative moves along the tense border on the divided Korean peninsula, warning Saturday of "unpredictable military conflicts."

The rare threat came as North Korea gears up to test-fire a long-range missile believed capable of reaching U.S. territory.

Briefly

- Tibetan monk: A Tibetan Buddhist monk doused himself with gasoline and set himself ablaze in western China in an apparent protest against government restrictions on religion. Security forces shot him, Tibetan advocacy groups reported.
- Architect dies: Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn, whose unique style of blending modern forms with Scandinavian traditions earned him the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize, has died. He was 84.
- China laws: China's legislature enacted a tough new food safety law, promising tougher penalties for makers of tainted products in the wake of scandals that exposed serious flaws in monitoring of the nation's food supply.
- Guyana bloggers: Police in Guyana say they are looking for bloggers who caused alarm with a false report that a commercial bank in the South American nation had requested a \$5 million bailout to avert a collapse.

Load-Date: March 2, 2009



Israel readies postwar battle for public opinion; Officials brace for onslaught of global criticism

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
January 18, 2009 Sunday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 587 words

Byline: Ron Bousso, Agence France-Presse

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Having declared its Gaza war over, Israel is readying a new offensive -- the battle for public opinion once there is a full account of the destruction and civilian deaths in the battered enclave.

With Israel keeping Gaza closed to foreign media during the war and <u>Hamas</u> preventing access to combat areas to local journalists, coverage of the Jewish state's deadliest ever offensive on the Gaza Strip has been limited.

With the fighting over, foreign journalists and non-governmental organizations are expected to flood into the impoverished Palestinian territory to assess the damage from 22 days of massive bombing and shelling.

Even before the increased scrutiny, the picture from the war is grim -- more than 1,200 people killed, including 410 children and 108 *women*, with medics expecting to find more bodies in the mountains of rubble left by the fighting.

To counter the criticism, the government has begun assembling "incriminating" information on the many buildings hit during the offensive to prove they were legitimate targets used by *Hamas* militants.

Aerial photos and images filmed by foot soldiers equipped with video cameras during the fighting are being combed through in order to extract details on as many incidents as possible, Israeli Welfare Minister Isaac Herzog said.

"Israel wants to be able to present facts that the majority of the demolished buildings were used by militants. Many were booby-trapped, used for firing rockets and storing arms," he told AFP.

Israel launched Operation Cast Lead on Dec. 27 with the declared goals of ending militant rocket fire against the south of the country and deterring Gaza's rulers from renewing attacks.

It has been accused of heavy-handed tactics during the operation that included some 2,500 air strikes on the densely populated territory, including against UN schools and shelters where dozens of civilians were killed.

Official figures show that around 4,000 residential buildings, 51 government buildings and 20 mosques have been levelled since the start of the war.

Israel readies postwar battle for public opinion; Officials brace for onslaught of global criticism

The extensive list also catalogues damage to roads, schools, the electricity grid and the water network, according to figures provided by the Palestinian Authority.

In total, some 14 per cent of all the buildings in the battered territory have been either damaged or destroyed, putting the total cost of the losses at nearly \$500 million US, Palestinians say.

Israel's battle over the perception of the war will be a global one, with at least six ministers fanning out to different countries to press home Israel's view of the conduct of the war, the government said.

Some of the ministers will be armed with residents of Israeli communities near the Gaza border who will tell audiences what it has been like living for years under the threat of rockets launched from the Palestinian enclave.

"Naturally, Israel's battle over international public opinion is a very difficult one. In a world of superficial media that broadcasts only short clips, obviously they would go for the images of destruction," Herzog told AFP.

Israel is also concerned about heavy criticism over the number of Palestinians civilians killed during the onslaught, despite Israel's repeated statements that made every effort to spare innocent life.

"Israel will also show that it warned civilians before carrying out strikes against buildings by phone or by dropping leaflets warning of an impending attack," Herzog said.

The Israeli military used more than 120,000 phone calls and text messages to warn Gazans of attacks, he said.

Graphic

Photo: Getty Images; A Palestinian boy sweeps in front of his family home after Israeli warplanes struck his neighbouring Taha mosque on Saturday in Beit Lahia, in the northern Gaza Strip.;

Photo: AFP; Getty images; French doctor Regis Garrigue, right, head of the Help-Doctors non-governmental organization, attends to a Palestinian woman wounded on Saturday.;

Load-Date: January 19, 2009

End of Document



'My daughter's birth is the first light in this darkness'; The Independent's reporter in Gaza, Fares Akram, has lost his father and home to Israeli bombs - but today he is celebrating

The Independent (London)

January 16, 2009 Friday

Fourth Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 548 words **Byline:** Fares Akram

Body

It has been the bloodiest, most violent day yet here in Gaza City. Israeli tanks came in from the south, shelling and bombing in the residential areas. But, even with this death, bloodshed and chaos all around us, we are filled with joy. Twelve days after my father was killed by an Israeli airstrike, our first baby has been born, healthy at 3.8 kilos, with dark hair, just exactly as her mother wanted. I couldn't believe my eyes, seeing her for the first time. I kissed and hugged her softly. She cried when I held her.

On Wednesday evening as Alaa was in labour, there were signs of hope for an end to the conflict; we heard reports that <u>Hamas</u> had accepted the Egyptian plan for a ceasefire. "Perhaps our baby, and peace, would arrive together," I thought. But, overnight, the Israelis escalated attacks, targeting an area called Tel al-Hawa which is not a <u>Hamas</u> stronghold. It is an area of villas where wealthier people live. I spoke to one of my friends who described terrible scenes, with injured people running into the streets. I called the Red Cross. They said they had suspended operations as tank fire had hit the al-Quds hospital, causing panic among survivors of earlier incidents. The UN building, struck by three shells, burned all day.

Alaa had been frightened at the prospect of giving birth and, to make it more terrifying, we could hear the bombing as we got in the taxi to Shifa hospital. Conservative Muslim customs apply in public hospitals so I wasn't allowed in to the labour ward. It was disappointing, but Alaa's sister came out from time to time to tell me how it was going.

I knew the birth would be long. The doctors induced labour. So I went down to the entrance, where ambulances were arriving. I saw eight wounded people taken from a fire engine. All were civil defence staff still in fluorescent jackets. A house near their base had been hit by a missile. They rushed to evacuate the house, but another missile struck. It was a terrible sight. Most had their legs cut off from beneath the knee. They had severe shrapnel cuts.

All day yesterday, the Israelis intensified strikes on Gaza City and, at the emergency wing of Shifa hospital, away from the calm of the maternity ward, the ambulances never stopped arriving. For 20 minutes, I watched the injured and dying coming in non-stop convoys of ambulances, civilian cars, pick-up trucks; anything that could be used.

'My daughter's birth is the first light in this darkness' The Independent's reporter in Gaza, Fares Akram, has lost his father and home to Israeli bombs - but t....

Some of the wounded were burnt, some badly cut. Some were sent to the morgue. Most of the victims seemed to be **women**, girls and children. They included a small baby in white blankets.

My mother joined us in hospital. She held back the tears but I knew she was sad, thinking of my dad. He would have been so happy to see his new granddaughter. And yet, I know that, as one family member leaves us, another is born. It reminds you that life is a circle, a continuous thing.

I'm afraid for my wife and daughter. The smoke from the UN building makes it difficult for us to breathe clean air, so how is it for a baby just a few hours old? I only hope Somaya's birth will be accompanied by the end of the killing. For our family, if not for the rest of Gaza, her birth is like a light in the dark.

Israel 'sorry' for UN strike Aid workers say they were hit by white phosphorus Gaza crisis, pages 23-25

Load-Date: January 15, 2009

End of Document



THE WORLD WATCHES WITH HOPE, SKEPTICISM

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 21, 2009 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2009 P.G. Publishing Co. **Section:** NATIONAL; Pg. B-5

Length: 560 words

Byline: Jack Chang, McClatchy Newspapers

Body

Tens of millions around the world watched Barack Obama become president yesterday with a mix both of hope that he'd bring peace to a war-torn world and skepticism about what one man could accomplish.

In Kenya, where his father was born, hundreds of people from all walks of life and ethnic communities sat in the great court of the University of Nairobi, counting the hours and minutes until the inauguration.

When Mr. Obama took his oath, the crowd rose, erupting in cheers of "Yes we can!" and "Obama! Odinga!" Both Mr. Obama and Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga are descended from Kenya's Luo tribe.

"There are no words to describe how I'm feeling," said David Osienya, a 24-year-old literature student. Mr. Obama "has shown us it is time for us young people to change society, after our old politicians here nearly took us to civil war."

A similar scene played out in Jakarta, Indonesia, where Mr. Obama lived as a child with his mother for four years. About 1,000 people crowded into a hotel ballroom in the Indonesian capital to watch the ceremony. Among the most excited was Ati Kitjanto, a former classmate of Mr. Obama's at the Muslim Jalan Besuki school.

"We're very excited that somebody who was in my class and lived in Indonesia has made it this far," Ms. Kitjanto said in a phone interview. "We feel like some of his personality was molded somehow when he was in Indonesia."

Ms. Kitjanto said an Obama White House would surely look on countries in Asia and around the globe with greater sympathy than had the Bush administration.

Mr. Obama's message sparked a different reaction in the Middle East, where Arabs said they didn't see much change on the way for a U.S. foreign policy they blamed for unpopular actions such as the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the recent Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip.

Ahmad Abdul-Raheem Mezel, 30, a resident of the Iraqi city of Fallujah, voiced a common view -- that Mr. Obama would do little to improve the lives of everyday Arabs. "I do not think that Obama will bring any good or prosperity to our life, since the former administration spent six years promising that without making any of that come true," he said.

THE WORLD WATCHES WITH HOPE, SKEPTICISM

"Maybe he will try, but he won't be successful, as there are many strong hands behind curtains that control him. He has not become U.S. president without satisfying those hands."

In the Gaza Strip, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were digging out of the rubble of Israel's three-week war on the militant group *Hamas*, few people shared the rest of the world's hope for change under the new president. As Mr. Obama began his inaugural address, most of Gaza City was shrouded in darkness, the war having cut electricity to more than half the Gaza Strip.

Hours earlier, Mahmoud Nimer, a young <u>Hamas</u> supporter, expressed frustration at Mr. Obama for not condemning an Israeli offensive that killed more than 1,300 Palestinians, almost half of them civilians, according to Gaza medical officials. "He kept totally silent about what was happening here," Mr. Nimer said. "I don't expect anything good from him."

Official Russian media struck a similar tone, predicting that the state of U.S.-Russian relations would remain shaky for years to come.

"In my opinion, Russia does not trust the United States at all now," read a newspaper opinion piece by the head of a pro-government research organization.

Notes

THE INAUGURATION OF BARACK OBAMA

Graphic

PHOTO: Simon Maina/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images: Kenyan <u>women</u> read a special edition of the Standard newspaper yesterday in the western city of Kisumu.

Load-Date: January 22, 2009

End of Document



<u>Sending in the blue helmets won't help; The United Nations shouldn't</u> protect terrorist actors

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia)

January 15, 2009, Thursday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. P4A

Length: 596 words **Byline:** Don Surber

Body

SOME liberals - progressives, or whatever it is they call themselves these days - want the United Nations to patrol Gaza to protect *Hamas* terrorists from the Israelis.

The advocates of U.N. blue helmets call this "peace-keeping."

No word on why *Hamas* would want the United Nations to interfere.

My question is what have the <u>women</u> and children done to deserve blue-helmeted U.N. troops invading their land? The track record of the blue helmets includes:

In 2003, Nepalese troops were accused of sexual abuse while serving in the Congo. Six were jailed.

In 2004, two UN peacekeepers were sent home after being accused of abuse in Burundi.

In 2005, UN troops were accused of rape and sexual abuse in the Sudan.

In 2006, UN personnel were accused of rape and exploitation on missions in Haiti and Liberia.

In 2007, the UN launched a probe into sexual abuse claims in Ivory Coast.

That's from a BBC report last May.

The trouble with the blue helmets is they have no adult supervision and are answerable to no one.

The idea that the United Nations is anything more than a parliament of dictatorships and bureaucrats is laughable.

The United Nations has devolved over the last 60 years into an anti-Western organization.

Civilized people realize that the day the terrorist Yassar Arafat addressed the United Nations was the day it lost all its credibility. That was 30 years ago.

Giving money to companies whose executives donated money to politicians used to be called graft and corruption. Now it is called a bailout.

Sending in the blue helmets won't help The United Nations shouldn't protect terrorist actors

After years of knocking President Bush's tax policy as "tax cuts for the rich," not only did a Democratically controlled Congress agree to give the rich \$750 billion to address the credit crisis, under President Obama, Democrats are prepared to give them trillions more.

Instead of giving General Motors and Chrysler \$25 billion - or whatever the figure is now - the government should buy \$25 billion worth of tanks and Hummers from these car companies so they can put people back to work.

Instead of bailing out the Ravenswood aluminum plant, our congressional delegation should push for buying more military aircraft, which use aluminum.

World War II pulled the nation out of the Great Depression because Americans were put back to work building tanks and aircraft.

With Russia re-arming, we need to do the same.

Bailouts are corporate welfare.

And worse, ineffective,

Native West Virginian Mark McNabb of Houston dropped a line about the death of Patrick "Duutz" Blymyer of Beckley.

Blymyer had a long and productive career in films and movies, beginning as a gaffer/chief electrician for "The Monkees" TV show.

His daughter, Xochi, is following his footsteps, having worked as an assistant director in "Primal Fear."

"Both Xochi and her father have always been great supporters and promoters of WV as a filming location where it counts most, in word-of-mouth from one professional to another," McNabb wrote.

It sounds like the state has lost an ambassador in Hollywood. That's a loss for the state, and Hollywood.

The liberal group, Families USA, in Washington has said that expanding Medicaid to cover another 22,000 adults will add 1,000 jobs to the state. That's one job for every 22 people.

Not listed is how many jobs will be lost by the additional cost of covering them.

The press release said 19 other states have made this expansion.

Considering that West Virginia is one of the few states remaining that can balance its budget, I'd think things over before jumping off that cliff.

Surber may be reached at donsurber@dailymail.com His blog is at blogs.dailymail.com/donsurber.

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

The Irish Times

January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 10

Length: 596 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN in Jerusalem

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Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

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Load-Date: January 19, 2009



Close US bases call by MPs

Gulf Daily News January 14, 2009

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Length: 618 words

Byline: MOHAMMED AL A'ALI

Body

OUTRAGED MPs in Bahrain yesterday demanded that all US military bases in the region be closed, in protest over Israel's onslaught in Gaza.

They voted to seek help from other parliaments to create a united front seeking the closure of bases throughout the Arab world.

MPs also voted to put an urgent request to the government to reopen the Israeli Boycott Office, closed as a condition of Bahrain's Free Trade Agreement with the US.

They also drew up a new condemnation of the attacks, saying a similar statement issued two weeks ago was too soft.

MPs also condemned the "silence" of Arab leaders, saying it amounted to tacit approval for Israel's actions.

MPs voted at their weekly session to send aid to Gaza out of parliament's budget, the figure for which will be set later.

They also urged the government to increase its aid to the besieged Strip, where hundreds of men, <u>women</u> and children have been killed in the onslaught.

A parliamentary delegation is set to visit the <u>Hamas</u> political office in Syria, while two thank you letters will be sent to Turkish Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, for their stand in support of Gaza.

Parliament is also to write to international and regional parliament associations and federations urging them to take action.

MPs praised His Majesty King Hamad for holding an urgent Cabinet session last Thursday to discuss the Gaza situation.

Close US bases call by MPs

They called for punishments to all hotels and nightspots which went ahead with New Year's Eve celebrations, despite orders from His Majesty to stop concerts in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza.

MPs also demanded the immediate release of Palestinian parliament president Dr Aziz Al Dowaik, of <u>Hamas</u>, from prison in Israel.

The Arab Parliamentary Federation is planning to take the case to the International Court, based on a request from Bahrain.

But a move to nominate Dr Al Dowaik as the winner of an award for the top Arab parliamentarian, instead of Bahrain's parliament chairman Khalifa Al Dhahrani, resulted in a stalemate vote.

Mr Al Dhahrani is tipped as the favourite to win the award, as he is backed by all GCC countries, in addition to other Arab countries.

MPs stood for a minute's silence at the beginning of the session, wearing pro-Palestinian scarves and with placards in front of their desks depicting Israel's atrocities.

Parliament's Palestinian Support Committee chairman Nasser Al Fadhala said that Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni must be happy with Arab leaders' silence.

"Israel is using unsanctioned weapons, as Arab leaders give their approval to what's going on with their continued silence," he said.

"Livni is happy with their silence, because without it, they wouldn't have killed so many people in Gaza, or be able to continue."

"While Arab leaders are quiet, non-Arabs like Erdogan and Chavez are doing their best to highlight the case and ask for action against Israel."

He said American military bases had to be closed, because they were a potential threat.

"They are not here to protect us, they are here to protect and serve Israel, which is testing American weapons on the Palestinians," said Mr Al Fadhala.

"One day those bases will be used to kill us, considering that the US would do anything for Israel and Arab people are and will always be a target."

Al Wefaq MP Jalal Fairooz blamed the Arab world for doing business with Israel and the UN for failing to act.

"There is no stand against Israel despite its breach of international conventions, simply because of US protection," he said.

"The Arab world is also to blame, considering that BD1.5 billion of Israel's revenue comes from their pockets, as 300 companies operate in Arab countries."

alaali@gdn.com.bh

Load-Date: January 20, 2009



UN base hit despite talk of truce; Israel considers Egypt ceasefire plan

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 16, 2009 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 9

Length: 600 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis, Jerusalem

Body

FIGHTING looks set to continue in the Gaza Strip for several days while Israel considers a ceasefire deal proposed by Egypt and accepted by *Hamas*.

Despite signs a truce was near, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency headquarters in Gaza City came under attack from Israeli shelling last night.

UN spokesman Christopher Gunness told The Age three rounds of white phosphorus had struck the UN's main compound in Gaza City.

"Several buildings are on fire," Mr Gunness said. "There are fuel tankers in the very near vicinity. White phosphorus cannot be extinguished by conventional means, you need sand and we don't have sand."

Palestinian sources in Gaza City reported that Israeli tanks had begun moving towards populated neighbourhoods in the city, accompanied by helicopters. According to the reports, several tanks opened fire on high-rise buildings. Thousands of residents were reportedly fleeing.

As Israel's offensive in the territory entered its 21st day, the Palestinian toll in the conflict was 1033 killed, including 322 children and 76 **women**, and 4850 wounded. Thirteen Israelis had been killed, including nine soldiers, and 58 injured.

The Israeli Air Force was continuing nightly bombing raids, hitting about 70 targets on Thursday.

Israeli defence official General Amos Gilad arrived in Cairo last night to discuss Egypt's plan for stopping arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip. *Hamas* wants a full withdrawal of Israeli troops as part of any ceasefire, as well as a detailed plan for the opening of the border crossing points into and out of the strip.

Egypt and Israel want forces loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah party to take control of the Egypt-Gaza border.

General Gilad was scheduled to return to Jerusalem early this morning to present the Egyptian plan to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. If the plan meets their approval, it will be discussed by the Israeli security cabinet. Because General Gilad twice cancelled plans to travel to Cairo last week, last night's visit was being interpreted as a sign that significant progress had been made.

UN base hit despite talk of truce Israel considers Egypt ceasefire plan

Israel is also pushing a plan that would involve building a fence that encloses the border city of Rafah, half of which is located in Gaza and the other half in Egypt. Densely populated on both sides, Rafah is a hub for smuggling arms, vital supplies and consumer goods into the Gaza Strip.

"Between Rafah and Cairo is the Sinai desert, so if you build the fence outside Rafah, it's very easy to see what's going in and out, and it's impossible to tunnel under the fence and into the desert without being seen," General Giora Eiland, a former director of Israel's National Security Council, told The Age.

Before Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, General Eiland had responsibility for preventing smuggling in the territory.

"Because Rafah is so densely populated on both sides, it is impossible to prevent tunnels from one side to the other. A fence around Rafah is the only way," he said.

The Director-General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, Aaron Abramovich, left for Washington last night to present demands that the US work to prevent arms smuggling from Iran to Gaza before the arms reach Egypt. Israel has asked the US to provide guarantees for smuggling prevention by means of increased sea and land patrols, and by imposing tighter sanctions on Iran.

France and Germany also indicated preparedness to guarantee prevention of arms smuggling and the opening of the crossing points to Gaza as part of a permanent ceasefire.

Graphic

PHOTO: A Palestinian girl stands in her damaged home after an Israeli military strike in Gaza City. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



Yusuf Islam, once Cat Stevens, releases song for Gaza

Daily News Egypt
January 28, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 221 words

Body

Singer-songwriter Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens, released on Sunday a charity song whose proceeds will go towards assisting Palestinians in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip.

The new recording of the song "œThe Day the World Gets Round,€ originally recorded by George Harrison, features Islam on vocals and Klaus Voorman, known to many as the fifth Beatle, on bass.

The song can be downloaded online at different rates and its proceeds will go towards the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and Save the Children to aid children and families in the Gaza Strip, UNRWA said in a statement.

Islam said on his website he hoped the recording will "help remind people of the immense legacy of love, peace and happiness we can share when we get round to looking at mankind's futile wars and prejudices."

As Cat Stevens, Islam, now 59, recorded several major hits in the late 1960s and 1970s. He converted to Islam at the height of his fame in 1977, devoting himself to education and philanthropy.

Israel's 22-day offensive in the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled territory, which ended on Jan. 18, killed more than 1,300 Palestinians, including hundreds of <u>women</u> and children. It also left widespread destruction.

UNRWA said the song can be purchased online at http://www.jamalrecords.com/cgibin/commerce.cgi?display=home. €"AFP

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Load-Date: January 29, 2009



World - Protests in solidarity with Gaza continue

Morning Star

January 17, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 238 words

Body

Protests against Israel's onslaught on Gaza continued around the world yesterday.

Some 2,000 Palestinian refugees at the Yarmouk camp near the Syrian capital Damascus called for Israel to pull out of Gaza.

Iraqis protested across the country and donated money, jewellry and food, as clerics called for donations to help suffering Palestinians.

In Beirut, more than 1,000 Lebanese and Palestinian <u>women</u>, including the widows and orphans of war casualties, staged an hour's sit-in outside the UN relief agency building in solidarity with Gaza.

Palestinian police in the West Bank town of Tul Karem beat up protesters chanting in support of the <u>Hamas</u> government.

Israeli soldiers shot a man dead at a separate protest. In Jordan, around 1,500 people marched after noon prayers towards the EU mission in the capital Amman. The protesters condemned an Arab summit on Gaza under way in Doha, demanding that Arab nations send armies rather than hold gatherings.

Some tried to push their way through police lines to the Israeli embassy, demanding that the government dismiss the Israeli ambassador and abolish Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

Israel's war on the besieged and almost defenceless territory has killed at least 1,105 Palestinians, including 346 children, and wounded 5,100 out of a population of 1.5 million since December 27.

Thirteen Israelis, three of them civilians, have died, while 233 Israeli soldiers have been wounded.

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



A question of compensation

Herbert River Express (Australia)

January 27, 2009 Tuesday

1 - Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 2

Length: 218 words

Body

EVERY day we are seeing world wide condemnation, demonstrations and marches against the Israeli attacks against the rocket firing *Hamas* Palestinians. Even our country has joined the hue and cry.

Now, I have not seen or ever heard of any such activities against the carnage and slaughter of civilians, men, **women**, and children in Iraq by suicide bombers from both religious sects, Sunni, and Shiite.

The death toll in that country over the years far exceeds that of Gaza. The Americans are not even involved in these attacks.

The Muslims are killing their own people, and there is utter silence from the Muslim communities here and around the world. Why? Any protester care to explain?

After the Bali bombers were found guilty and executed, there has been no case for compensation for the families of the deceased from any of the law fraternity, who are never slow in jumping on the gravy train in such cases. After all, Libya had to pay out millions to the families of the Lockerbie Pan Am disaster which killed 252 people. What is the difference, both were proven guilty?

Ah, but we do have one compensation case, involving Dr Haneef. It turned out the doctor was falsely accused, on the other hand 88 Australians and other nationalities were killed in Bali.

Someone please enlighten me.

-- Colin Easdon-Smith,

Ingham

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



UN worker kidnapped, driver killed in Pakistan

Cape Times (South Africa)
February 03, 2009 Tuesday
e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 **Length:** 229 words

Body

Gunmen kidnapped an American, John Soleckithe, head of the United Nations refugee office in the city of Quetta, as he travelled to work and killed his driver in Pakistan yesterday, underscoring the security threat in a country wracked by violence.

An Iranian woman activist, Alieh Eghdamdoust, has started a three-year jail term for taking part in a protest in 2006 to demand more **women**'s rights, a fellow campaigner said yesterday.

An Israeli aircraft attacked a car travelling in the Gaza Strip yesterday, killing a militant and further straining a truce with <u>Hamas</u>. The January 18 ceasefire has been tested by sporadic Palestinian shelling attacks and Israeli air strikes.

Nato would "regret" any decision by Kyrgyzstan to order the closure of a US base that serves as a resupply post for operations in Afghanistan, in the hope Russia will extend a major loan.

UN special envoy to Myanmar met detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi as her party expressed frustration with the world body's failure to persuade the military regime to reform.

Cuban President Raul Castro says he is returning home "very happy" after talks with Russian leaders aimed at revitalising ties between the two Cold War allies.

About 900 workers at a British nuclear processing plant, Sellafield, walked out yesterday, joining widening protests over the use of foreign workers as unemployment is rising.

Load-Date: February 2, 2009



Yusuf Islam, once Cat Stevens, releases song for Gaza

Daily News Egypt
January 28, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 221 words

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Load-Date: January 29, 2009



Saks' piece is false Zionist propaganda

Sowetan (South Africa)

January 20, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION & EDITORIAL

Length: 228 words **Byline:** Sam Ditshego

Body

Saks' piece is false Zionist propaganda

In his opinion piece in Sowetan on January 15 headlined "<u>Hamas</u> is to blame for Israeli raids", David Saks presents your readers with fabricated stories and Zionist propaganda.

I have never heard of a people who asked to be bombed. Saks uses US military speak like "enemy civilians", "legitimate military targets" and "collateral damage".

There are no enemy civilians. A civilian is a civilian and civilians cannot be legitimate military targets. Collateral damage refers to innocent victims of unprovoked wars such as the one Israel currently wages against unarmed Palestinians, and the ones the US waged against Iraq and Afghanistan.

Saks has the gall and temerity to refer to an occupied people as terrorists. His entire article blames the victims. Let me remind him that it was at the Zionist Congress of 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, that a decision was taken to create, through terrorist means, a Zionist state for Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia.

It is not the first time that Zionists have committed such atrocities. In 1948, many of the indigenous population were bombed and raided out of Deir Yasin where 250 Palestinians, mostly <u>women</u> and children, were killed. Did they fire rockets? The blame for the latest attacks rests squarely on Israel. South Africa should cut diplomatic relations with that country.

, Kagiso

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



'I ask for your trust in this time of crisis'. As government sworn in, Netanyahu promises action on Iran and economy, vows to bring Schalit home

The Jerusalem Post
April 1, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1400 words

Byline: SHELLY PAZ and TOVAH LAZAROFF

Body

Israel seeks peace with the entire Arab and Muslim world but continues to be threatened by the forces of Islamic extremists, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said several hours before he was sworn in Tuesday evening.

He took the oath of office just before midnight, after the Knesset voted 69-45 to approve the new government.

"These are irregular times," Netanyahu told the Knesset plenum. "Today Israel is faced with two tests - an economic crisis and a security crisis. The source of these crises are neither our past actions nor past mistakes.... Our [current] actions, however, will determine the results of these crises."

Netanyahu was interrupted numerous times by critics of his extra-large government as he presented it and its guidelines to the Knesset. In the past, Netanyahu himself expressed opposition to large governments due to the expense involved.

"It is not with a victor's joy that I stand here today in front of you, but with a great sense of responsibility," Netanyahu began. "I ask for your trust at this time of worldwide crisis of a kind we haven't known before, and it is with a sense of worry, but also with hope and faith, that the State of Israel confronts two major challenges: the economic challenge and the security challenge. I am certain that the people of Israel will cope successfully with the challenges that lie ahead of it."

Regarding Iranian threats to "erase Israel from the map," Netanyahu criticized the international community for its lack of response.

"The Jewish people has experience with dictators and it cannot overestimate megalomaniac dictators who threaten to destroy it," he said.

The new prime minister added that the worst thing for the State of Israel and the world would be "that a radical regime obtains nuclear weapons."

The threat to Israel came from the spread of extremist Islam in the region and in the world, Netanyahu said.

'I ask for your trust in this time of crisis'. As government sworn in, Netanyahu promises action on Iran and economy, vows to bring Schalit home

"I separate extremist Islam from the general Muslim world, which is also threatened by extremist Islam," he told the plenum. "The Muslim culture is a rich culture that knew times of prosperity, of Arabs and Jews who lived together and created things together."

Six prime ministers had strived for peace with the Palestinians but failed, he said, adding that "the failure was not their fault. If the heads of the Palestinian Authority want peace, I tell them now - we can achieve it."

Netanyahu said his government would work for peace with all of Israel's neighbors on three levels: economic, political and security.

"We will carry out ongoing negotiations for peace with the Palestinians in an attempt to reach a permanent agreement," he said. "We don't want to rule another people, and the agreement will give the Palestinians all the rights to rule themselves, except for those that endanger Israel."

Netanyahu also explained how his government would handle the "truly unprecedented" economic crisis, saying it threatened the livelihood of tens of thousands of Israelis and that no one could tell when and how it would end.

"But I know that the Israeli market has clear advantages that enable it to cope with many challenges," he said. "The fact that we are a small country provides leverage in getting out of this crisis. The Israeli market is like a small and light speedboat whose direction can be changed more easily. I myself will lead this change of direction and the government I head will operate to protect work places, to resolve the shortage of credit in the market, and to maintain macroeconomic policies."

Netanyahu also promised a revolution in the education system and set a goal to place Israel among the top 10 countries in the world within 10 years.

"From my experience, when you set a goal, a process to achieve the goal starts right away," he said.

Netanyahu also discussed his plans to address the increase in crime, promising to strengthen the police, implement more severe punishments and advance reforms.

"It is unacceptable that the Jewish people, who were dispersed in more than a hundred countries in the Diaspora where they maintained high standards of morality, came back to their country where crime organizations that deal in murder, **women** and drug trafficking are emerging," he said.

Netanyahu also said he was committed to the Declaration of Independence from 61 years ago, "including the obligation for full equality for all people regardless of their religion, gender and race."

He praised departing prime minister Olmert and thanked him for the work he had done for the state, its security and its citizens.

Finally, Netanyahu read out the long list of ministers and deputy ministers that he asked the Knesset to approve - to loud catcalls from the opposition.

He explained that the coalition agreements had been checked with the relevant legal bodies, adding that when he was in the opposition, he had never shown disrespect for the Knesset.

He paused and look out to the spectators gallery where Aviva Schalit sat along with Karnit Goldwasser and Esther Wachsman.

Aviva's son Gilad was kidnapped by <u>Hamas</u> in June 2006. Until two weeks ago, hopes had remained high that Olmert would find a way to conclude a prisoner swap with <u>Hamas</u> for Gilad's return.

Now, it was Netanyahu's turn to speak of prioritizing Gilad's release.

It is right before Pessah, he said.

'I ask for your trust in this time of crisis'. As government sworn in, Netanyahu promises action on Iran and economy, vows to bring Schalit home

"At our national table, there is an empty chair. It is Gilad Schalit's chair. I will do everything in my power to ensure his speedy return, healthy and whole, to his family's bosom," Netanyahu said.

Then he moved from a personal address to the Schalit and said that as an expression of his feelings as Pessah approaches, he had chosen to read to the plenum a portion of one of the last letters that his brother Yonatan had written before he was killed in July 1976 leading a raid in Entebbe, Uganda, to rescue hostages.

His brother, Netanyahu said, had written that Pessah was the best holiday, because it focused on the liberty of the Jews. The Jews had gone through many long years of suffering, oppression, vagrancy and degradation, Yonatan wrote.

For many years, there appeared to be no ray of light, but that is no longer true, he wrote.

This holiday is a testament to the eternal goal of freedom.

"Pessah awakens an emotional bond, because of the Seder, and like all of us, I recall old memories from my personal past," Yonatan wrote.

But even, he said, as he reflected on his past, "I also see myself as an inseparable link in the chain of the existence and independence of Israel."

Then Netanyahu continued where his brother had left off.

"Israeli citizens, in this fateful hour, we are all an integral link" in that chain.

"From this podium in Jerusalem, which is our eternal capital, I am uttering a prayer to God, to bless that the work of our hands will be blessed, and that the unity with which we started on our way will be a good sign... that will ensure our future."

Kadima leader and outgoing foreign minister Tzipi Livni followed Netanyahu with a fiery speech that gave an indication of how her tenure as head of the opposition would be.

She criticized Netanyahu for the large government he had presented and warned that the public would soon tire of paying the heavy cost of the coalition's stability.

"You imposed this pompous government on the 'thin' public, a government of ministers of nothing and deputy ministers for anything," she said.

Livni attacked Israel Beiteinu chairman Avigdor Lieberman, as well as Netanyahu for giving Lieberman's party ministries responsible for enforcing the law while its leader was facing criminal investigations.

She also accused the Labor party and its chairman, Defense Minister Ehud Barak, for joining the new government, accusing them of being stuck to their seats at the cabinet table.

In a speech that was a farewell to political life, Olmert said earlier that there had been an "unbearable gap between the criticism this [outgoing] government absorbed and its achievements," although he added that he was leaving with no complaints or bitterness.

He talked about the main event of his tenure, the Second Lebanon War, and said that time was changing perspectives on the war, which eventually brought quiet to a border that had suffered rockets attacks between 2000 and 2006.

Olmert spoke of his partners in waging that war, thanking Labor MK Amir Peretz, at the time defense minister, whom he described as a "decent man," and retired chief of General Staff Dan Halutz, "a noble man and a hero."

'I ask for your trust in this time of crisis'. As government sworn in, Netanyahu promises action on Iran and economy, vows to bring Schalit home

Graphic

2 photos: PRIME MINISTER Binyamin Netanyahu addresses the Knesset before presenting his new government last night. Esther Wachsman), whose son Nachshon was murdered by <u>Hamas</u> terrorists in 1994, Aviva Schalit, whose son Gilad is being held by <u>Hamas</u>, and Karnit Goldwasser, whose husband Ehud was killed by Hizbullah, watch at the Knesset last night. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski/The Jerusalem Post)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Palestinian Killed In Israeli Air Strike In Southern Gaza

RTT News (United States) February 2, 2009 Monday

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Length: 221 words

Body

(RTTNews) - One Palestinian was killed and four others were injured in an Israeli air strike on their car in the border town of Rafah in southern Gaza, near the Egyptian border, said officials on Monday.

Israeli officials said that the air strike was launched after the group fired two mortar bombs into Israel. Meanwhile, local Palestinian sources said that the group targeted by the Israeli air strike was from the Popular Resistance Committee, a small militant organization in Gaza.

The latest violence comes just weeks after unilateral cease-fires declared by Israel and <u>Hamas</u>, the radical Islamist group that rules Gaza, ended the Jewish nation's three-week-long offensive in the Gaza Strip.

However, both Israel and the Palestinian militants have often violated the fragile cease-fire they had declared on 18 January to end the 22-days of fighting in the Gaza trip.

Israel had launched a three-week long offensive against the Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip on 27th December to end the firing of rockets from the Gaza into southern Israel.

It is estimated that at least 1,300 Palestinians, including <u>women</u> and children, and 13 Israelis were killed and many more injured in the 22 days of fighting.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



The personal code of the IDF soldier: 'May our camp be pure'

The Jerusalem Post April 7, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 19

Length: 1070 words

Byline: DANNY ZAMIR

Highlight: This article, obtained by The Jerusalem Post, was written by Danny Zamir in order to put into context the controversy surrounding him and graduates of his program, over IDF behavior in Operation Cast Lead. Atty. Danny

Zamir (Major, IDF reserves) Director, Yitzhak Rabin Pre-army Leadership Development Program

Body

A number of articles published recently in The New York Times quoted or were based on words spoken by myself and by graduates of the pre-army leadership development program which I head (the "Rabin Mechina") - graduates who participated as combat soldiers in Operation Cast Lead and who met recently to process personal experiences from the battlefield.

Both explicitly and by insinuation, the articles claim a decline in the IDF's commitment to its moral code of conduct in combat, and moreover, that this decline stems from a specific increase in the prominence of religious soldiers and commanders in the IDF in general, and from the strengthening of the position of IDF Chief Rabbi Avichai Ronsky in particular.

It was as if the media were altogether so eager to find reason to criticize the IDF that they pounced on one discussion by nine soldiers who met after returning from the battlefield to share their experiences and subjective feelings with each other, using that one episode to draw conclusions that felt more like an indictment. Dogma replaced balance and led to a dangerous misunderstanding of the depth and complexity of Israeli reality. The individual accounts were never intended to serve as a basis for broad generalizations and summary conclusions by the media; they were published internally, intended for program graduates and their parents as a tool to be used in the process of educating and guiding the next generation.

I chose as well to submit the soldiers' accounts to the highest levels of the IDF, directly to the chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, out of my deep faith in the solid moral foundations of IDF policy and in complete confidence that the accounts would receive serious and thorough attention, including both investigation and corrective measures, if and when necessary. This faith was and is based on my personal experience of more than two decades - as a combat solider, a major in the IDF and as mentor for hundreds of the Rabin Mechina's graduates who are soldiers serving in combat units (active and reserve).

There are, to be sure, important political differences between myself as a social-democratic Zionist and Zionists of other political opinions. But there exists among us a very broad consensus regarding the moral character of combat - a moral character to which the IDF is committed and educates its soldiers, a character positively influenced by religious mechinot and by the special personal qualities of my colleague Rabbi Ronsky.

THE GUIDING principle that directs IDF combat soldiers, both in their planning and conduct in combat, encompasses a balance between two needs: to defend soldiers' lives and to minimize harm to the civilians behind whom terrorists try to hide. This is expressed in the tension between the necessity of opening fire when the soldiers' security and battle conditions require, even when there's a danger to civilians (providing advance warning to the extent possible), and the absolute obligation to hold fire and to act with due compassion toward civilians when it appears that they have no evil intent. In addition, basic respect toward civilians' belongings and their religious and spiritual property is part of this moral code.

These guidelines and the obligation to uphold them are an inseparable part of the Jewish-Zionist world of IDF soldiers, and deeply anchored in generations of Jewish heritage, particularly in the doctrine of military conduct renewed by the early socialist-Zionists a century ago. They called this principle by a name that's unlikely to have been given by any other nationalist movement fighting for its independence: "Purity of Arms" - that is, preventing harm to those not involved in or supporting the combat.

This moral commandment remains a central motto of the IDF; it is the complete opposite of the code of conduct of Islamist terror organizations such as <u>Hamas</u>, whose judgment on every Israeli and Jew is death. "Purity of arms" is not part of their world, not even in theory.

The outsider may not understand this, but we - the Jews of the State of Israel - live this every day, every hour.

In order to appreciate this moral code, one must note the context in which it operates. The State of Israel is under a prolonged attack by the <u>Hamas</u> movement - a fundamentalist Islamic terror movement, based on a racist and ultranationalist ideology that seeks the killing of Jews for being Jews and the actual elimination of the State of Israel as its declared aspiration, and formally part of its foundation platform. And bear in mind that <u>Hamas</u> is not a marginal extremist underground, but a movement freely chosen by the Palestinians to head their elected government.

Our war against an unrestrained terror organization that uses civilian populations as human shields in various ways, such as hospitals and masquerading as <u>women</u> and children, presents the IDF - an army obligated to an ethical code of combat based on humanism and international law - with almost impossible complexities. The nature of combat in complex conditions (such as in Gaza) brings with it difficulties and failures. The greatness of an army fighting under such conditions lies in its aspiring to "zero errors" and in its openness to examining its failures - finding them and fixing them.

IF IT'S possible to learn something from the real Israel - and not that which the media (including Israeli media) makes such efforts to portray - it would be from the uproar of emotions and the frank discussions that have taken place within Israeli society in the wake of the soldiers' accounts. It is out of their commitment to the moral code that the soldiers spoke and their accounts were submitted; purity of arms requires continuous examination of our actions and intentions.

"May our camp be pure." This is the watchword borne by my soldiers in the IDF, not only because this is how they've been educated by their commanders and their officers, but because this is the essence of their belief and their national heritage, a belief and heritage shared by and uniting us all: secular and religious, right and left, in the IDF and outside it. It is a source of pride and of confidence in our way, even in times of venomous attacks from every quarter - such as transforming a sensitive, personal discussion among combat soldiers back from the battlefield to mendacious claims of policies that involve so-called war crimes.

And so may it be.

Graphic

The personal code of the IDF soldier: 'May our camp be pure'

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 13, 2009 Friday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 1105 words

Byline: From News Services

Dateline: 0

Body

KARACHI, PAKISTAN U.S. trying to mediate solution to crisis

Police arrested dozens of government opponents Thursday as hundreds defied a ban on gatherings and started a protest march that could further destabilize the nuclear-armed nation.

Many fear the latest political crisis could distract the year-old civilian government from its fight against militants along the country's border with Afghanistan, crucial to the war on terror.

The U.S. is trying to mediate. U.S. ambassador Anne W. Patterson traveled to see opposition leader Nawaz Sharif and urge him to reconcile with Pakistan's president. The Obama administration's special envoy to Pakistan, Richard C. Holbrooke, spoke to Pakistan's president, Asif Ali Zardari.

KHARTOUM, SUDAN Three Westerners are kidnapped in Darfur

Armed men stormed an aid agency compound in Darfur and kidnapped three Westerners, heightening fears that foreigners will be targeted in the backlash over the international arrest warrant for Sudan's president.

The three workers for Doctors Without Borders were kidnapped late Wednesday in a government-controlled area in northern Darfur.

UNITED NATIONS U.N. leader softens 'deadbeat' reference

After drawing a rebuke from the White House, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon tried Thursday to smooth over his characterization of the U.S. as a "deadbeat" for its late payments to the world body.

"My point was simply that the United Nations needs the fullest support of its members, and never more so than in these very demanding times," Ban told reporters at U.N. headquarters.

AMSTERDAM Dutch police arrest 7 over terrorist threat

Dutch police arrested seven people suspected of preparing a terrorist attack in Amsterdam, including a relative of one of the attackers who died in the 2004 bombings in Madrid.

DIGEST

Mayor Job Cohen said, "Men were planning to put explosives in the shops and wanted to cause casualties in busy places."

TORONTO Man gets 10½ years for terroristic threat

A judge has sentenced a Canadian man to 10 1/2 years in prison for plotting with a group of British Muslims to bomb buildings and natural gas lines in the United Kingdom.

Momim Khawaja is the first person to be sentenced under Canadian anti-terrorism laws passed after the Sept. 11 attacks. He was convicted last fall of financing and facilitating terrorism.

CAIRO Palestinians blocked over policy on Israel

Palestinian factions trying to hammer out a power-sharing agreement are struggling to reconcile their differences toward peace talks with Israel, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman said, as the Palestinian president agreed to release dozens of <u>Hamas</u> prisoners in a goodwill gesture during the talks.

Fawzi Barhoum, the militant group's spokesman, said the disagreement over Israel is one of the key hurdles holding up the formation of a new unity government between *Hamas* and the more moderate Fatah faction.

RIO DE JANEIRO Prince Charles warns of imminent threat

Britain's Prince Charles warned that mankind has 100 months or less to save the planet from a climate-caused disaster.

Charles told some 150 business leaders in Rio de Janeiro that "the best projections tell us that we have less than 100 months to alter our behavior before we risk catastrophic climate change and the unimaginable horrors that this would bring."

BELFAST, N. IRELAND Police team up in search for dissidents from IRA

The commanders of Ireland's two police forces pursued a common strategy for catching dissident Irish Republican Army members responsible for a new wave of violence, amid fears their next attack could be a car bomb.

Commissioner Fachtna Murphy and other senior officers from the Republic of Ireland discussed better coordination of anti-terrorist activities with Chief Constable Hugh Orde, commander of the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND 16 reported missing after helicopter crash

Rescuers searched freezing waters for 16 missing people after a helicopter reported mechanical problems and ditched into the Atlantic Ocean off Newfoundland.

Of the 18 aboard, one was rescued and one was confirmed dead. The others were missing about 30 miles out to sea, officials at a news conference said.

RIGA, LATVIA Third government in 15 years is formed

Latvia's parliament approved a new center-right government with Europe's youngest premier as the economic crisis in this Baltic state deepened.

The 67-21 vote made Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis, 37, and his five-party coalition the third government in 15 months in Latvia, which only won independence from the Soviet Union 18 years ago.

BEIJING Detained doctor seeks government apology

A Chinese doctor who exposed the extent of Beijing's SARS outbreak has asked the government to apologize for detaining him after he criticized the 1989 crackdown on protests in Tiananmen Square.

DIGEST

Jiang Yanyong called on authorities to "correct their mistakes and issue an apology," according to a copy of the Feb. 6 letter. The letter also demanded that his right to travel overseas be restored.

JERUSALEM Man injured by mine is killed in fall from copter

Authorities say an Israeli hiker who was rescued from a minefield fell to his death from an army helicopter that was evacuating him.

The man was hiking with friends when he stumbled into a minefield left over from one of Israel's wars and stepped on a mine. The military sent a helicopter to airlift the seriously injured man to a hospital, but as rescuers were hoisting him into the aircraft at the end of a rope, he fell 60 feet back into the minefield and died on impact.

LONDON Chelsea Pensioners add <u>women</u> members

The Chelsea Pensioners - a group of army veterans who live at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, likely Britain's most stately retirement home - welcomed the first <u>women</u> into their ranks. They were created in 1692.

To become a resident of the hospital, a pensioner must be a former soldier in the British army who is older than 65 and has no dependents. The residents surrender their pensions and in return get a small bedroom, full board and medical care for the rest of their lives.

Briefly

- North Korea launching: North Korea told two U.N. agencies it plans to launch a communications satellite between April 4 and 8, an unprecedented disclosure seen as trying to fend off international worries that the launching is really a test of long-range missile technology.
- Niagara Falls plunge: Police say a man who survived a plunge over Niagara Falls then fought off rescue attempts is a 30-year-old Canadian who was suicidal.
- Border agents: Mexico extradited two former U.S. Border Patrol agents, Raul Villarreal and Fidel Villarreal, who were accused of taking bribes from smugglers of migrants.

Load-Date: March 14, 2009



Guardian Weekly: International news: Obama offers olive branch to Muslims: Observers praise craft of Cairo speech but question the substance

Guardian Weekly

June 12, 2009 Friday

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The Guardian Weekly

Section: Pg. 4

Length: 652 words

Byline: Ian Black, Cairo

Body

Barack Obama used his speech to the Muslim world last week to call for a new beginning in relations and made an impassioned plea for a two-state solution to resolve the bitter conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Seeking to draw a line under the war in Iraq, Guantanamo Bay and other Bush policies, Obama went out of his way to display understanding of the causes of Muslim resentment and mistrust of the west. But his landmark address last Thursday drew mixed reviews for a performance many found sensitively crafted and sincere but lacking in substance or novelty.

"I have come here to seek a new beginning between the US and Muslims around the world, one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect," the president told an invited audience at Cairo University. "America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition."

Obama's messages on Israel, the Palestinians and Iran did not break new ground, while passages on Afghanistan, Iraq and fighting extremism also replayed familiar themes. But some of his strongest words were reserved for the contentious issue of Israel and the Palestinians, whose life under occupation was "intolerable". There was loud applause when he said: "The US does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop."

But comments that presage a clash with Binyamin Netanyahu's rightwing government were balanced with an appeal to the Palestinian movement <u>Hamas</u> to abandon violence. "It is a sign of neither courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old <u>women</u> on a bus," he said. Obama also referred to America's "unbreakable bond" with Israel, which he coupled with a bold attack on "baseless, ignorant and hateful" denial of the Holocaust - a staple of Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Obama painted a flattering picture of Islamic religion, culture and civilisation, starting with the traditional Arabic greeting, assalaamu alaykum - "peace be upon you" - drawing a thunderous ovation. As expected, he referred to his own Muslim roots, mentioning the azaan call to prayer he heard while a child in Indonesia. America would never be at war with Islam. "The faith of over a billion people is so much bigger than the narrow hatred of a few. Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism - it is an important part of promoting peace."

Guardian Weekly: International news: Obama offers olive branch to Muslims: Observers praise craft of Cairo speech but question the substance

He issued a warning on the issue of nuclear weapons. "We have reached a decisive point. This is not simply about America's interests. It is about preventing a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down a hugely dangerous path."

He referred to his decision to close the Guantanamo detention camp and did not use the Bush-era phrase "war on terror". Religious freedom and <u>women</u>'s rights were also emphasised. Comments on democracy - a burning issue in most Arab countries were detailed but non-specific, a disappointment if not a surprise to activists.

"America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election," the president said. "But I do have an unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; government that is transparent and doesn't steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. Those are not just American ideas, they are human rights, and that is why we will support them everywhere."

In Damascus, the <u>Hamas</u> leader, Khaled Meshal, told Time magazine: "Undoubtedly Obama speaks a new language, but we are looking for more than just mere words." Hisham Kassem, a leading Egyptian commentator, said: "Obama was saying, 'I'm not George Bush'. But there was very little policy and very little you could hold him accountable to."

Load-Date: June 14, 2009



The Jerusalem Post April 14, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 4

Length: 2842 words

Byline: TOVAH LAZAROFF

Highlight: The Wachsman family's third son was born the day after Pessah 34 years ago. They named him Nachshon, in honor of the courageous Jew who leapt first into the Red Sea on the Exodus from Egypt. More than 14 years after Nachshon was kidnapped by <u>Hamas</u> and killed, his mother Esther has been an active participant in efforts to secure the release of another kidnapped Israeli soldier, Gilad Schalit, and has built a poignant relationship with the Schalit family. On this, Gilad's third Pessah in captivity, the kinship and connections are particularly acute.

Body

Esther Wachsman knows what it is like to hear a plea from a kidnapped son held by *Hamas*.

Her son, Nachshon, was captured in 1994 and then killed six days later during a botched IDF rescue mission by the Palestinian gunmen who held him.

Within two days of his disappearance on October 9, <u>Hamas</u> released a videotape of her bound 19-year-old son still in his khaki army uniform. Standing behind him was a terrorist who had a red keffiyeh wrapped around his face and a rifle slung over his soldier.

"I am Nachshon Wachsman. Those who kidnapped me want their prisoners released or they will kill me," her son said when prompted to speak by the terrorist.

Twelve years later, when <u>Hamas</u> captured 19-year-old soldier Gilad Schalit in a border raid and took him to Gaza, the initial similarity with her son's story prompted Esther to call Gilad's parents, Aviva and Noam, to offer them her support.

At the time, she said: "It is the same record playing over again."

Last month, she and her husband Yehuda went to the protest tent the Schalit family had set up outside former prime minister Ehud Olmert's Jerusalem residence.

Noam and Aviva sat in the tent for two weeks in March to pressure Olmert before he left office to conclude a prisoner exchange with *Hamas* for Gilad's release.

Visitors to that tent were often greeted by a simulated sound of Gilad's voice, pleading: "Save me!"

Although she has been an opponent of prisoner releases, Esther said she could not bear to think of another young man in a similar situation to that of her son.

"I can't separate from the mother in me. Nobody can understand this, unless they have experience it," she said.

Esther called Olmert during the Schalit's two-week protest when it seemed as if a deal was possible.

She told him that if it would help free Gilad, she would even be willing to have her son's kidnapper released from jail.

But, she added, "I hoped he would do it with some sense."

Esther said she was among those who believed that those prisoners responsible for murdering Israelis should be deported if they are released.

This is not an easy stance for her to take, she said.

"Thank God, I do not have to make these decisions," Esther said. "I understand the fear of letting all the killers out because they are going to kill again."

There are other measures beyond a prisoner swap or a rescue operation that could be employed, such as shutting down electricity in Gaza, Esther said.

At the invitation of Gilad's mother, Esther sat next to her in the visitors' gallery in the Knesset earlier this month to hear Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's first address, in which he promised to make Gilad's release a priority.

As someone who knew something about the price that can be paid for rescuing hostages, Netanyahu read from a letter that his brother, Yonatan, had written to the family just before Pessah.

It was one of the last letters the family received from "Yoni" before he was killed leading a successful mission to free over a hundred hostages held by Palestinian terrorists in Entebbe.

In the letter, Netanyahu said, his brother wrote of his belief that he was an inseparable link in the chain of Jewish history that spanned from biblical times to the modern state of Israel.

As children of Holocaust survivors, Esther and Yehuda Wachsman are fully aware of the weight of that history.

She was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany in 1947 to parents who had been in Nazi concentration camps. A Catholic woman hid her older sister.

In 1950, the family immigrated to New York. Esther left the United States for Israel in 1969, where she met and married Yehuda in 1970. Yehuda had made aliya with his family from Romania in 1959 at the age of 11.

Together they raised seven sons in Jerusalem, six of whom have served in the army.

The first two were named for relatives who perished in the Holocaust. The third, Nachshon, was born the day after Pessah in 1975.

With an eye toward history and the Bible, they named him for the person who spurred the ancient Israelites into crossing the Red Sea after fleeing from Egypt.

As the Israelites stood on the sea bank terrified to head into the churning waters, Nachshon jumped in. Only then did the sea part for everyone to safely cross.

During Pessah 1948, it was Operation Nachshon that opened the road to Jerusalem during the War of Independence, Esther noted.

Her son, Nachshon, Esther said, "was a very fun-loving and peace-making type who went to yeshiva."

Outside their home, he volunteered with Ethiopian Jews and Magen David Adom and was very active in the Ezra youth movement.

Inside, he had a special relationship with his youngest brother Rafael, who has Down Syndrome.

Nachshon would take him to his afternoon program at the Shalva Center for children with special needs and pick him up, said Esther.

Out of all her other sons, "he was the one who played with [Rafael] the most."

Both Nachson's older brothers served in Golani. He followed in their footsteps and then tried to outdo them by gaining acceptance to the elite Orev Golani unit.

Two days before he was taken, Nachshon had just arrived home on Friday for a week's break from serving in Lebanon.

After Shabbat, the army called him to say they were sending him up North for a one-day course on Sunday.

He left later that night with his friend, Moshe, who had received the same call.

There was nothing unusual about his departure, recalled Esther. She gave him a hug and a kiss and said, "See you tomorrow night."

When he had not returned by 9 p.m. the next day, his parents became nervous. They called Moshe, who had already arrived home.

He said he had dropped Nachshon at the Bnai Atarot Junction, just outside Yehud.

Nachshon told Moshe that he would take what ever came first - a bus or a ride. By midnight, she and her husband telephoned the IDF's liaison officer in Jerusalem.

When he told them that nothing could be done for 24 hours, she and her husband began phoning police stations all over the country.

Her children knew to call when there was a change of plans, said Esther. She became certain that harm had befallen him because otherwise, he would have found a way to contact his family, she said.

By Monday, she told herself that he must be dead and if anything was found, it would be his body. While she was contemplating the worst, the army was busy looking to see if Nachshon was absent without leave.

They called hotels in Eilat and checked his bedroom for love letters.

"I told them, 'No, this was not our lifestyle,'" said Esther.

Friends and neighbors put together their own search party and scoured around Bnai Atarot. Friends and relatives also gathered in her home to give their support.

Then suddenly, on Tuesday, Israel Television called. It said it had a tape of Nachshon to show the family before it was aired, Esther recalled.

A <u>Hamas</u> terrorist said in the video that if their demands were not met and the group's spiritual leader Ahmed Yassin and 200 prisoners were not released by 8 p.m. Friday night, Nachshon would be killed.

The room was full of relatives. Everyone was crying, she said. Still, the tape raised a flicker of hope for her.

"I felt like, okay, he is not dead, there is still a chance we are going to get him," she said.

Since the tape had been released to a Reuters photographer in Gaza, prime minister Yitzhak Rabin declared on television that if anything happened to Nachshon, it would be the fault of then Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

To Esther, it was an infuriating statement. She called Rabin and said, "My family and I are Israeli citizens. My son was wearing an Israeli uniform when he was kidnapped. No way will I accept that Arafat is responsible for his death. All the responsibility will be yours," she said.

The family had received a message from Arafat that week through Ahmed Tibi, who at the time served as his political adviser.

Tibi quoted Arafat as saying that if their son was in Gaza, the PLO leader would leave no stone unturned until he was found.

Esther said that she viewed the call with a certain amount of cynicism, given that he had just been given a Nobel Peace Prize that same week, together with Rabin and foreign minister Shimon Peres.

For the next 72 hours, she and her husband spent every waking moment doing everything in their power to secure Nachshon's release with the help of Israel, the US and religious leaders.

It never occurred to them not to lobby for their son. "What were we supposed to do, sit still and wait?" she asked. "What we could do we did. We never stopped acting for one second."

"We announced his American citizenship and we turned to [former US president Bill] Clinton who sent the secretary of state to the area," she said.

They also tried to use back-channel diplomatic contacts and spoke with people who knew Muslim leaders in various Arab countries to see if that could help.

On Thursday, Ashkenazi chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau held a prayer for Nachshon at the Western Wall to which 100,000 people showed up.

Throughout the week, they received an incredible show of support from the Israeli public.

"You do not know how many restaurants delivered foods and sent drinks, all anonymously," she said.

On Friday evening when she lit candles, Esther said, "I invited the press who were parked outside the door to watch. I said, I am talking to you, Nachshon. We are all working as hard we can to get you out of there."

"I asked every Jewish woman to light an extra candle that night for my son who could have been anyone's child or brother or friend," said Esther.

In the weeks that followed, Esther said, she received some 70,000 letters in response to her request.

"We had to build a closet for the letters," she said.

"<u>Women</u> sent pictures of themselves lighting candles. People who had never before lit said they had done so that week for her son."

As she uttered the blessing over the candles, she was not aware that at that moment, the IDF was in the midst of a rescue operation for Nachshon.

"We knew nothing," she said. "We did not know that [the driver of the car which kidnapped Nachshon] had been apprehended. We did not know that he was in a house [in the Palestinian village Bir Nabala] only ten minutes away from mine. I live in Ramot."

The deputy defense minister at the time, Motta Gur, had told them that there were talks going on, so they believed the IDF was looking to strike a deal for Nachshon.

At 8 p.m. - the deadline <u>Hamas</u> had set for their demands to be met - the family was sitting around the Shabbat table.

"I was staring at the door and truly, I expected it to open and for Nachshon to walk in," Esther recalled.

Instead, three top IDF officers walked in, including OC Manpower Maj.-Gen. Yoram Yair.

Once the family saw them, "We knew what message they brought," she said.

Yair called them into a separate room and for the first time gave them details of the kidnapping.

The terrorists had dressed up as haredim and had placed a Bible and a prayer book on the dashboard.

They stopped at the Bnai Atarot junction, where Nachshon had been thumbing a ride home. Once they had him in the car, they took him to Bir Nabala and held him there.

But their plan started to go awry when the IDF caught the driver. He was able to give the army enough details of where Nachshon was held to allow for a rescue operation, said Esther.

But what had worked in Entebbe did not work here. This was a totally different situation from the operation in Entebbe, which involved many people in a large area, said Esther.

"You were talking about a plane full of hostages, a dozen terrorists and an international airport. The dynamic is different."

"Here you are talking about a house with one boy," said Esther, who is of the belief that a military rescue of one person under any circumstance is impossible because it is harder to execute a surprise in such a small space.

But that was only one of the problems with the raid. The IDF tried to blow its way through the main entrance to the house with inadequate explosives, which only dented the iron door.

When the second charge tore down the door, the soldiers' way was blocked by a second door, which took four minutes to open.

The terrorists then shot at the soldiers as they came through the door, wounding several of them and killing the head of the mission, Capt. Nir Poraz.

When the soldiers entered the room, Nachshon was slumped dead in a chair, still bound in the chair on which he had been killed by his kidnappers as the IDF raid began.

Esther and Yehuda learned more details of the failed rescue mission on Saturday night from Rabin and chief of staff Ehud Barak, who was one of the architects of the Entebbe mission.

After hearing them speak, Yehuda asked everyone to leave the room, including his wife. Yehuda told Esther later that he had argued that other options had been available.

At the very least, the government, he said, should have done something to delay the Friday deadline so that the soldiers could be better prepared.

"I am angry with what happened," said Esther. "On the other hand, I am a believer. What happens occurs by divine intervention. His [Nachshon's] time was up."

Rabin left the room crying after speaking with her husband, said Esther.

A year later, according to the Hebrew calendar, Rabin was assassinated, she added.

Soon after the visit, later that Saturday night, they buried Nachshon at the Mt. Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem.

The funeral was held on the eighth birthday of his twin brothers, but one of them, Rafael, did not attend.

Since Rafael does not speak as a result of Down Syndrome, it was hard to say for certain what he understood of Nachshon's loss, said Esther.

The day the tape of Nachshon was shown on television, the head of the Shalva Center came to their home with a suitcase and took Rafael.

When Rafael returned home at the end of the seven-day mourning period, he took a picture of Nachshon off the wall and smashed it, said Esther.

"It had to mean something," she said.

Esther never told her father, who lived in New York, about Nachshon's death because his doctors feared it would be too traumatic, given that he had already lost most of his family in the Holocaust.

Each time he came for a visit to Israel, they told him Nachshon was on a secret mission.

"It was not such a lie. He is on a secret mission," said Esther.

"When one sustains a loss like this, there are only two ways to go on. You can get under the covers and not function" or you can do something, she said.

She took early retirement from her job as an English teacher at Hebrew University High School. Her husband stopped his real estate work, went back to school to study psychology and does volunteer work.

"It turns out that God gave me a voice. I have chosen to be a voice for two of my sons. One who is no more and my other son who has Down Syndrome and can not ask for help for himself."

Fourteen years ago, she raised money for a new building at the center, which was named for her son.

She and her husband have also pursued those responsible for their son's death in court. In 2006, they filed a law-suit against Iran for providing funds and training to *Hamas*.

On March 27, in New York, a federal judge ordered Iran to pay \$25 million plus interest to their family; a ruling that is mostly symbolic since it is difficult to collect payment in these cases.

"I'm happy that it showed the world that Iran is responsible," said Esther.

Time has not made her son's absence easier.

"There is not a minute when I do not think of him," she said.

His friends still come to the house to visit and she has been invited to their celebrations.

"I go to the weddings. I see the children being born. I am delighted for them and stricken with grief that my son will never be one of them," she said.

Esther pictures Nachshon at the Friday night table or the Seder table. This year is her fifteenth Pessah without her son.

For the Schalit family, it is their third Pessah without Gilad.

To symbolize Gilad's absence and his continued captivity during the festival of freedom, Jews around the world were asked to leave an empty chair at their Seder table.

Esther, who already has an absent family member, said that she too had planned to set aside an empty seat for Gilad.

As time has passed and Gilad has spent more than a thousand days in captivity, his situation has weighed heavily on her, said Esther.

She thinks of missing airman Ron Arad. One year after his plane was shot down over Lebanon in 1986, his captors sent to Israel a photograph of him and a letter he wrote.

Arad went missing in May 1988, before the government could conclude a prisoner swap. His story hangs like an ominous cloud over the struggle for Gilad's release.

Not only have intelligence reports confirmed that he is alive, but since he has been held in Gaza, his captors have sent his family two letters and a cassette from Gilad.

"We messed up with Ron Arad and that is what is going to happen to Gilad. This thought appalls me. It makes me sick. I identify with Gilad because I am Nachshon's mother. I am sleepless over it," she said.

"Gilad has become very close to me," said Esther. "He is alive and he must come home."

Graphic

3 photos: Esther Wachsman. If it would help free Gilad Schalit, she would support the release of the terrorist who kidnapped her son, Nachshon. Esther Wachsman sits with Aviva Schalit and Karnit Goldwasser in the Knesset as it approves the new Netanyahu government on March 31. The Wachsmans visited the Schalit protest tent in Jerusalem last month. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Our readers' views

The Columbian (Vancouver, Washington)

March 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. C4

Length: 1064 words

Body

Elected officials don't want to listen

In the Feb. 25 Columbian, two stories jumped out: "Clark County unemployment hits 25-year high," and "Counties seeking tax-raising ability." It's become common for elected officials to bypass the voters when they don't get their way. The state's county officials now want taxing ability without a vote to pass measures that we have said "no" to.

Thanks to Rep. Ed Orcutt, R-Kalama, for being the voice of common sense. He said, "Revenues are down because consumers cannot afford to take any more money out of their pockets." Yet that is exactly what the counties are asking for. They will "consult their constituents" prior to any increase in taxes. Sounds to me they have already made that decision. I feel they don't have a compelling enough reason for a tax increase. But since we don't know what is in our own best interests, the government will decide for us. Michael Pendleton

Vancouver

Other jurisdictions inflict tax on us

Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard and Portland Mayor Sam Adams wrote a joint opinion column, "Bridge partnership forged for long haul," that appeared in the Feb. 25 Columbian and The Oregonian. The mayors wrote, "Because our partnership recognizes these decisions affect more than just the limited I- 5 Bridge Influence Area, we propose to assess and manage other impacted areas, including the I- 205 river crossing and Rose Quarter." To me, this says that we will try to impose tolls on Interstate 205 and get anyone who lives in Clark County who wishes to commute into Oregon for any reason to pay.

The people of north Clark County, including the cities of La Center, Ridgefield, Battle Ground and Yacolt, need to speak up before we get stuck with an agreement by another jurisdiction, including one that does not even have sovereign authority over us.

As a resident of Battle Ground, this concerns me a great deal.

Adrian Cortes

Battle Ground

Petition to 'null and void' stimulus bill

Now that Illinois Sen. Roland Burris could face expulsion for possibly having perjured himself under oath at his confirmation hearing, isn't it about time for the Republicans to petition the U.S. Supreme Court to have the stimulus bill declared "null and void"?

I submit that Burris' senatorial appointment by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, since impeached from office for corruption, was tainted from the get-go.

In addition, the recently admitted ballots in the Minnesota Senate race may overturn Al Franken's certified election "victory," and send the Republican Norm Coleman to the U.S. Senate instead. If Burris is expelled or forced to resign, the voters of Illinois will almost certainly send a Republican to take his place.

With two more Republicans in the Senate, the threat of a filibuster vote ought to bring the Democrats and President Barack Obama back to the table to negotiate a true bipartisan bill for economic recovery.

Curtiss Ryan Mooney

Vancouver

Confine Level 3 in state-run facilities

Our readers' views

Once again, some people appear to want to blame property owners and not transients who illegally trespass and should be arrested for it when they inhabit certain areas. By lack of enforcement, our city encourages violent, addicted transients as it allows them to beg on any corner and does not bust up their camps along Interstate 5 and in other areas.

We have hundreds of addicted male transients because homelessness has become such an industry that they don't try to gain a job for employment.

I am pro <u>women</u>'s and children's shelters, as many needing those are escaping abuse from addicted males who are enabled by society to remain addicted abusers, because we shelter them from hitting rock bottom. But I think that Level 3 sex offenders and the mentally ill need to be housed in state-run facilities. We must stop enabling those who have made poor choices to continue in their destructive behavior.

Angie York

Vancouver

Reap reward once banks restore profit

If banks that are considered too big to fail are still in trouble after all the TARP funds have already been given out, then we need to be very careful about the terms under which further money is loaned.

There should be no more giveaways for Wall Street at taxpayers' expense. If banks made bad investments, then their shareholders and executives need to face the consequences before any taxpayer money is put on the line.

Prominent economists, including Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz (both Nobel Prize winners), Dean Baker and Jeffrey Sachs, agree that the government must get a fair bargain for any money it invests in banks, even if that means temporarily taking over insolvent banks.

If taxpayers are going to risk their money to help banks get back on their feet, then we should get equity just like other shareholders and we should reap the reward once banks are restored to profitability.

Alan Lindquist

Vancouver

Baird's concerns are misguided

Congressman Brian Baird, touring Gaza, expressed he was "extremely troubled" viewing the devastation. With his statements, he follows up closely in the footsteps of former President Jimmy Carter, the dispenser of misinformation and demonization of the state of Israel .

War is not pretty. People died - not 1,300, but 300, half of them militants who hid among the civilian population in schools and residential areas. The Gazans died because of their murderous leaders using them as human shields. Those are the facts.

Congressman Baird didn't seem as troubled about the traumatized civilian population, children and old people, living in underground shelters due to the relentless daily mortar shells across the border since Israel withdrew and *Hamas* came into power.

The U.S. government has placed $\underline{\textit{Hamas}}$ on the list of terror groups. $\underline{\textit{Hamas}}$ is dedicated to wipe out the state of Israel and its people from the face of the Earth.

Loti S. Christensen

Vancouver

Holder has some learning to do

Shame on U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder for making such an outrageous comment about Americans. We are flawed, but we are not cowards. That remark that the United States is "a nation of cowards" on matters of race was beneath the dignity of Holder and his office.

I hope President Barack Obama gave him a good talking to after he embarrassed himself and the president with that ridiculous and insulting comment.

Holder is in the big time now - act like it.

Go buy the book, "Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," and read it.

Anna Miller

Camas

Load-Date: March 5, 2009



Scarred youngsters return to life

Daily News (South Africa)

January 28, 2009 Wednesday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6 Length: 978 words

Body

'Mujahedin!" yells the teenager standing on top of a heap of rubble.

Mujahedin are resistance fighters, and the boy is 16 years old and replying to a question about what he wants to be when he is older.

Around him his teenage friends grin and nod their heads in agreement.

It is 10 days after Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip stopped; damage and stories of horrors of war are everywhere. Jet trails from Israeli planes can be seen in the distance and the constant expectation of renewed attack hangs over everyone.

Many houses have been reduced to heaps of rubble, like the one the teenagers are standing on. This particular heap is the rubble of *Hamas* leader Nezar Rayan's home.

Rayan, his four wives and 11 children died in the house when it was bombed by Israelis.

Neighbours said Rayan refused to leave even though he expected to be attacked; his family would not leave him either.

The massive rubble pile that was once a house is surround-ed by other houses all with sections of walls blown off from the bombing. A first-floor bedroom is missing a wall on one side of the rubble pile; on the other side a missing wall reveals a library of books covered in dust.

One teenager pulls a book from the rubble, and shouts angrily about the destruction.

An old woman walking past the rubble calls out that Israeli soldiers took away all their food and made them eat duck food.

Throughout the city children and teenagers wander through ruins of buildings.

Three boys play on a tank trailer left behind by Israelis.

A few kilometres away in Alatatra a boy runs across hills of rubble that used be his family's orchard, holding an empty black rocket casing, weaving it through the air the way a child in another country would play with a toy aeroplane.

Scarred youngsters return to life

The boy is one of 10 children of the Al Atar family, who woke up four weeks ago to rockets being fired into their home, everything on fire.

Six of the children were injured, one now perman-ently disabled. Their home is a blackened ruin still stinking of fire, and they are camping on the doorstep under a rough cover.

The father said he heard that Israelis accused their next-door neighbour of having a *Hamas* tunnel under his home. He and his surviving neighbours don't believe this.

"Only mad people would make tunnels under their houses," comments one neighbour - but the house next door is now flattened and the three people who lived in it are dead.

One of the Al Atar's daughters, about 14 years old, grabs hold of any adult she sees, stridently repeating over and over what happened in the attack.

She keeps pulling at her filthy jersey, which is too small for her, showing her dirty clothes to anyone who will talk to her, not pausing to listen to an answer.

Like the rest of her family, for the past four weeks she has been wearing the only set of clothes she now owns. Nobody has been able to wash either their clothes or themselves.

The family insists they are aligned to neither <u>Hamas</u> - the party ruling the Gaza Strip which the Israelis hope to destroy or weaken - or the alternative Fatah party.

"We are just civilians. We are very, very poor people."

One of the family, Moham-med (11), says he wants to be a scientist when he grows up.

His younger brother interrupts him to shout: "I want to live with dignity!"

Across town, youngsters play in the shadow of the remnants of a 16-storey block of flats that's now full of gaping holes. Like the rest of the city, thick layers of dust cover everything.

One man, Hashim Mahmood, points out the hole on the fourth floor that used to be his home. He had already fled the area when the attack came, but says 15 people died in the block when eight rockets hit it.

Children peer through holes in the basement of the now rickety block, shouting and pointing to the unexploded rocket - about the size of a large person - protruding from rubble in the basement.

The children ignore adults who tell them to stay away from the unsound building, even when men clearing a flat on the tenth floor start throwing rubble down to the ground.

In the Jabalia area of Gaza City a family has gathered to bury 11 members who died in the same attack. Pictures of the dead hang on the wall - six are **women** and most seem to be children or teenagers.

"We feel victory because we defeated the Israeli army," said a relative at the funeral.

Nearby, young boys show the twisted bits of metal remaining from the bomb that killed the family. One of the boys says he wants to be a doctor when he grows up, another says he wants to be a journalist.

Around the corner, Salah Qadas describes how his |14-year-old nephew, Ahed Eyad Qadas, died while trying to push his wheelchair-bound grandmother to safety. The boy's father, Qadas's brother Eyad, died in another Israeli attack four years ago.

Down the street the Jabalia Prep school for boys, run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) is trying to get the school running again.

Scarred youngsters return to life

The school was being used as a shelter by nearly 1 800 people in early January when it was hit; about 40 were killed.

School principal Ahmed Abu Sharia said seven of the school's children had died in the war. Many others are badly traumatised by the violence. "They have lots of panic and they're scared," he said.

Now the teachers are trying to get the children accustomed to being back in school and deal with the horrors they have seen. "Each teacher sits down with his children and asks them to tell their stories," said Sharia.

UNWRA education manager Mahmoud Al Hemdiat said about 90% of children were back at the UN's 221 schools in Gaza. In the corridors overlooking the playground boys shout to friends as they head back into classrooms. Overhead, jet trails from Israeli planes mark the skies.

q In part two tomorrow, Louise Flanagan interviews South African doctors on how |to deal with children who have been through the trauma of war

Load-Date: January 28, 2009



Letter from Emma Bushell

Swindon Advertiser February 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: SWINDON LETTERS (SWINDON LETTERS)

Length: 249 words

Body

WITH two fragile ceasefires now in place in Gaza and the scale of the destruction becoming apparent, a key question should be asked: is anyone going to be held responsible for war crimes?

Evidence of war crimes has emerged throughout this terrible conflict - both of Palestinian armed groups quite unacceptably launching rockets into civilian areas of southern Israel, and of the Israeli military's inexcusable behaviour during its massive assault.

For example, Amnesty International has eyewitness accounts of Israeli soldiers in Gaza bursting into Palestinian homes, forcing families to stay in a ground-floor room while using the house as a sniper position. In other words, Palestinian men, <u>women</u> and children were used as human shields in violation of the Geneva Conventions, precisely what Israel accused <u>Hamas</u> of doing.

We're urging readers to write to their local MP calling on them to ask the UK government to lobby for an independent investigation that could help bring perpetrators to justice for crimes committed in Gaza. Meanwhile, there should be an arms embargo on all parties to this conflict.

This isn't about taking sides - it's about calling for justice, for both Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

Without the deterrent effect of credible accountability for those guilty of war crimes, it is more likely that conflict will erupt again as future leaders feel they can literally get away with murder.

EMMA BUSHELL

Swindon and Marlborough Amnesty International Group

Belle Vue Road

Swindon

Load-Date: February 4, 2009



Israel started dispute by breaking truce

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 19, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL/OPINION; Pg. A7

Length: 214 words

Byline: Sami Mazloum, Windsor Star

Body

Waging a war against a civilian population that is already militarily occupied is not only incomprehensible, it is immoral.

Although the rocket attacks from <u>Hamas</u> are counterproductive and should stop, Israel's claim that it is simply responding to unprovoked attacks is untrue.

In fact, it was Israel that broke the truce with its incursion inside Gaza Nov. 4.

The facts surrounding the situation in Gaza show that this is a violation of human values and international laws. After 16 days, Israeli attacks had killed more than 890 Palestinians, including **women** and children.

Whole families have been obliterated and hundreds of homes have been destroyed. Three UN schools being used as shelters for displaced civilians were bombed.

No matter what you argue or believe, the statistics do not support the Israeli claim that they are conducting surgical attacks against Palestinian militants. This is a one-sided, unjustified war.

It is the moral responsibility of all those who believe in human values to object to this war. This will not bring peace and security to any of the parties in this conflict. It can only fuel radicalization and extremism in the region. It is time for a just and lasting peace that will end the occupation, and guarantee peace and security for all.

SAMI MAZLOUM

Windsor

Graphic

Photo: Baz Ratner, Reuters; FACE TO FACE: A Palestinian man argues with an Israeli border police officer outside Jerusalem's Old City.;

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



Female judges help women get justice in Islamic courts

The New Zealand Herald March 6, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 655 words

Body

RAMALLAH? The Islamic courts were among the last male-only bastions in Palestinian society, where <u>women</u> have been presidential candidates, police officers and even suicide bombers.

But Khuloud Faqih, 34, and Asmahan Wuheidi, 31, made history last month when they became the first *female* Islamic judges in the Palestinian territories.

Across the Arab world, only Sudan has had <u>women</u> judges in Islamic courts, while Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, all relatively progressive states in the region on <u>women</u>'s rights, do not.

"I compare us to other Arab Muslim <u>women</u>, and I think we've done well," said Faqih, wearing a sash in the colours of the Palestinian flag across her long black robe. "I think I've opened a door for myself and other <u>women</u>."

She spoke between meetings with petitioners in her modest courtroom - an office with a few couches, a desk and a coffee table with plastic flowers.

Muslim courts in the Palestinian Authority rule over family affairs such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and custody, relying on Islamic jurisprudence rather than secular rules.

The petitioners did not seem shocked to see a woman in the judge's seat - in this case, an office chair. But they appeared to argue often and loudly with Faqih, in stark contrast to the quiet in a neighbouring room where a male judge heard cases from respectful petitioners.

Palestinian feminists have praised the <u>female</u> judges but say the move will not make a dramatic change, because the judges still rely on Islamic laws that ultimately favour men.

"As long as the law is the law, which is difficult to <u>women</u>, I don't think it will change much," said Dima Nashashibi of the Palestinian *Women*'s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling.

For example, women need a judge to grant a divorce, while men don't need that approval.

But the <u>female</u> judges say they can help <u>women</u> obtain their rights under Islamic law. They say a sense of shame surrounds <u>women</u> speaking to men, especially about intimate family relations.

Wuheidi gave the example of a woman seeking divorce because her husband was impotent but who was too shy to divulge details of her sex life to the male judge. In Islam, a woman can ask a judge for a divorce if she is not sexually satisfied.

Female judges help women get justice in Islamic courts

"When a woman speaks to another woman, it's easier for her to speak," Wuheidi said.

In one case, Faqih doubled the alimony that a woman's ex-husband had to pay for each of their five children to \$96US (\$190) a month - a fair sum among Palestinians.

"Where I can make decisions that help women obtain better rights, I will," Faqih said.

But some petitioners doubted **women** could be equal to men.

"I'd like to see her, but I think that men do this job better, they are less emotional," said Eziyeh Yousef, who was finalising her divorce papers.

But Yousef's friend, Najah Mahmoud, quickly interrupted. "Are you kidding? <u>Women</u> can do everything like men. She doesn't know what she's talking about."

The two new judges are trained civil lawyers, not Islamic scholars. But they excelled in the Islamic law exams, beating dozens of mostly male applicants.

The top judge responsible for the appointment, Sheik Taysir Tamimi, said Faqih approached him in last year asking if she could apply for a position.

"I said, 'I beg you to apply'," Tamimi said, hoping it would help women obtain better rulings.

Tamimi debated the issue with his reluctant colleagues, then issued a letter confirming that <u>women</u> could become Muslim judges.

The decision only affects the West Bank, ruled by the Western-backed Palestinian Authority. In the Gaza Strip, the ruling militant group <u>Hamas</u> has not made similar appointments, although <u>Hamas</u> women have become legislators and are slowly emerging in senior positions.

Tamimi said he hoped more women would apply, but said it depends on how the two new judges perform.

"Any new experience will have supporters and detractors. But if you want to please everybody, we'll never move forward as a society," he said.

- AP

Load-Date: March 5, 2009



DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 6, 2009 Wednesday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 270 words

Byline: FROM NEWS SERVICES

Dateline: 0

Body

Biden takes stand for Palestinian state

A viable Palestinian state, existing peacefully with Israel, "must be achieved," Vice President Joe Biden said Tuesday in a speech at the annual conference of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, sending a strong signal that the administration of President Barack Obama will push Israel's new government to move toward peace with Palestinians.

Afghans say U.S. raid kills dozens - Bombing runs called in by U.S. forces killed dozens of civilians taking shelter from fighting between Taliban militants and Afghan and international troops, Afghan officials said. A provincial councilman said he saw about 30 bodies, many of them <u>women</u> and children. Villagers estimated from 70 to well over 100 civilians may have died.

Gates asks Saudis for help - As the Obama administration prepares for talks this week with senior leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan, Defense Secretary Robert Gates flew to Saudi Arabia to seek that nation's help in pushing back Taliban advances in Pakistan.

Iran, Syria send message to U.S. - The leaders of Iran and Syria reaffirmed their support for "Palestinian resistance," a defiant message to the U.S. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also met with the chiefs of <u>Hamas</u> and other Damascus-based Palestinian radical groups during his visit to Syria.

8 held in assault in Turkey - The 44 victims of a deadly assault on an engagement ceremony in Turkey's mostly Kurdish southeast were buried side by side, and authorities detained eight suspects accused of killing the betrothed couple - whose wedding they opposed - along with relatives and friends.

Load-Date: May 7, 2009



The Jerusalem Post April 10, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 24

Length: 2287 words

Byline: DAVID HOROVITZ

Highlight: Are we losing the capacity to distinguish between what we know from our own experiences to be true or

credible and what others would have the world believe about us? EDITOR'S NOTES

Body

In a Jerusalem Post supplement that will appear next week to mark the end of Pessah, Esther Wachsman, whose son Nachshon was kidnapped by <u>Hamas</u> in 1994 and killed in a Palestinian village not far from Jerusalem as the IDF tried to come to his rescue, describes poignantly how the family came to choose his name.

The family's third son, he was born at Pessah time in 1975, and they decided to name him in honor of Nachshon the son of Aminadav, the man who had the guts to trust God and test the waters, the man who leapt into the Red Sea confident that his people would be able to cross, the man who showed the children of Israel the path to their destiny.

Israel cries out for such a figure today... or such a mindset: the confidence to set a path of national destiny, to unify behind it, and to pursue it for our own benefit and that of like-minded nations, leaving our enemies helpless in our wake.

Israel has faced, and faced down, more daunting hostile challenges in its brief modern history than those posed today by the toxic mix of demonization and violence championed by Iran and offshoots such as <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah. Surviving the first moments of statehood in 1948, when a few hundred thousand pioneering Israelis prevailed against armies drawn from surrounding populations in the tens of millions, was only the first of many improbable victories.

It was a series maintained through the decades, notably including the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, all the way through to the second intifada, when the Palestinians dispatched suicide bombers in a calculated, strategic onslaught that was designed to terrorize our nation and encourage us to take the only sensible course of action - to flee. Yet even with buses and cafes and shopping malls blown up week after week, and much of a watching world branding us the architect of our own misery because we had resisted suicidal terms for Palestinian independence, the people of modern Israel did not flee; we stayed, we rethought, and we learned to protect ourselves more effectively.

But in the years since then, those who seek our demise have rethought as well. We sought to construct hermetic physical barriers to the suicide bomber onslaught. From south Lebanon and Gaza, Hizbullah and then <u>Hamas</u> simply cleared those obstacles by firing missiles over them, and every effort is being made to do likewise from the West Bank.

Protecting Israel cannot now be achieved by walls and fences and defensive measures; the rockets have to be stopped at source - and the source of the rockets, as ruthlessly determined by the Palestinians who manufacture and launch them, lies in the heart of the civilian populace. By cynical design, those who would kill our citizens thus ensure that their people are killed when we try to thwart the attacks - so that we are forced to fight not only to protect ourselves, but to protect our good name and our legitimacy as we do so.

This creates a somewhat complex reality - in which war footage and death tolls emphatically do not tell the full story of our conflicts, and yet that story is told, and is misunderstood, largely in a mix of misleading images and statistics. Still, internalizing the true picture - of an Israeli nation seeking to defend itself against a cynical, dishonest Palestinian terror leadership whose religiously inspired loathing for us far outweighs its concerns for the well-being of its own people - is not impossibly challenging, not for those with the earnest will to look a little more carefully.

Operation Cast Lead, Israel's turn-of-the-year military effort to halt the rocket fire from Gaza, however, seems to have marked something of a turning point as regards the willingness to look a little more carefully, to probe beyond the daily images of war and the casualty tolls.

Indeed, the furor surrounding purported testimonies from a small group of soldiers back from the war - the soldiers whose stories were compiled by the Rabin pre-army program's Danny Zamir - would suggest that a growing proportion even of our own people, we Israelis, are losing the capacity to distinguish between what we know from our own experiences to be true or credible and what others would have the world believe about us.

THE IDF is a people's army which directly touches us almost all of us. We all serve in it ourselves, and/or have relatives and friends and colleagues who do.

Almost all of us knew soldiers who directly experienced the Second Lebanon War, and came home with sorry tales of inadequate training, equipment and supplies. Almost all of us know soldiers who served in Operation Cast Lead. And what we didn't hear directly was supplemented by what we saw and heard and read about in the media.

We knew that the IDF was drawn into a civilian theater of war by an enemy that had placed rockets inside mosques, booby-trapped schools and deployed snipers in apartment buildings. We knew, too, because IDF commanders were permitted to say so publicly, that the army had changed tactics in the wake of events such as the ambush in Jenin refugee camp in 2002, in which 13 soldiers lost their lives, and that there was a readier resort to fire power in areas of military operation.

We knew, for instance, that the IDF leafleted areas where it was tackling <u>Hamas</u>, and urged Palestinian civilians by radio and in countless phone calls to leave. If it then came under fire from a particular building in such an area, we heard commanders detail, rather than send in soldiers to their possible deaths, it called for air support and, if necessary, took the building down.

We knew that mistakes were made - how could they not be in so densely populated an area at a time of war? Somewhere amid the self-flagellation of the Zamir soldiers' stories, we seemed to forget that the IDF killed several of its own soldiers in the bloody chaos of conflict. Inevitably, there were Palestinian noncombatants, many Palestinian noncombatants, killed in error in a conflict in which teenagers and the elderly were known to be potential suicide bombers, in which <u>Hamas</u> gunmen fought out of uniform and sometimes fired from within civilian crowds, in which any notion of Palestinian fighters following rules of war was nonsensical.

Credible sources, furthermore, suggest that, post-war, there has been considerable debate within the IDF about the difficulties of reconciling traditional IDF military ethics with the problematics posed by the nature of the civilian-theater conflict Hizbullah and <u>Hamas</u> have concocted: Where is the correct path between safeguarding troops and minimizing harm to civilians, and was it followed this time?

This newspaper, when news broke of the Rabin academy graduates' "testimonies," sought to measure their credibility by traditional journalistic standards. How dependable was the source? Were the testifying soldiers named? Could they be contacted to verify their accounts?

By definition, such assessments have to be made rapidly, decisions taken against the pressures of deadlines, and all newspapers inevitably get some of them wrong. But since the soldiers themselves were not named and not contactable, and since doubts about the accuracy of their accounts surfaced almost immediately, it was rapidly decided to carry those initial stories on the inside pages of the paper.

Danny Zamir's unexpected declaration to this newspaper on Tuesday that he had been horrified by the worldwide controversy sparked by his soldiers' accounts was, to put it mildly, hard to reconcile with his earlier stance and expressions. Now, Zamir says that the IDF "tried to protect civilians in the most crowded place in the world. There were no orders to kill civilians or any summary executions or things like that. There were problems, but problems the army can deal with."

The narrow focus in his own op-ed article (reprinted on Tuesday in the Post) on The New York Times in particular and the international media in general is disingenuous, too; it was parts of the Hebrew media, notably Haaretz and Ma'ariv, that first splashed the damming accusations he had compiled of permissive rules of engagement producing specific incidents in which civilians were deliberately shot dead. It was a Haaretz reporter who flatly stated that "the soldiers are not lying, for the simple reason that they have no reason to... This is what the soldiers, from their point of view, saw in Gaza."

Except, it turns out, they didn't. Their "testimony" was hearsay, and untrue.

FROM ISRAEL'S front-pages, in the sadly predictable rat-pack world of what passes for global journalism these days, Zamir's compilation became the most prominent story on earth for a few days - headlining major newspapers, leading global newscasts, demolishing yet more of Israel's legitimacy, turning Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi's insistence that the IDF is a "moral army" into an international bad joke.

With newspapers closing down, resources evaporating and reporters' buckling under ever-heavier pressures of work, it should be understood, there is no profound process of evaluation that determines whether a story like this will dominate the global agenda. What happens, rather, is that a hostile-to-Israel story in the Hebrew press is deemed credible simply by virtue of its having appeared in the Hebrew press: The Israelis are saying nasty stuff about themselves. Networks such as Al-Jazeera have an ideological interest in pumping up any such stories. Rival networks don't want to be left behind. Once the story is running on TV, in turn, the print news agencies feel obligated to cover it, because otherwise their clients will complain that it's on TV but not on the wires. Hey presto. World headlines.

The highly dubious nature of this and certain other items that made world headlines relating to the Gaza conflict, I have been told, prompted considerable unrest in the newsrooms of several international news organizations, with some staffers loudly protesting the apparent suspension of more rigorous journalistic standards - to no avail and, I suspect, to no lasting effect.

Entirely unsurprisingly, infinitely less global media attention has attended Zamir's contention to the Post this week that "the international media turned the IDF into war criminals," that he had no way of knowing whether the alleged shooting incidents ever took place, and that "Operation Cast Lead was justified; the IDF worked in a surgical manner. Unfortunately, in these types of operations, civilians will be killed."

FROM THE Israeli perspective, among the more troubling aspects of this dismal affair was emblemized by a letter we received, and published in Wednesday's paper, from a reader in Tel Aviv who took the Post to task for believing that "the IDF 'investigation' [of the purported killings] is gospel truth" and for ostensibly ignoring what he called "the flood of testimonies coming from Gaza - almost on a daily basis - about IDF soldiers shooting innocent men, women and children fleeing their homes, about killing medical personnel, about a civilian death toll much higher than Israel claims, all backed with strong evidence.

"No, the Palestinian side of things will always remain a lie for you," the letter writer concluded, "and evidence [of] grave wrongdoing is not for a once-honorable paper that is rapidly becoming a mouthpiece for the propaganda of the most moral army in the world."

Far more worrying than the criticism of this newspaper was the assertion of a "flood of testimonies" backed by "strong evidence" that IDF soldiers shot the innocent, and the cynical description of the IDF as "the most moral army in the world."

Skepticism is an essential tool in the armory of any journalist, and indeed of any member of the public in assessing what is presented as fact. Again, the IDF is itself agonizing about the ethical parameters within which to wage war in Gaza.

What was so sad about this reader's letter was the mix of elevated skepticism regarding what the army has to say about its own practices, and the suspension of such skepticism as regards the worst allegations being leveled against it. And what is so dismaying is the degree to which that skewed mix was widely manifest not only in this episode, but in much of the way that Israel is generally viewed from afar and, increasingly I fear, in the way we are coming to view ourselves.

WE ISRAELIS need to constantly ensure that our actions are moral and just. In that context, Zamir's allegations emphatically should have been - and indeed were - carefully investigated and handled as he told the Post this week he'd hoped they would be: His soldiers had "talked about what was difficult and painful in the war," and he took their accounts "to the army because I expected them to deal with the issues raised."

More broadly, with the dilemmas posed by Gaza as with all challenges to our capacity to live here securely, we need to shape military and diplomatic tactics and strategy to best ensure that we can both hold true to our core values and survive.

We live in a region where hostility and hatred are not easily redirected toward conciliation. We are battling in a largely unsympathetic international climate and must defend ourselves, physically and intellectually, against those who seek our demise. Critically, we cannot afford to become the prisoners of others' distorted sense of our reality, our behavior and our challenges.

These are national imperatives and they require a cohesion of purpose that Israel has yet to achieve. Internally riven and all-too intolerant, we remain as far as ever from a consensus over what our goals should be and the means we should employ to realize them.

We have left Egypt and reached the promised land, but not yet fulfilled our destiny. We await our Nachshon.

Graphic

Photo: COMING BACK from Gaza. Somewhere amid the self- flagellation of the Zamir soldiers' stories, we seemed to forget that the IDF killed several of its own soldiers in the bloody chaos of conflict. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



US congressmen, in first visit to Gaza in eight years, push for political progress. Unclear if trip, coordinated with Israel, signals a changed American approach

The Jerusalem Post February 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3 Length: 641 words

Byline: HERB KEINON, AP contributed to this report.

Body

Three US lawmakers, including Sen. John Kerry, visited the Gaza Strip on Thursday, the first trip there by US congressmen in eight years and an indication, according to Rep. Brian Baird, of a change in the US approach to Gaza.

Baird (D-Wash) toured Gaza in the morning together with Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn), Congress's first Muslim member. They were followed in the afternoon by Kerry (D- Mass), who heads the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee.

The visits, which were coordinated with Israel, were organized by the United Nations. Except for rare occasions, US embassy and consular officials have been prohibited by Washington from entering Gaza since the 2003 killing of three US security contractors.

None of the lawmakers met with representatives of <u>Hamas</u>, which the US has placed on its list of terrorist organizations.

CNN quoted Baird as saying the visit marked a change in attitude and approach to Gaza under newly-elected President Barack Obama.

But Kerry countered Baird.

"Let me make this clear, there is no change in policy," the Massachusetts senator said in Gaza. "I am here to listen with the UN personnel on the ground to hear their assessment and to make personal judgment."

He added that it would be necessary "to improve the situation in the region."

Kerry toured the ruins of an American-style school destroyed in an IAF bombing, and visited a neighborhood in northern Gaza where dozens of homes had been flattened. He also spoke with local residents, including Shaarhabel Alzeem, a prominent attorney.

"We highly appreciate your visit here and hope you can talk to your colleagues and say that we want peace with Israel," Alzeem told the senator. "But we also need to live respectable lives."

US congressmen, in first visit to Gaza in eight years, push for political progress. Unclear if trip, coordinated with Israel, signals a changed American approa....

Kerry responded by saying that Alzeem should look to Palestinian leaders.

"Your political leadership needs to make it clear how it is willing to move to make peace," Kerry said, "and those decisions have not been made yet. Your political leadership needs to understand that any nation that has rockets hitting it for many years, threatening its residents, is going to respond."

Prior to going to Gaza, Kerry toured Sderot with Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. Baird and Ellison are scheduled to visit Sderot on Friday.

"The amount of physical destruction and the depth of human suffering here is staggering," AFP quoted Baird as saying in Gaza in a statement issued jointly with Ellison. According to the report, Baird said the situation was "shocking and troubling beyond words."

Ellison, according to AFP, said, "People, innocent children, <u>women</u> and non-combatants, are going without water, food and sanitation, while the things they so desperately need are sitting in trucks at the border, being denied permission to go in."

Together with Baird, Ellison spent some nine hours with relief workers and civilians in Gaza.

"The stories about the children affected me the most," the Minnesota Democrat said. "No parent, or anyone who cares for kids, can remain unmoved by what Brian and I saw here. The personal stories of children being killed in their homes or schools, of entire families wiped out, and relief workers prevented from evacuating the wounded, are heart wrenching."

Ellison told his hometown newspaper, The Minneapolis- St. Paul Star Tribune, that he was not there to assign blame but had found the civilian devastation hard to understand.

"I've always believed we need to resolve this thing by diplomacy," Ellison said. "I'm even more convinced of that now."

Israeli officials downplayed the importance of the visits, saying they signaled no change in US policy toward *Hamas*. However, one diplomatic official said that while the visits did not necessarily presage a change of policy, they did signal a different attitude, reflecting Obama's philosophy that it is necessary to "go to different places and talk to many different people."

Graphic

2 photos: US SENATOR John Kerry views the remains of rockets launched from Gaza during a visit to Sderot Thursday with Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. Also on Thursday, US Rep. Brian Baird helped lift an empty water tank at a UN food distribution center in Gaza City. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Charade goes on while Gaza buries its dead

Irish Independent

January 20, 2009 Tuesday

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Independent.ie

Section: ANALYSIS Length: 654 words

Body

The front page of the Beirut daily 'As-Safir' said it all yesterday. Across the top was a terrible photograph of the bloated body of a Palestinian man newly discovered in the ruins of his home while two male members of his family shrieked and roared their grief. Below, at half the size, was a photograph from Israel of western leaders joking with Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister. Olmert was roaring with laughter. Silvio Berlusconi, arms on the back of Olmert's shoulders was also joshing and roaring -- with laughter, not grief -- and on Olmert's right was Nicolas Sarkozy of France wearing his stupidest of smiles. Only Chancellor Merkel appeared to understand the moral collapse. No smiles from Germany.

Europe laughs while Palestinians mourn their dead. No wonder that in the streets of Beirut, shops were doing a flourishing trade in Palestinian scarves and flags.

Over and over again, Al-Jazeera television strapped headlines onto their news reports of Palestinians carrying the decomposing corpses of their dead:"More than 1,300 dead in Gaza, 400 of them <u>women</u> and children -- Israeli dead in the war 13, three of them civilians." That, too, said it all.

All day, the Arabs also had to endure watching their own leaders primping and posing in front of the cameras at the Arab summit in Kuwait, where the kings and presidents who claim to rule them also smiled and shook hands and tried to pretend that they were unified behind a Palestinian people who have been sorely betrayed. Even Mahmoud Abbas was there, the powerless, impotent leader of Palestine -- where is that precisely, one had to ask' --trying to suck some importance from the coat-tails and robes of his betters.

Slipping and sliding on the corpses of Gaza, these assembled supreme beings should perhaps be pitied. What else could they do'Saudi King Abdullah announced EUR850,000 to rebuild Gaza -- but how many times have the Arabs and the Europeans been throwing money at Gaza only to see it torn to shreds by incoming shellfire. It has to be said that the two cowled <u>Hamas</u> gunmen who announced that they had won a "victory" in the ruins of Gaza were only fractionally less hypocritical. Still they had not understood that they were not the Hizbollah of Lebanon. Gaza was no longer Beirut. Now, it seemed, Gaza was Stalingrad. But whose uniforms did <u>Hamas</u> think they were wearing: German or Soviet?

"Israel has to understand," the good king said -- as if the Israelis were listening -- "that the choice between war and peace will not always stay open and that the Arab initiative (for Arab recognition in return for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders of Israel) that is on the table today will not stay on the table." He knew that "an eye for an eye . . .

Charade goes on while Gaza buries its dead

did not say an eye for the eyes of a whole city."But how many times -- how many bodies have to be pulled from the ruins -- before the Saudis realise time has run out'

The Israelis briskly dismissed land for peace in 2002 but yesterday they suddenly showed their interest again.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, of course, dismissed the whole initiative in Qatar last week as dead, insisting that Israel be declared a "terrorist entity".

But Mahmoud Abbas stepped further into humiliation yesterday by announcing that the "only option" for Arabs was to make peace with Israel.It was Arab "shortcomings" that led to the failure of the 2002 Arab initiative. Not Israel's rejection, mark you.No, it was the fault of the Arabs.And this from the leader of 'Palestine'.

No wonder America's man in Egypt -- a certain Hosni Mubarak -- repeated the tired old slogan that "peace in the Middle East is an imperative that cannot be delayed".

And then the Emir of Kuwait invited Bashar and Hosni and King Abdullah of Jordan and the other King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to have lunch together -- the menu was not disclosed -- to end their feuding.

There was really no adequate comment for this charade.

Load-Date: January 20, 2009



Jewish group angry over Gaza cartoon

The New Zealand Herald March 27, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 269 words

Body

LOS ANGELES - A Jewish human rights group has denounced a political cartoon as anti-Semitic, comparing it to Nazi imagery of the 1930s that led up to the Holocaust.

The syndicated cartoon by Pat Oliphant published yesterday in newspapers across the United States depicts a goose-stepping uniformed figure carrying a sword and wheeling a fanged Star of David that menaces a small *female* figure labelled "Gaza".

The Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre, a Jewish rights group with more than 400,000 members in the US, said the cartoon is meant to denigrate and demonise Israel.

The centre called on the New York Times and other outlets to remove the cartoon from their websites.

Oliphant, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1967, is considered one of the most widely syndicated editorial cartoonists in the world. His work has been syndicated internationally since 1965.

His latest cartoon alludes to Israel's aggression on the Gaza Strip, where its troops launched an offensive in December to halt rocket fire and weaken the territory's *Hamas* rulers.

More than 1400 Palestinians, including more than 900 civilians, were killed, according to a Palestinian human rights group.

Oliphant has courted controversy before.

In 2001 and 2007, the Asian American Journalists Association objected to what they called offensive racial caricatures in cartoons about trade with China and concerns about international food safety.

In 2005, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee criticised one of his cartoons, saying it drew on false stereotypes of Arabs.

An Australian, Oliphant came to the US in 1964 to work for the Denver Post.

- AP

Load-Date: March 26, 2009



Friends of sabeel are working hard to bring peace in gaza

The Bristol Post
March 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 259 words

Body

On first glance there is nothing remarkable about the office above a shop in Dursley.

Yet this is the headquarters of a national charity working to bring peace between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Friends of Sabeel is run by Jennifer Oldershaw and, following the recent conflict in Gaza, there is greater need than ever for its efforts to bring peace to the region.

The UK branch of Friends of Sabeel supports the Jerusalem-based charity Sabeel.

"Sabeel is an ecumenical interfaith group working for justice and truth, peace and reconciliation by non-violent means," said Jennifer, a retired librarian who also spent 20 years working for the diplomatic service.

Started by Palestinian Christians, Sabeel encourages cooperation between different groups and particularly works with Muslim clergy, *women* and young people.

It promotes accurate international awareness of the Palestinians' suffering which, says Jennifer, has lasted for decades but has increased since the January conflict.

Jennifer explained that the Israeli army has such advanced equipment that there was no need for civilians to be targeted in Gaza. She also called for a long-term approach.

"You also need to ask why <u>Hamas</u> were firing rockets. It goes back 60 years. If you have seen your father killed or humiliated in front of you and have seen your livelihood taken away, you see no future and have nothing to lose."

To find out more about Friends of Sabeel events, become a member or to offer volunteer assistance call 01453 544 655 or log on to http://www.friendsofsabeel.org.uk.

Load-Date: March 5, 2009



Friends of sabeel are working hard to bring peace in gaza

The Bristol Post
March 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 259 words

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Load-Date: June 11, 2009



UNRWA School Not Hit By Israel: U.N.

RTT News (United States)
February 6, 2009 Friday

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Length: 277 words

Body

(RTTNews) - The United Nations Thursday backed down from a claim that one of its school in Gaza was hit by an Israel Defense Force (IDF) mortar attack last month, correcting its earlier media statements that a massacre occurred within the U.N. education facility, media reports said.

The U.N.'s latest field report reads, "The humanitarian coordinator would like to clarify that the shelling, and all of the fatalities, took place outside rather than inside the school."

The revelation reinforces the Israeli assertions that the militant organization, <u>Hamas</u> had been attacking the Israeli forces from civilian locations, thus the high civilian casualties from Israeli retaliation.

The U.N. Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) January 7 said that "43 persons were killed following an attack on a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) school transformed into a refugee site for displaced persons."

John Ging, UNRWA's operations director in Gaza, had accused Israel of deliberately carrying out a "horrific" attack by targeting its school and claimed Israel knew it was targeting a U.N. facility.

Following the U.N. claim, the whole world condemned Israel over what was perceived as a blatant attack on a school.

However, the latest revelations were not expected to ease calls by human rights groups for an independent investigation into these and other incidents.

Palestinian medics have said that many of the over 1.300 persons reportedly killed in the three-week Israeli offensive were civilians, including many **women** and children.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



Letter: Your Say - No winners in Gaza

Birmingham Evening Mail
January 27, 2009 Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 18

Length: 246 words **Byline:** Ray Williams

Body

THERE are no winners, only losers in the Israeli and Palestine conflict inside Gaza.

<u>Hamas</u> were wrong to mortar bomb parts of Israel, but how many people did they kill compared with the heavy bombing of Gaza by Israeli planes and then tanks over a period of three weeks?

The Israelis killed more than 1,000 in Gaza. Hundreds were <u>women</u> and children and many more will be discovered among the ruins in the weeks to come.

The Americans were reluctant to call for a ceasefire because the USA bombed Iraq for several weeks, killing thousands of innocent men, **women** and children and, like the Israelis, destroying the infrastructure.

Did that bring the instant peace which Bush and his henchmen had expected?

When you destroy the homes and families of young men and children, you build up hate and resentment for years to come, and often this breeds more terrorists who want revenge or justice and George Bush knew there was very little chance of that.

Apart from those killed in the rocket attacks, thousands more were injured by falling rubble and thousands will be without water and electricity, something most of us take for granted in this country.

Let's hope and pray that peace talks will bring about permanent peace, but I have my doubts. So much is being expected of Barack Obama, who I think will bring new hope for peace, but he is not a magician nor miracle worker and he will need time to solve America's problems, let alone the world's.

Ray Williams, Shifnal

Load-Date: January 27, 2009



Turkish PM Storms Off WEF Stage Over Gaza Argument

RTT News (United States)
January 29, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 255 words

Body

(RTTNews) - Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday stormed off the stage at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos after a heated argument with Israeli President Shimon Peres over the recent fighting in the Gaza Strip.

The incident happened after the moderator refused to allow Erdogan to respond to Pares' passionate defense of Israel's actions in Gaza, saying that the debate had exceeded the allotted time.

"I do not think I will be coming back to Davos after this because you do not let me speak," Erdogan shouted as he marched off the stage in front of various international leaders including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Earlier, Peres had defended Israel's Gaza offensive for over 25 minutes after brief remarks from Erdogan on the subject. In Israel's defense, Pares told Erdogan that Turkey would have responded in the same manner if the Palestine militant rockets had hit Istanbul instead of southern Israel.

"The tragedy of Gaza is not Israel, it is *Hamas*," Peres said. "They created a dictatorship. A very dangerous one."

Israel had launched a three-week long offensive against the Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip on 27th December to end the firing of rockets from Gaza into southern Israel. It is estimated that at least 1,300 Palestinians, including <u>women</u> and children, and 13 Israelis were killed and many more injured in the 22 days of fighting.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



New power emerging...

Gulf Daily News June 22, 2009

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Length: 714 words

Byline: MANDEEP SINGH

Body

A NEW power is emerging in the Middle East, that of the voice of the people, says one of the world's leading television journalists. The Internet and other technology have given birth to the "citizen journalist", who cannot be silenced as easily as the regular media, says BBC World's Doha Debates founder and moderator and former Hard Talk host Tim Sebastian.

He says youngsters in the Arab world are taking the "bull by the horns" and expressing their opinions like never before.

The age of the "citizen journalist" is forcing the governments into transparency and accountability, said the veteran journalist.

Events unfolding in Iran are testimony to the "power" of these "citizen journalists" who, aided by technology, are taking their message to the world.

"The Iranian authorities are in a way contributing to this by clamping down on foreign journalists in Tehran to cover developments after the recent presidential election," said Mr Sebastian.

"They should realise that they can lock up the messenger but not the message," he said, reacting to foreign journalists not being allowed to leave their hotel rooms.

"So, people are using social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook and the mobile telephone to get their message across.

"Technology is here to stay. This is creating an avenue for people who are hungry to talk to the world and to make them listen.

"Whether what is happening in Iran is right or wrong is not for me to say, but it is one more occasion for people to express their opinions, something that has been unheard of in this part of the world."

New power emerging...

The freedom for people to express their opinions on television is also something new in this region, said Mr Sebastian.

"It is these youngsters who are taking the liberty to now make their feelings known," he said.

The Doha Debates, broadcast from Qatar, bring together key figures in front of an invited audience to debate hot issues in the Middle East, such as the Israeli-Palestinian situation, or marriage rights for Muslim **women**.

The series has spawned some extraordinary discussions on the present and the future of the Arab world," said Mr Sebastian.

"People have asked very tough questions; questions that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago," he said.

"The leaders are now listening to these discussions and questions are being answered. That is the power that we are seeing emerge, and that is a very healthy sign.

"The topics that have been discussed include whether Muslim <u>women</u> should be free to marry anyone they choose and whether it was finally time for the US to get tough on Israel, among others.

"The conclusions have been hotly contested and have made people sit up and take notice.

"At least the people are talking, expressing their opinions. Sooner or later this will make a difference."

He recalled some exhilarating interviews from his Hard Talk days, including former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev and <u>Hamas</u> strongman Dr Mahmoud Al Zaher, whose "jaw fell open" at the way he was being asked questions.

"World leaders have been found wanting on several occasions and have reacted in certain ways," said Mr Sebastian.

Those he would have liked to have on Hard Talk, included Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Syrian President Basher Al Assad and *Hamas* strongman Shaikh Hassan Nasrallah.

"I also wanted to get Tony Blair in the hot seat but for some reason he never agreed. It was as if he was trying really hard not to come," said Mr Sebastian.

On his present show, he would like to get US President Barack Obama and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad facing off across the debating table.

Mr Ahmadinejad and his "vanquished" opponent Mir hossein Mousavi are also in his sights.

"It is tough, but it could happen," said Mr Sebastian.

He also said that he would love to interview and engage in debate Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, for his "great style and rather interesting views".

"People in Bahrain are often freer to express opinions and views, which is encouraging. Other nations may have some catching up to do," said Mr Sebastian.

"The world has to take care of and listen to dissent, because opinions cannot be kept locked up," he said.

Mr Sebastian was in Bahrain to speak during the launch of the news magazine, the Bahrain Telegraph.

mandeep@gdn.com.bh

Load-Date: June 22, 2009



Papal visit inspires Gaza Catholics

Financial Times (London, England)

May 9, 2009 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 683 words

Byline: Tobias Buck in Gaza City

Highlight: Middle East

After the red carpet, Pope Benedict XVI will have to tread carefully during his time in the region, writes Tobias Buck

Body

Next week's visit by Pope Benedict XVI to Israel and the Palestinian territories has aroused conflicting emotions among Christians, Muslims and Jews in the region. To the small Catholic community in the Gaza Strip, his arrival offers the rare chance to escape, if only for a day, the misery of the war-ravaged territory.

Like most of the Strip's 286 Catholics, Jabrah alNajjar, a 61-year-old who lives with his wife in Gaza City, has applied for an Israeli permit to attend the Pope's mass in Bethlehem next Wednesday. The Israeli government has promised to lift the normally stringent travel ban on Gazans for the occasion, but church leaders expect there will be at most 250 permits, not all of which will go to Catholics.

For Mr Najjar, sitting in his small living room surrounded by Easter decorations and with a large wooden cross above the front door, it is proving a tantalising wait. He is still waiting for Israeli permission to leave Gaza. But he says: "I am extremely happy that the Pope is coming. For me it means peace, love and brotherhood."

The Pope's visit offers a rare moment of joy for the small - and dwindling - Catholic communities living in Israel and the Palestinian territories. By far the smallest is the one in the Gaza Strip, where 50 Catholic families form a minority within a minority, making up only a fraction of a 3,000-strong Christian community dominated by members of the Greek Orthodox church.

For the Pope, the plight of Gaza Catholics is one of many thorny issues he will face as he embarks on a visit laced with controversy and political pitfalls. The recent Israeli offensive against the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza Strip means some Christians are looking to him for words of condemnation and protest. At the very least, they want him to highlight the desperate situation facing both Christians and Muslims in the Gaza Strip.

But the Pope, who started his visit to the region in Jordan yesterday, will have to tread carefully. Relations between the Vatican and Israel have been strained in recent months, not least as a result of his decision to rehabilitate a renegade bishop who cast doubt over the Holocaust (the Pope later said he had been unaware of the bishop's views). His visit will also be clouded by longsimmering Jewish anger over Pope Pius XII's role during the second world war and doubts over whether he did enough to help Jews escape Nazi persecution.

Papal visit inspires Gaza Catholics

On the other side of the Middle Eastern divide, Palestinian Muslims have not forgotten the Pope's controversial 2006 speech, which included a quote describing Islam as a "cruel and inhuman" religion. Some Muslim residents of Nazareth, the birthplace of Jesus and the setting for a papal mass on Thursday, this week put up a banner suggesting Benedict deserved punishment for harming God and the Prophet.

The small band of Gaza Catholics - living among 1.5m Muslims and governed by the Islamist <u>Hamas</u> group - insist the two communities currently live side by side largely without tensions, in spite of sporadic extremist attacks on Christian institutions.

Mr Najjar points out that Gaza Christians do not have to work on Sunday mornings - a normal working day in the region - so they can attend mass. The community can bring wine into the Gaza Strip for communion, and Christian <u>women</u> still walk outside their homes without headscarves. "My Muslim friends come and visit me on the holy days, and we celebrate together," he says.

Hussam al-Taweel, a leader of the Greek-Orthodox community and the only Christian member of the Palestinian Legislative Council from Gaza, paints a similar picture: "We [Christians and Muslims] share everything - we share the history, we share the future and we share the struggle against the occupation."

Much to the disappointment of Gaza's Christians, the Pope will not come in person to visit their small, embattled community. But at the very least, says Mr Taweel, Gazans now expect him to give a "strong, political speech in order to assure our [the Palestinians] rights of independence".

This sliver of land, of all places, he adds, "is in need of his care and patronage".

Load-Date: May 8, 2009



<u>Turkey as a crucial bridge between the western and Muslim worlds;</u> <u>POLITICS: At East-West Crossroads, Turkey Presses Ambitious Agenda&t;</u>

IPS (Latin America)
May 22, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1282 words

Byline: Analysis by Helena Cobban

Body

For the past few years Turkey has likewise acted as a crucial bridge between the western and Muslim worlds. Turkey is a member of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The current secretary-general of the OIC is a Turkish historian.

In early April, U.S. President Barak Obama issued a crucial appeal for understanding between the west and Islam during a visit to the Turkish capital, Ankara.

The Turkish government has been led since 2002 by the moderate-Islamist Justice and Development Party (known by its Turkish initials, AKP). Now Turkey, a democratic country of 71.5 million people that has long embraced the separation of church (mosque) and state, looks set to play an increasingly important role in both the Middle East and the broader Muslim world.

In the Arab-Israeli arena, for eight months until last December, Turkey sponsored and hosted a series of breakthrough proximity talks between Israel and Syria. It brought the two nations closer than ever to concluding a final peace agreement. The talks were abruptly ended after Israel invaded Gaza Dec. 28.

In February 2006, Ankara hosted Khaled Meshaal, the national leader of the Palestinian Islamist movement, *Hamas*. One month earlier, *Hamas* had won the elections to the Palestinian legislature.

Turkey's president, Abdullah Gul, and prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have both repeatedly called on the international community to respect the results of the Palestinian elections and urged western countries to find a way to deal with *Hamas*.

In an achievement that indicates Turkey's weight in world affairs, Turkey has been able to retain its good relations with Israel even while adopting this stance.

On U.S.-Iranian relations, Gul and Erdogan have consistently called for a negotiated resolution of the two countries' problems. At a conference held by Sabanci University's Istanbul Policy Centre here Thursday, former diplomat Can Buharli noted that Turkey's relations with Iran have grown stronger over the past decade.

Turkey is a majority-Sunni country. IPS found no Turkish nationals who agreed with the claim made by some western officials that an Iranian-backed 'Shiite wave' is about to take over the Middle East or that Iran's nuclear programme poses a threat to the region.

Turkey as a crucial bridge between the western and Muslim worlds POLITICS: At East-West Crossroads, Turkey Presses Ambitious Agenda&t;

Back in 2003, Turkey firmly opposed the George W. Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq, and refused to allow the U.S. military to use Turkey as a transit corridor for the invasion.

The distinctive position that Turkey now occupies in world affairs is, most Turkish commentators agree, largely a result of the in-depth strategic thought of Dr. Ahmet Davutoglu, who was appointed foreign minister on May 1. Before that, Davutoglu worked as a special adviser to Erdogan, running Turkey's shuttle diplomacy between Israel and Syria and other initiatives on Erdogan's behalf.

Some years ago Davutoglu developed the concept that Turkey should have 'zero problems with its neighbours.' More recently, he has advocated building on that to strive for 'maximum cooperation' with all neighbours.

With some neighbours, like Armenia and the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, that approach has proven difficult. But even with those two, Erdogan has considerably improved relations that were previously very tense.

In late April, Turkey concluded a five-point 'road map' agreement with Armenia. One of the points stipulated that the two countries will establish a joint historical commission to investigate what happened to the Armenians in Turkey in 1915.

Regarding northern Iraq, Turks now seem confident that they have solid commitments from the ethnic-Kurdish provincial leaders there that they will no longer give sanctuary to fighters from the PKK, a movement of ethnic-Kurdish Turkish citizens that has waged a lengthy armed struggle in eastern Turkey in support of its secessionist goals.

Israel is not an immediate neighbour to Turkey. But even there, Erdogan has worked for maximum cooperation, despite deep differences over Tel Aviv's policy toward the Palestinians. In January, those differences spilled into the elite halls of the annual Davos conference when Israeli president Shimon Peres raised his voice to Erdogan in a panel discussion - and Erdogan stormed out of the hall.

Peres later called Erdogan to apologise.

For all its attention to the Middle East, Turkish foreign policy is still strongly oriented toward the country's longstanding goal of joining the European Union.

'We see ourselves as part of the west, without a doubt,' Buharli said. 'And our neighbours in the region see us that way, too. Indeed, that is part of what makes us attractive to them.'

The two successive AKP governments in Ankara have brought seven years of unprecedented political stability to a country that throughout the Cold War was plagued by numerous military coups. Many people around the world also view the AKP as an intriguing example of how an Islamist party that commits to democratic principles can become well-integrated into the political life of a democracy.

When Turkey became a nation-state in 1923 ,it was founded on the explicitly secular and Turkish-nationalist principles of its first president, Kemal Ataturk. From then until today, Turkish <u>women</u> have been forbidden to wear Muslim-style headscarves in public universities or government offices.

Ataturk ran the republic as a one-party state, clamping down on political opponents. Under him and until very recently, successive Turkish governments also used the military to ruthlessly suppress any signs of cultural autonomy or political separatism from members of the country's sizeable Kurdish minority.

Since the AKP came to power in 2002 it has moved ahead carefully on all these once explosive issues. It has not pushed forward its longstanding request that scarf-wearing **women** be allowed their full economic and social rights.

The wives of both Gul and Erdogan are scarf-wearers, as are around one-quarter of the <u>women</u> one sees on the streets of Istanbul. (The proportion is reportedly higher in the country's interior.) But here, as in many majority-Muslim countries, young **women** with and without headscarves mix easily together.

Turkey as a crucial bridge between the western and Muslim worlds POLITICS: At East-West Crossroads, Turkey Presses Ambitious Agenda&t;

On Kurdish issues the AKP has moved ahead more determinedly - in a constructive, pro-peace way. Earlier this year the public television station started airing programming in Kurdish for the first time.

In general, the AKP has built a strong political base by pursuing a policy of 'live and let live' at the ideological level - while also paying attention to the efficient and non-corrupt delivery of good public services to all citizens.

One liberal secularist told IPS that though she was not an ideological supporter of the AKP, 'If you are a liberal in Turkey, then the AKP is probably the party that will best support your needs and interests.'

Not all Turkish secularists agree. On Sunday, around 20,000 militant supporters of Ataturk-style secularism demonstrated in Ankara against the AKP and against a wide-ranging investigation the country's judiciary has launched into a reported anti-government plot hatched in 2007 in what is called the Ergenekon case.

Istanbul residents expressed different opinions to IPS on whether there is any substance to the Ergenekon allegations, or whether the whole affair is an AKP exaggeration or witch-hunt. But they seemed to agree that the judiciary could be trusted to sort out the truth from the many lurid allegations now swirling around the case.

In a country where the rule of law was trampled on so thoroughly until recent years, that trust in the judiciary seems like a significant achievement.&t;/ © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: May 22, 2009



Column: Israel-Palestine on campus debate calls for activism that matters

University Wire

April 15, 2009 Wednesday

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I find we often get caught up in debates over the

Length: 698 words

Byline: By Jonathan Hollander, Columbia Daily Spectator; SOURCE: Columbia U.

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Israeli-Palestinian conflict that hardly exist anywhere outside our academy. For instance, the major issue on Columbia University's campus at the moment is the push by the Columbia Palestine Forum to label Israel an "apartheid" state and to pursue a policy of boycotts and sanctions. If these anti-Israel activists ever came to Capitol Hill, I'm pretty certain that all 535 congressmen would laugh in their faces and dismiss their proposal as nonsense. This is not because the United States Congress is trapped within the clutches of the "Israel lobby," but because the policies being advocated by the Columbia Palestine Forum either have no basis in reality or are completely impracticable. In the face of the apartheid claim lies the fact that Arabs living within pre-1967 Israel carry full Israeli citizenship, with Arabs having served in both the Cabinet and on the Supreme Court. In fact, Israel is one of the few countries in the Middle East where Arab women can vote in meaningful elections, lending credence to the argument that in many respects, Arabs living in Israel have more rights than Arabs living in most Arab countries. Obviously, there still exists a considerable amount of economic and political disparity between Jews

Column: Israel - Palestine on campus debate calls for activism that matters

and Arabs in Israel, but does a similar rift between African Americans and Caucasians not occur in the United States? I say this not to condone these inequalities but rather to question the fairness of applying the apartheid label to Israel when the United States and Europe both have deep-seated racial problems of their own. The members of the U.S. Congress understand that Israel is in fact a very free society, which is why the Jewish state garners so much bipartisan support. In our meeting with Rep. Charlie Rangel-one of the most powerful (and liberal) members of the House-the congressman outlined a position on Israel that was both measured and productive. Like most Democrats, he wasn't thrilled by the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister, but at the same time he noted that he did not think it would be a major setback to America-Israel relations, since the connection has more of a foundation in the shared ideals of freedom and democracy than it does in the political leadership of the moment. The key to peace, he said, was to stop groups like *Hamas* and Hezbollah from derailing the process, a position that stands somewhat at odds with the radicals at Columbia who see *Hamas* as Gaza's democratically legitimate rulers (in the same way that Hitler was Germany's democratically legitimate ruler) and who don't even believe that Israel should exist as a Jewish state .

Rangel was not the only congressman to voice these pro-Israel, pro-peace opinions-virtually every representative we met with that day also reiterated his or her support for Israel as a critical element of U.S. foreign policy. Witnessing this solidarity with Israel gave me a great deal of solace because it highlights just how irrelevant groups like the Columbia Palestine Forum are. By focusing solely on the demonization of Israel and flagrantly ignoring the terrorist (or as they refer to them, "resistance") elements of Palestinian society, the Columbia Palestine Forum effectively removes itself from the mainstream

Page 3 of 3

Column: Israel - Palestine on campus debate calls for activism that matters

discourse and thus from the policy process.

In my opinion, anti-Israel radicals have become so caught up in their twisted perceptions of the situation that they are blinded to the realities on the ground. Like it or not, Israel exists as a Jewish state with both conventional and nuclear deterrent capabilities. This means that, hard as some may wish it, Israel will never cease to be the Jewish homeland. Thus, by calling Israel an apartheid or genocidal state, groups like the Columbia Palestine Forum are accomplishing nothing other than feeding the cycle of hatred-and the bloodshed that results. The only way for peace to ever be achieved is for activist groups to be proactive and work towards the establishment of two states, not the destruction or demonization of one. This was our goal on Capitol Hill, and I am certain that it made more of a difference than screaming slogans on Columbia's campus.

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Load-Date: April 17, 2009



Letter: Israel on the way to genocide

Nottingham Evening Post February 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 14

Length: 267 words

Body

P. Sheppherd (Israel is 'vilified', January 24) admits that Israel was created on Arab land but states that Israel is surrounded by Arab states hell-bent on its destruction. This is no longer true, if it ever was. He also claims that *Hamas* uses civilians as human shields and sets up rocket batteries in mosques and schools. This is in part Israeli propaganda and is disputed by independent UNRA. W.D.Hains (Not Genocide) states that Israel is surrounded by "hostile elements" calling for Israel's destruction and, irrationally, for this reason Israel's actions cannot be genocide. The worst "hostile elements" except for in Iran, not even a neighbour, are not governing their countries, and are certainly not physically attacking Israel. The scale of Israel's response to a pinprick is on the way to genocide.

Mr Hains claims that Israel is not an artificial state and writes of Jewish history at the time of Moses. If he had read Numbers, he would see that although the Jews claimed that "the promised land" was given to them by God, it was already occupied and the adult males of the occupiers were slaughtered, the <u>women</u> and the children being captured, with the married <u>women</u> and male children later being "put to the sword". And this is shortly after Moses had received the commandment "Thou shalt not kill"!!

The Romans destroyed the state of Israel nearly two thousand years ago. It was recreated in the 20th century. Of course it as artificial, but it exists and will continue to exist unless over-the-top responses bring about its own destruction.

R. L. COOPER Harlequin Close Radcliffe-on-Trent

Load-Date: August 21, 2009



Time to speak up

therecord.com

January 21, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A12

Length: 311 words **Byline:** Peter Eglin

Body

Re: Laurier Prof And Students Vent On Gaza Strip Conflict -- Jan. 8

Wilfrid Laurier University's dean of students, David McMurray, thinks it would not be appropriate for a post-secondary institution to take a stand on the destruction of academic institutions in Gaza. On Dec. 28 the science and engineering buildings of the Islamic University of Gaza were destroyed by U.S.-made Israeli F-16 jets. Founded in 1978, the university is the largest academic institution in Palestine, serving more than 20,000 students -- 60 per cent *women*.

Israel defends the attack saying science labs conducted research and development on weapons manufacture. Islamic university officials deny this, but let's say it's true. Insofar as practically all U.S. and Israeli universities do the same then, by this logic, <u>Hamas</u> would be justified in bombing, say, MIT or the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. But if bombing either of these is unacceptable, then so is bombing the Islamic university.

Should Grand River Hospital denounce the university attack? No, surely that institution would want to condemn the assault on health care, including denial of electricity, water and necessary medical supplies to hospitals enduring a humanitarian catastrophe.

Should it be the City of Waterloo? No, surely that municipal corporation would want to denounce the destruction of vital city infrastructure.

Well then, the Waterloo Region Record? No, that news medium would surely want to vociferously counter Israeli and Canadian propaganda blaming the victims for being killed. How about the Waterloo Region District School Board? Surely they would want to condemn the killing of 45 civilians sheltering in two UN schools from bombardment of their refugee camp.

So, if post-secondary institutions like Wilfrid Laurier University will not speak up when a university is attacked, who will?

Peter Eglin

Kitchener

Time to speak up

Load-Date: January 21, 2009



Letters

The Jerusalem Post April 13, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1223 words

Byline: Peter Simpson, Jack Cohen, Zalmi Unsdorfer, Dov Aarons, Coleman Brosilow, Steve Kramer, Richard H.

Schwartz, Stephen Cohen, Zev Chamudot

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Is Adams just

being gullible?

Sir, - If <u>Hamas</u> truly has peaceful intentions ("Gerry Adams to 'Post': <u>Hamas</u> is not al-Qaida or Taliban; it wants peace," April 12), then it would immediately release its captive, Gilad Schalit, whom it is holding against international law. Otherwise, all Mr. Adams is indulging in is yet another case of a British MP supporting terrorism, as *Hamas* is a designated a terrorist organization.

PETER SIMPSON

Jerusalem

Oath could help

end conflict

Sir, - I agree with those who argue that transferring portions of Israeli land inhabited by Arabs to a future putative Palestinian state in exchange for areas of the West Bank inhabited by Israeli Jews would be a good approach. But such an exchange cannot be carried out without a plebiscite of the Arab inhabitants of those portions of Israel. After all, they have human rights that include choosing which country they belong to.

If they vote to stay within Israel and are required to take a loyalty oath, it would go a long way toward settling the conflict. This is one idea that should be borne in mind until the Palestinians in the West Bank have reached the stage of development where they can come to terms with Israel as a Jewish State and drop their real plans to destroy us.

JACK COHEN

Netanya

Lieberman's outlook well grounded

Dear Sir, - In "The Threat from Within" (April 7)â Larry Derfner claims that Avigdor Lieberman's support of Meir Kahane during his student years makes him even more dangerous than Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Unlike the last two elections, of Sharon and Olmert, the Israeli electorate this time knew exactly what it was getting when it voted for Lieberman. He's never minced words.

These voters have seen every initiative, from Oslo to Annapolis, fail on false assumptions paid for in Jewish blood. Meanwhile, Kahane's doctrine of separation remains as valid today as it ever was. Tragically, it continues to be revalidated with each new attack on innocent civilians, whether by bomb, tractor, knife or axe.

Israel is a lot safer with leaders grounded in Kahane's harsh realism than the utterly discredited fantasies of Oslo.

ZALMI UNSDORFER

Chairman, Likud-Herut UK

London

The real villain

Sir, - Islam is identified worldwide with mass terrorism, kidnapping, torture. blackmail, piracy and limb- lopping. It is similarly identified with enslavement, not only of indigenous non-Muslim populations but of <u>women</u> in general.

How is it then that in Britain it is Israel that is demonized while Islam is thought of as the hard done-by good guys? Is this due to an anti-Semitic media or terrible Israeli PR? Or both?

This is a very serious and deteriorating situation that should be worrying the Israel government. But is it?

DOV AARONS

London

'Post" can do

its part, too

Sirs, - David Horovitz decries the publication of unsubstantiated news in the Israeli press ("Home truths about Gaza," April 10), which then goes on to be headlined by the foreign media, with the implicit assumption that if it is negative about Israel and published by the Israeli press it must be true.

As one of the two major English-language papers in Israel, the Post is in a unique position to counter such reporting and at the same time reduce cynicism among the general public about the reliability of the media. Instead of publishing something that cannot be verified or attributed - such as the (false) reports of wanton IDF killings of Gaza civilians - it could report on rumors to this effect and an investigation.

I believe that achieving a reputation for complete reliability could actually gain readership and help Israel in its struggle against the lies of its adversaries.

COLEMAN BROSILOW

Rehovot

Subtle message,

then and now

Sir, - Caroline Glick pointed out that Vice President Joseph Biden told CNN that "Israel would be 'ill-advised' to attack Iran's nuclear installations" ("Surviving in a post-American world," April 10).

Israel faced a similar situation in 1967 when its Arab neighbors girded for war and promised the destruction of Israel. Then-president Lyndon Johnson promised an international flotilla while warning Israel not to attack on its own. But the US was unable to initiate any international action and reversed its position, letting Israel know that it would have to handle the problem itself. The result was the Six Day War.

In effect, America and the West are telling Israel to tough it out on its own. This can easily be interpreted to mean, "Go ahead and do it, but you're on your own."

STEVE KRAMER

Alfei Menashe

Reverse climate

change through diet...

Sir, - With Israel now facing the worst drought in its history, and with the Israel Union for Environmental Defense projecting that global warming will result in an average local temperature increase of three to 11 degrees Fahrenheit, a decease in average rainfall of 20-30 percent, severe storms and the flooding of Israel's coastal plain, your April 10 article (The Jewish people's new challenge - climate change") was very appropriate.

It was good that the article indicated that plans are being made by Jewish groups to address the issues. However, the importance of dietary changes appears to be off the agenda so far. In a 2006 report, the UN indicated that animal-based agriculture emits more greenhouse gases (in CO2 equivalents) than all cars, planes, ships and other means of transportation combined, and that the number of farm animals is projected to double in the next 50 years. Hence, a major shift to plant-based diets is an essential part of responding to global climate change.

RICHARD H.SCHWARTZ, Ph.D.

President, Jewish Vegetarians

of North America, and Director, Veg Climate Alliance

New York City

...or ignore it...

Sir, - The Jewish response to global climate change should be one of extreme skepticism.

We are taught to ignore false prophets, and that one way to distinguish between the false and true is to see if their prognostications come about.

Proponents of the theory of climate change forecast 10-15 years ago that the Earth would continue to warm at an ever increasing rate. The average global temperature peaked in 1998 and has remained virtually constant; hurricanes have been quiescent lately and sea levels have not risen perceptively.

Skeptics have also noted that global temperatures have been going up and down for centuries, long before human activity could have had any effect - but these facts have been conveniently ignored.

It is time that reputable newspapers like The Jerusalem Post stop treating doubtful hypotheses as fact.

STEPHEN COHEN

Ma'aleh Adumim

...but don't blame Judaism

Sir, - The various positive plans and programs regarding global warming that you describe represent an exciting initial response by some Jewish groups to these sober challenges.

I however was completely taken aback by the infelicitous statement of Yosef Abramowitz, president of the Arava Power Company, who stated, "This is really a chance for us to determine whether Judaism still has anything relevant to offer our world or whether our role in history is done."

Mr. Abramowitz should appreciate the fact that Judaism's relevance and its eternal moral and ethical message, which has served as a basis for the world's monotheistic faiths, do indeed form the basis for man's awareness of his responsibility toward his fellow man and toward global well being.

ZEV CHAMUDOT

Petah Tikva

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Livni on trail of a hawk

Herald Sun (Australia)
February 10, 2009 Tuesday
1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 33

Length: 273 words

Body

ISRAEL goes to the polls today in a vote that could see the rise of the nation's second <u>female</u> leader or the return of a hawk.

The favourite to become prime minister is hardliner Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the Right-wing opposition party, Likud.

But his opinion poll lead has been clawed back in recent weeks by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who heads the Centrist Kadima, the largest party in the Government.

Ms Livni, 50, an ex-Mossad agent, had avoided playing the ``gender card" for fear of appearing weak in a male-dominated society where frequent wars with Arab neighbours tend to make generals and other military figures more popular as politicians.

But, after failing to win enough of a boost from a 22-day offensive in Gaza that was widely popular in Israel, Ms Livni has added feminist-tinged rhetoric to her repertoire, mixing calls to smash <u>Hamas</u> militants with complaints of male chauvinism.

She is seeking to become Israel's second <u>female</u> prime minister after Golda Meir, who held office from 1969 to 1974.

Polls show the lead of Mr Netanyahu, a former prime minister, narrowing after the war to a 2-4-seat advantage over Ms Livni.

Some polls have also predicted the Yisrael Beiteinu party, led by Avigdor Lieberman, could eclipse Labour as Israel's third-largest.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak, an ex-general running as head of the Leftist Labour party, has seen his support double since the Gaza war in which 1300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis died, but still trails Ms Livni and Mr Netanyahu.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced several months ago that he was stepping down in the face of investigations into alleged corruption.

Load-Date: February 9, 2009



<u>Israel to shield soldiers from prosecution; Reaction to claims of illegal</u> activities by the defence force

Alberni Valley Times (British Columbia)

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: TOP OF THE NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 272 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Body

As the UN investigates whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza earlier this month, Israeli decided Sunday all military personnel who fought in the <u>Hamas</u>-run Palestinian enclave will receive state protection from foreign prosecution.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend us, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defense Forces have been made by the UN and such agencies as Amnesty International.

Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore almost the full brunt of attacks by Israeli forces.

One is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp and about 1.5 kilometres from the Israeli border. As residents combed through scores of flattened homes, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Awadallah said as a crowd swarmed her and an associate.

"It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to <u>women</u> and children."

Piecing together who did what when and where will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



MEP broadside for broadcasters

Kidderminster Shuttle
January 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: KIDDER NEWS LATEST (KIDDER NEWS LATEST)

Length: 264 words

Body

WEST Midlands Liberal Democrat Euro MP, Liz Lynne, has today expressed her anger at BBC and Sky for refusing to run an appeal by the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) for urgent help to the aid operation in the Gaza Strip.

The appeal by the DEC, which represents 13 major charities, comes after the three-week incursion into Gaza by the Israeli army in response to rocket attacks by extremist members of *Hamas* on Southern Israel.

The conflict claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people, half of them innocent men, <u>women</u> and children, and has left thousands more homeless and without vital supplies, said the MEP.

Both the BBC and Sky News have said, however, they will not run the appeal because of fears it will appear they are taking sides in the conflict.

Ms Lynne, a member of the European Parliament's Sub- Committee on Human Rights and a long-time critic of Israel's blockade of Gaza, said: "The decision by the BBC and Sky beggars belief. The idea that people cannot distinguish between news content and a charity appeal for people in desperate need of help is ludicrous.

"The Israeli attack on Gaza has already cost the lives of over 1,000 people. Appeals like this may help to stop the death toll rising.

"I believe people understand that this appeal is not about the conflict itself but the humanitarian cost of the fighting.

"The fact is the people of Gaza need our help. The more broadcasters who show the DEC appeal, the more people will contribute.

"The actions of the BBC and Sky do a disservice to the people of Gaza and are an insult to the intelligence of the British public."

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



Hundreds join Gaza peace march

South Wales Argus

January 18, 2009 Sunday

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Section: LATEST NEWS (SWA NEWS)

Length: 279 words

Byline: Ben Frampton

Body

PROTESTERS were out in force yesterday to condemn Israeli military actions in Gaza and call for peace in the region.

Hundreds of people gathered in Pill for the a peaceful march through the city centre, followed by a rally held in John Frost Square.

By the time the march reached its destination, more than 250 people had joined.

Event organiser Ifthir Ahmed, chairman of the men's group at the Young Muslim Organisation, said they were only expecting between 50 -100 people.

Protesters waved banners and placards, attracting a lot of attention from Newport's Saturday afternoon shoppers, with a few even joining the march as it made its way down Commercial Street.

Mr Ahmed, 28, said: "The purpose was to raise awareness throughout the general public about the atrocities being committed by the Israeli government against the Palestinian refugees and innocent Palestinian civilians."

Once they arrived in the square, speeches were given by Newport East Am John Griffiths and Caerphilly councillor Ray Davies among others.

Jasmine Ahmed, chairwoman of the <u>women</u>'s group of YMO, said she was spurred into action after seeing images of a father carrying his dead child the streets of Gaza: "That just took my heart away, I thought I had to stand up for what was happening."

Mrs Ahmed, 27, said she was "very pleased" with how the march went, adding: "We weren't expecting that many, but it just goes to prove that there's a lot of people who feel the way we do, so we were very happy and very thankful to the Newport community for joining us and supporting us."

<u>Hamas</u> announced a one week ceasefire following the unilateral declaration by Israel yesterday that it was ending hostilities.

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



The War on Terror goes on, whatever we call it; Binyam Mohamed may have been maltreated, but that doesn't mean that the threat from Islamic theocracies is not real

The Times (London)
February 24, 2009 Tuesday
Edition 1

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 22

Length: 1106 words

Byline: David Aaronovitch

Body

George Bush is gone, Binyam Mohamed is home from Guantánamo, and the War on Terror is no more. Rejoice. It was all a bad dream.

Should even a fraction of Mr Mohamed's story of physical and psychological abuse in various prisons from Morocco to Afghanistan turn out to be true, he has been appallingly treated. His activist lawyer, Clive Stafford Smith, is quoted as saying that Mr Mohamed was "a victim who has suffered more than any human being should ever suffer".

Of course, it would be easier to demand that security heads should roll if we knew that Mr Mohamed had been wrongfully detained in the first place and that he was not, and had never been, a jihadi. I have longed to have this question put directly to Mr Stafford Smith in one of his hundreds of interviews, but in vain. He did once tell an interviewer that his hypothesis was that the detainees "actually didn't do much of anything down in Afghanistan or they were aid workers, humanitarian people ..." Mr Mohamed's story is that, as a young Ethiopian denied asylum in Britain but permitted to remain, he led an unsatisfactory life and became a drug addict. In June 2001, in an effort to kick the habit, he went first to Pakistan, then to Taleban-ruled

Afghanistan, where he thought he'd take a look at how Islamic rule was working out. In April 2002 he was arrested in Pakistan, attempting to return to Britain.

The US alleges, partly as a result of Mr Mohamed's own confessions (he claims, made under duress), that he had attended an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan, and had been plotting a Richard Reid-type attack in the West. But no charges have been, or will be, brought.

I can't honestly say that I believe Mr Mohamed's account, partly because it was a long way to travel for drug rehab, and partly because it reminds me of the case of the Tipton Three, whose odd journey through the Afghan war to American prison was supposedly chronicled in Michael Winterbottom's 2006 film, The Road to Guantánamo.

The War on Terror goes on, whatever we call it Binyam Mohamed may have been maltreated, but that doesn't mean that the threat from Islamic theocracies is not re....

In that movie the three young men were depicted travelling to Pakistan for a wedding, getting bored, becoming part of a humanitarian relief column to Afghanistan, sitting around Kabul eating naan bread, taking the wrong taxi and ending up in a war zone. I noted at the time that the film had obscured both the timeline and the nature of the places visited by the Tipton boys, but still had to agree that their story could be true. Wrong. A year later one admitted to Channel 4 that they had indeed had weapons training in a jihadi camp. The humanitarian, accidental stuff was lies.

Nor is it the case that everyone held at Guantánamo could either be charged or was guiltless. Three weeks ago two former inmates turned up as senior al-Qaeda figures in Yemen, one of whom had subsequently been involved in bombing a US embassy..

I make this point because, in my view, Guantánamo was wrong despite there being a real problem of terrorism, and not because that threat was overblown by George Bush and his evil neocon advisers.

But the war is over. Yesterday, shortly before Mr Mohamed landed in Britain, I listened to one of those fashionable voices that calls for more understanding of political Islamism and less confrontation. The former MI6 agent Alastair Crooke, who has become a kind of Dr Dolittle of Islamist movements, was discussing his new book, Resistance: The Essence of the Islamist Revolution with Andrew Marr.

Crooke's point seemed to be that we in the West could learn a lot from Islamism, since it was, in some ways, morally superior to our fly-blown, materialist, individualist societies. Islamism, as practised by Hezbollah, <u>Hamas</u> and President Ahmadinejad, was saying something profound "about the essence of man".

He went on: "It is not just about violence or a whimsical reaction to modernity, it is a new way of seeing our existence ..." Islamists wanted "a society based on compassion and justice".

Sure, Marr said, but what about the position of <u>women</u>, persecution of gays and the tendency towards blowing stuff up. "There is a part that is dangerous and ugly," Crooke agreed, before adding, bewilderingly, "but that is largely something the West has created itself." Then a piece of apologia that would have impressed any old Communist: "There are many mistakes ... the Iranians would admit this isn't the finished article." I believe that, as a matter of pragmatism, it will be necessary to enter into a dialogue with the likes of <u>Hamas</u> and the Iranian Government, but Crooke's failure to see that a theocracy is very unlikely to lead to a world of "compassion and justice" is stunning. The institutionalised inequality of <u>women</u>, backwardness and sexual hypocrisy that it entails is no accident, it is intrinsic. So is the disqualification of "ungodly" candidates and the persecution of apostates. Since God declines actually to come among us and make his wishes clear, it must be left to a council of bearded clerics to tell us what he wants. And once they do . .

All theocracies are coercive, as are most Islamist movements, and where they are not (as in Turkey) it is because they have been forced to change. Crooke's <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah are still the organisations that pour out hour after hour of poisonous anti-Jew racism on their TV channels, and have a rough way with dissent in their own areas.

In the Pakistani region of Swat, whence the Akond has long fled, the local Taleban were blowing up schools, attacking schoolgirls with acid, murdering journalists and assassinating human-rights activists.

On November 26 Bakht Zeba was dragged from her home, flogged and shot dead for the crime of criticism.

Last week the Pakistani authorities reached a ceasefire with the insurgents, part of which is to agree that girls will no longer have the right to go to school in Swat. Where are the student occupiers and the calls for sanctions? And lest we thought that the problem would stay in the valley, yesterday, as Binyam Mohamed came home to Britain damaged but alive, the body of a 17-year-old French girl was being flown to Paris from Cairo, where she had died in a bomb attack.

But there is no more War on Terror. Except, as my friend Professor Norman Geras has been pointing out, Barack Obama has found phrases that mean exactly the same thing, such as this from the inauguration: "Our nation is at

The War on Terror goes on, whatever we call it Binyam Mohamed may have been maltreated, but that doesn't mean that the threat from Islamic theocracies is not re....

war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred." Or this: "The United States intends to prosecute the ongoing struggle against violence and terrorism ..." Professor Geras calls it "the struggle formerly known as the War on Terror".

So Binyam may be back, Barack may be in the White House, but the truth is that the problem remains.

Graphic

The Road to Guantánamo was not quite the journey described

Load-Date: February 24, 2009



<u>chatroom</u>

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

January 19, 2009 Monday

B - Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 30

Length: 658 words

Body

RE: boogie board riders. Nothing would have even been said about this if that lady hadnt been hit and all of a sudden its an issue 2 those who had no prior opinion. The flags are there cos thats the safe area, send the boarders out beyond that and they are in possibly dangerous waters. What the? - Michelle, Labrador

INTERESTING to know that testing on side effects etc from drugs and vaccinations done by the drug companies that make the trillions of dollars from selling the drugs. Like, what did you think the test results would be. Before u agree to vaccinate your babies, might be an idea to look up side effects of drugs on the net. But look at independent studies. - Keena, Mudgeeraba

GOLD coast best recyclers in southeast qld by a mile, but please ladies put your dirty nappies in the rubbish! Not the yellow bin, all goes to china and they hate em. Nearly lost our export licence. - MRF mngr

EVER wondered why there is so much autism spectrum disorders now! Vaccine poison, it doesnt cause it but brings it out if in the genes by pumping so many viruses in2 tiny veins at once. Not what our bodies r made 2 deal with. Have a look on utube. - Mother of asperger child

WHY is it when a bikie gets done with a bong, a few gms of pot and couple shotgun shells its front page news! But when anyone else gets done with 40,000 ekkies or a kilo of pot it ends up at the bottom corner of page 6? Who makes these decisions? - Nanna

THOSE expounding the virtues of vaccination have obviously not done any research but blindly believe what doctors (drug salesmen) have told them. Statistics show all the childhood diseases were waning before vaccination. Why so much autism and autoimmune diseases now? And by the way, the injections put the germ in you, so the vaccinated are the carriers and perpetrators! - FG

RE: wanna sell my house! Agents commission hasn't been raised in qld since 1974. We dont get a wage either. Would u work 40 hrs ova 8 weeks per prop for no pay, just hoping that it sells &/or u get paid? Doubt it. Come on mate, be fair. - BM

I FULLY support muslim <u>women</u> who wear their veil. i'm not muslim & not a veil wearer but i have pals who r & do, so learn some tolerance & get a life!

IT would appear that a large number of the semi-evolved simians using chatroom thrive on creating conflict and would benefit from some de-programming! Two decades of right wing programming has left them neo-confused. - Cattldog

chatroom

TO mum with a broken heart, i guess u dont know who gave the jews the land and why <u>hamas</u> wants it? The god of israel gave the jews the land and he will make sure they keep it. its not <u>hamas</u> the fight is against, its satan and this war isnt anything compared 2 the one that God himself will fight 4 israel. Read your bible and ask God himself if what im saying truth. - Spiritual jew

I AM struggling to understand why the Qld govt all of a sudden pretends to care about our health, ie fluoride. If other than for their monetary gain they wouldnt go to the trouble. - Laraine

PATRICK & Maroubra, motorsport is not for everyone, yet this page regularly has mention of track closures & illegal use of bikes/cars on public roads & nature reserves. I am conscious of our environment but am also aware that some supervision & regulation is needed for these sports to survive whilst keeping the general public happy. To have facilities available for moto X, bikes, drifters, rally, karts & dragway in one big enclosure makes sense & in time cents. Your opinions are valid but not of the majority. - Ratscales

ONYA maree, there r a lot of questions asked to the younger people with no life experience. U just have to read the answers they give.

WHEN labor won the election i thought k rudd was going to be our pm. Looks like a vote for k rudd was a vote for j gillard.

WHERE was the sth africa cricket team poster for winning test series like bulletin had for nz rugby league?

TOADMAN, bones outside for dog attract crows. Crows kill toads.

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation

Chicago Daily Herald
February 3, 2009 Tuesday
L2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 **Length:** 735 words

Body

Hamas leader thanks Iran:

TEHRAN, Iran — <u>Hamas'</u> top political leader thanked Iran Monday for its support during Israel's Gaza offensive, calling his movement's most powerful ally a "partner in victory."

Khaled Mashaal received a hero's welcome from hundreds of Iranians at Tehran University, where a crowd chanted: "Hail to the soldier of holy war."

Cuban political prisoners dip:

HAVANA — Political prisoners held in Cuba continues to decline gradually, but brief detentions of activists have soared under President Raul Castro's rule, with more than 1,500 documented last year, the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation said Monday. It documented 205 political prisoners as of Jan. 30, down from 234 in early 2008.

Sunnis dispute vote results:

BAGHDAD — Iraqi authorities have ordered a nighttime vehicle ban across the Sunni-dominated province of Anbar. Tribal leaders who turned against al-Qaida two years ago are angry because they believe results of Saturday's ballot were manipulated to favor Sunni rivals linked to the national government in Baghdad.

Blast kills 21 Afghan police:

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan —

A suicide bomber in a police uniform detonated his explosives inside a police training center in Afghanistan on Monday, killing 21 officers and wounding at least 20, officials said. The Taliban claimed responsibility. The bomber entered the training facility in Tirin Kot as the police reservists were exercising, police said.

Obama selects Republican:

WASHINGTON— President Barack Obama plans to nominate Sen. Judd Gregg as commerce secretary today, after he agreed to a deal in which his home state governor must appoint a Republican to serve out the rest of his term. In a statement Monday, Gregg said Senate leaders of both parties understand this condition.

Clinton eyes Asia for first trip:

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is looking east as she plans her first trip abroad as America's top diplomat. Sworn in on Monday, Clinton is expected to visit key North Asian allies Japan and South Korea, as well as China, on her maiden voyage, which will likely begin next week, according to diplomats.

Obama: Some banks may fail:

WASHINGTON — In a sobering appraisal of the banking system, President Barack Obama signaled Monday he will need more money to bail out the battered financial industry. Even so, he said, "some banks won't make it." Neither Obama nor other administration officials said how much a renewed rescue plan might cost, beyond the \$700 billion of the first bailout.

McCain drops Lynn objection:

WASHINGTON — Sen. John McCain, the Senate Armed Services Committee's top Republican, dropped opposition to former Raytheon lobbyist William Lynn taking the No. 2 job at the Pentagon, a spokesman said Monday. Lynn's appointment violates President Barack Obama's own rule against hiring lobbyists to staff the federal government.

'Gone Wild' founder wanted:

LOS ANGELES — A federal judge in California has issued an arrest warrant for "Girls Gone Wild" founder Joe Francis because he failed to appear at a hearing in his tax evasion case. A U.S. attorney's office spokesman said a federal judge issued the warrant Monday in Los Angeles.

Obama promises FDA review:

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama vowed a comprehensive review of the Food and Drug Administration amid a salmonella outbreak linked to a Georgia peanut processor. More than 500 people have been sickened and at least eight may have died.

U.S. badminton team to Iran:

WASHINGTON — The White House is sending a <u>women</u>'s badminton team to Iran this week as part of a broad bid to engage the Iranian people through educational and cultural exchanges. This is the administration's first foray into such exchanges begun by President George W. Bush.

Octuplets now longest-living:

BELLFLOWER, Calif. — The octuplets born to a Southern California woman have become the longest-surviving bunch in U.S. history. The six boys and two girls — whose names have not been released — turned a week old Monday at Kaiser Permanente Bellflower Medical Center.

JonBenet case gets new look:

BOULDER, Colo. — The slaying of JonBenet Ramsey will be investigated as a cold case with all evidence and actions taken 12 years ago reviewed anew, the police chief said Monday as the department resumed a probe for which it had long been criticized. Chief Mark Beckner said new technology gives investigators new crime-solving tools.

Load-Date: February 3, 2009



Israeli bombs silence Gaza music school

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 693 words **Byline:** Nadia Hijab

Body

There was a music school in Gaza. It was just six months old. The 31 children aged 7 to 11 could choose one of five instruments, including the guitar, oud (lute), and piano. Most of the 19 girls gravitated to the guitar and piano, while many of the 12 boys showed a preference for the oud.

First person by Nadia Hijab

There was a music school in Gaza. It was just six months old. The 31 children aged 7 to 11 could choose one of five instruments, including the guitar, oud (lute), and piano. Most of the 19 girls gravitated to the guitar and piano, while many of the 12 boys showed a preference for the oud.

The school worked out of rented premises in the Palestinian Red Crescent Society building just across the street from the Preventive Security Forces compound in Gaza City. The compound was targeted in the first wave of Israeli bombardments on December 27, and twice more the next day. The five-story building was vaporized; a flat gravel surface is all that remains.

Like other buildings in the neighborhood, the Gaza Music School was shattered; window frames and doors were blown out, and holes were punched in the walls. The force of the blast imploded the four ouds, just like it had the compound.

By some miracle, the children had not yet arrived for their lessons and so were spared the fate of those in other schools in the path of Israeli bombs.

In the midst of all the death and destruction in Gaza, the school's short life rouses particular emotion. That there was such a school at all is astonishing, not just because of the 18-month siege that followed the decades of "dedevelopment" of Gaza under Israeli occupation but also because one might expect it to be contrary to an Islamist social program.

There is almost no musical education in Gaza. The school project was developed in response to community demand, particularly from among the 11,600 children who are members of the Qattan Center for the Child. The center provides extra-curricular activities and a library for the children. It is impressive: With its 103,000 books, it is one of the largest children's libraries in the Arab world.

Israeli bombs silence Gaza music school

The children who attended the center's music workshops and concerts started asking for more.

"They said, 'We want to play instruments too,'" explained Ziad Khalaf, the Ramallah-based director of the Qattan Foundation, which established the school with co-funding from the Swedish development organization SIDA.

The music school provided a window on another world for the besieged Gazans."Many parents sat in on the theory lessons so they could better support their kids' homework," said Khalaf.

The five music teachers include two Russian <u>women</u> married to Palestinian men. They refused to leave Gaza when the border was briefly opened to enable foreigners to flee. For them, Gaza with all its misery and deprivation is still home, just as it is for the 1.5 million other Palestinians living there.

And what about <u>Hamas</u>' supposed social rigidity? Some websites did take a strong line against musical education, complaining that <u>Hamas</u> was allowing music to be taught under its rule instead of the Sharia. But they were ignored. Khalaf emphasizes that the Qattan Foundation has experienced full support from all authorities and communities in its different places of operation.

The day after the music school was hit, its coordinator called each of the children and their parents to make sure they were safe, and also to assure them that the school would be repaired, restocked, and reopened as soon as possible.

In Ramallah, the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music is planning a fundraiser soon to help rebuild the school.

"Some friends from Amsterdam and London who saw the damage to Gaza music school on the Foundation's website said they will be fundraising to help," Khalaf said.

These plans, too, arouse emotion: Palestinians rebuild even as the rubble rises around them. They have had 60 years to learn how to do so, and show no signs of giving up their quest for their rights - not even the right to learn how to play a musical instrument.

Nadia Hijab is a senior fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies. She wrote this article for Agence Global.

Load-Date: January 21, 2009



Human rights groups accuse Israelis of war crimes; Civilian casualties

The Independent (London)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 24

Length: 703 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre and Kim Sengupta IN JERUSALEM

Body

Israel is under suspicion of committing war crimes and should halt the "clear and present danger to the lives and well-being of tens of thousands of civilians" in Gaza, nine of the country's main human rights organisations have declared.

The Israeli organisations have written to the government, armed forces chiefs and the attorney general, condemning the "unprecedented" harm to a civilian population now in "extreme humanitarian distress", the "wanton use of lethal force" and a series of what it says are "blatant violations of the laws of warfare".

These include the fact that, apart from the death toll, with border crossings closed residents are unable to escape the war zone and are living in "fear and terror". The organisations also cited the dire capacity problems of Gaza's hospital system and the failure to evacuate about 600 wounded and chronically ill patients; what they say is prevention by the army of rescue teams reaching isolated areas which have come under intensive attack; and the fact that, with sewage now flowing in many streets, more than half a million people are without clean water and 250,000 residents have been without electricity for 18 days. Another million residents are without power at any one time, the organisations said.

The agencies also said 12 medical personnel had been killed, and another 17 injured, and that there had been 15 separate attacks on medical facilities. Meanwhile, Israel was hitting civilian targets which it defined as military solely because they are defined as "symbols of power" in *Hamas*-controlled Gaza.

Several human rights representatives went out of their way to make clear they were just as vigorous in their condemnation of the killing and injuring of Israeli civilians in militant rocket and mortar attacks. But their letter says the harm inflicted on Gaza's 1.5 million civilian population is "disproportionate" and calls on the government to open corridors to allow residents to escape the fighting and rescue teams to reach the injured.

Asked about the large majority of Israelis the polls show as supporting the warfare in Gaza, the Israeli human rights lawyer Michael Sfard said: "We are witnessing a moral corrosion." Five years ago, when 15 bystanders were killed when a bomb was used to assassinate the *Hamas* militant leader Saleh Shehadeh, "there had been a very serious

debate. Today we're doing it daily and and no one says a word. The [Israel Defence Forces] has stopped expressing regret".

The Israeli human rights letter also says that transformers, cables and other equipment allowed by Israel into Gaza's only power station four days earlier were severely damaged in a bombing raid on Monday night.

Jakob Kellenberger, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said after a visit to Gaza that the three-hour window being offered by Israel for humanitarian operations "is simply not long enough". He added: "You must have 24-hour access to people who are wounded, people who are hungry." ICRC officials said it is often impossible to organise ambulance convoys through the battle zones in that time. Mr Kellenberger, who also visited the Israeli border town of Sderot, said he understood "the great psychological damage" caused by rocket attacks there. But he said the scenes he had seen at Gaza's Shifa hospital were "shocking, really shocking, it hurts to see it. The number of patients keeps on increasing".

Oxfam said the cost of the damage at the power plant was estimated at £280,000. Although less than a day's normal supply, 369,000 litres of industrial diesel - needed to fuel the power plant and restore electricity supplies vital to Gaza's water and sewage - is held up at the Nahal Oz terminal because it is too dangerous to transport it to the power station.

Gaza

The statistics so far

- 19 Number of days that the conflict has been going on
- 2,360 Number of Israeli airstrikes so far
- 1,013 Number of Palestinians killed so far
- 670 Number of casualties who are civilians
- 225 Number of child casualties
- 69 Number of women casualties
- 4,700 Number of Palestinians wounded
- 10 Number of Israeli soldiers killed
- 4 Number of Israelis killed by friendly fire
- 3 Number of Israeli civilians hit by rockets fired from Gaza

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



<u>Letters</u>

The Jerusalem Post

February 19, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1170 words

Byline: Jan Gaines, William Levy, Derek Dobson, David Goshen, Hilary Gatoff, Terry G. C. Ting, Gerald Schor,

Henry Tobias, Lou Scop **Highlight:** Readers' Letters

Body

Deserved death

Sir, - I agree with Judy Prager about the death penalty ("The impending prisoner swap," Letters, February 18). If Israel could waive its abolishment of the death penalty once, to enable Adolf Eichmann to be put to death, why not other mass killers?

Each had the intention of murdering as many Jews as possible. So the difference between Eichmann and killers like Marwan Barghouti is not one of intent, but of degree.

Our high moral standards give terrorists the knowledge that their only possible punishment is a short vacation in Israeli jails. If they knew death was their punishment, perhaps there would be fewer incentives to capture Israelis for ransom.

At the very least, Israel might not have to pay such a horrendous price to get its boys back.

JAN GAINES

Netanya/ Stamford, Connecticut

It's about protection

Sir, - Re "Victims' families torn by prospect of releasing terrorists for Gilad" (February 18): Gilad Schalit swore an oath to defend Israel from its enemies. How will he sleep each time he reads about a released murderer killing another Israeli?

Israel needs to stop this kind of trafficking in human flesh.

No deal, period. Not even one prisoner who may kill again.

Protect your country.

WILLIAM LEVY

Baltimore

A torrent of

reconciliation

Sir, - As someone who lives many thousands of miles away, I have watched the events in your country unfold with mixed emotions. Having been to Israel on three occasions, I know firsthand what a beautiful and amazing country it is. It therefore greatly saddens me to see the turmoil and division in a country with an unparalleled history.

I pray that your new prime minister and his or her government will show not only wisdom but also great compassion at a time when emotions run high and actions take place when, at other times, words would prevail. I also ask and pray that in "victory," Israel will be magnanimous, brave and show the face of compassion to the innocent victims who have suffered, whoever they may be. Let Israel show the true face of a nation that knows more than anybody what suffering and pain really mean.

Let the whole world see the mercy and compassion of a proud and God-fearing nation. Surprise everyone by holding out your hand in providing whatever is necessary to heal wounds; bury the dead, feed the hungry, house the homeless and console the bereaved. For is this not what God would have us do?

Have mercy and compassion, Israel, and may the world be astonished by your actions. Remember, too, that peace and reconciliation carries no flag, has no country and is not proud but rewarded with acceptance and respect.

May everyone shed tears, tears that run together and become a torrent of reconciliation.

Finally, may I quote the amazing words of a young girl who recently saw the death of her sisters in a way that words utterly fail: "If you don't have tears in your eyes, you cry in your heart." Need I say more? ("Maggots can metamorphose," Letters, February 17.)

DEREK DOBSON

London

Highlight those figures

Sir, - The statistics of those killed in Gaza do not highlight the numbers of Fatah supporters executed by *Hamas* fighters under cover of war. Some, in prison pending trial, accused of assisting Israel, were injured and had been transferred to hospital when the prison was bombed. There are eyewitnesses who saw the killings in the hospital.

Further reports from our security services since the end of the fighting cover the continuing <u>Hamas</u> executions of Fatah supporters. These figures should be taken into account in investigating and publishing the number of killed; also those killed as a result of <u>Hamas</u> using human shields and forcing people at gunpoint to stay in their homes after warnings of imminent IAF bombings were received ("UN moves to determine own Gaza war civilian casualty figures," February 17).

DAVID GOSHEN

Kiryat Ono

We got wet, and for what?

Sir, - Why did we go out in the pouring rain to vote for someone who hasn't a chance of forming a large enough political bloc to rule? ("Plenty of brakes, but no engine," Amnon Rubinstein, February 18). Electoral reform is the number 1 priority of our next Knesset - if we manage to have a Knesset at all.

I would make things simple: a party on the Left, a party on the Right, and whichever of these is the largest - if it gained less than 60 seats - to join with a center party. This would make a viable government.

Otherwise, whoever we vote for will join with a group which has exactly opposite views to the one we wanted, so why bother?

HILARY GATOFF

Herzliya Pituah

Women's influence

Sir, - I was glad to observe the 2009 elections here even after the hard Gaza conflict. It proved that Israel is really a democracy - no matter how difficult the situation is, you insist on carrying on your democratic system.

I also had interest in your article about <u>women</u> in Israel being more active in the elections as well as in other fields ("Activists urge <u>women</u> to vote to advance rights," February 9). In our last parliamentary elections in Taiwan (2008), we elected 34 <u>female</u> legislators out of a total of 113, compared with 17 out of 120 in Israel's 2006 elections.

When President Ma Ying-jeou was sworn in last May 20, Premier Liu Chao-Shiuan was appointed to organize his cabinet with 10 *female* ministers.

TERRY G.C. TING

Representative, Taipei Economic

and Cultural Office

Tel Aviv

Waiting and hoping,

what a disgrace

Sir, - I can't believe tennis star Andy Ram is waiting for a visa and hoping to play in Dubai next week, and that the Israel Tennis Association is not moving to prevent that despicable action.

Don't they understand that if Dubai gives Ram a visa, it will only be because it is trying to whitewash its rejection of Shahar Pe'er, hoping thus to avoid any adverse reaction such as the cancellation of next year's matches there? ("Storm clouds gather over Dubai debacle," Sports, February 18.)

The APT should cancel next week's men's tourney in Dubai. Of course it won't, because if the 1972 Olympics could continue after the murder of the Israeli athletes, then a mere visa refusal won't halt a tennis tournament.

GERALD SCHOR

Ra'anana

Sir, - I wrote to the <u>Women</u>'s Tennis Association about its despicable failure to call off the Dubai tournament in the wake of that country's refusal to allow Israeli tennis star Shahar Pe'er to compete, reminiscent of the world's failure to speak out when the Nazis banned world-class Jewish athletes from competing for Germany at the 1936 Olympics. The WTA should hang its head in shame.

I implore all readers to inundate its website with protests.

HENRY TOBIAS

Ma'aleh Adumim

Secondhand smoke,

firsthand sickness

Sir, - As a nonsmoker, I am frightened to learn how sick I could become after breathing in all the smoke- polluted air around ("Nonsmokers exposed to tobacco smoke face higher risk of dementia, UK, US research study reveals," February 16).

Never mind the smoker who doesn't give a damn about his or her own health; maybe every cigarette packet should tell the story of the damage being done to "the other person."

LOU SCOP, Netanya

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Posturing and laughter as victims rot; Comment

The Independent (London)
January 20, 2009 Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 26

Length: 738 words

Byline: Robert Fisk in Beirut

Body

The front page of the Beirut daily As-Safir said it all yesterday. Across the top was a terrible photograph of the bloated body of a Palestinian man newly discovered in the ruins of his home while two male members of his family shrieked and roared their grief. Below, at half the size, was a photograph from Israel of Western leaders joking with Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister. Olmert was roaring with laughter. Silvio Berlusconi, arms on the back of Olmert's shoulders, was also joshing and roaring - with laughter, not grief - and on Olmert's right was Nicolas Sarkozy of France wearing his stupidest of smiles. Only Chancellor Merkel appeared to understand the moral collapse. No smiles from Germany.

Europe laughs while Palestinians mourn their dead. No wonder that in the streets of Beirut, shops were doing a flourishing trade in Palestinian scarves and flags. Even some of Palestine's most serious enemies in Lebanon wore the Palestinian keffiyeh in solidarity with the people of Gaza. Over and over again, Al-Jazeera television strapped headlines on to their news reports of Palestinians carrying the decomposing corpses of their dead: "More than 1,300 dead in Gaza, 400 of them <u>women</u> and children - Israeli dead in the war 13, three of them civilians." That, too, said it all.

All day, the Arabs also had to endure watching their own leaders primping and posing in front of the cameras at the Arab summit in Kuwait, where the kings and presidents who claim to rule them also smiled and shook hands and tried to pretend that they were unified behind a Palestinian people who have been sorely betrayed. Even Mahmoud Abbas was there, the powerless, impotent leader of "Palestine" - where is that precisely, one had to ask? - trying to suck some importance from the coat-tails and robes of his betters.

Slipping and sliding on the corpses of Gaza, these assembled supreme beings should perhaps be pitied. What else could they do? Saudi King Abdullah announced £750,000 to rebuild Gaza; but how many times have the Arabs and the Europeans been throwing money at Gaza only to see it torn to shreds by incoming shell-fire?

It has to be said that the two cowled <u>Hamas</u> gunmen who announced that they had won a "victory" in the ruins of Gaza were only fractionally less hypocritical. Still they had not understood that they were not the Hizbollah of Lebanon. Gaza was no longer Beirut. Now, it seemed, Gaza was Stalingrad. But whose uniforms did <u>Hamas</u> think they were wearing: German or Soviet?

Posturing and laughter as victims rot Comment

"Israel has to understand," the good king said - as if the Israelis were listening - "that the choice between war and peace will not always stay open and that the Arab initiative (for Arab recognition in return for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders of Israel) that is on the table today will not stay on the table." He knew that "an eye for an eye ... did not say an eye for the eyes of a whole city". But how many times - how many bodies have to be pulled from the ruins - before the Saudis realise that time has run out?

The Israelis briskly dismissed land for peace in 2002 but yesterday they suddenly showed their interest again. "We continue to be willing to negotiate with all our neighbours on the basis of that initiative," the Israeli government spokesmen said - as if his own country's original rejection had never been thrown at the Arabs.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, of course, dismissed the whole initiative in Qatar last week as dead, insisting that Israel be declared a "terrorist entity". But Mahmoud Abbas stepped further into humiliation yesterday by announcing that the "only option" for Arabs was to make peace with Israel. It was Arab "shortcomings" that led to the failure of the 2002 Arab initiative. Not Israel's rejection, mark you. No, it was all the fault of the Arabs. And this from the leader of "Palestine".

No wonder America's man in Egypt - a certain Hosni Mubarak - repeated the tired old slogan that "peace in the Middle East is an imperative that cannot be delayed". And then the Emir of Kuwait invited Bashar and Hosni and King Abdullah of Jordan and the other King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to have lunch together - the menu was not disclosed - to end their feuding.

Al-Jazeera showed the ever-more putrid bodies being tugged from beneath cross-beams and crushed concrete as these mighty potentates debated their little disputes. There was really no adequate comment for this charade.

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



WOMEN DESERVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin)
February 2, 2009 Monday
ALL EDITION

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Section: OPINION; Pg. WEB

Length: 1188 words

Body

Dear Editor: I cannot believe that in the year 2009 I still have to write to you to protect the health of <u>women</u> and families. But I feel I must.

I am not pro-abortion as the pro-life folks tend to think. I am pro-<u>women</u>. I am pro-family (I have three daughters and a grand-daughter) I am pro-choice.

All <u>women</u> deserve access to health care services. My family and I are grateful to the Madison Surgery Center and Planned Parenthood for providing these services to all who need them in the Madison area. Thank you!

Amy Payne Madison

Vote for Todd Price for state superintendent

Dear Editor: I'm supporting Todd Price for Wisconsin superintendent of public instruction because he understands the importance of public education, is willing to rightly call No Child Left Behind a bad law, and is dedicated to fixing Wisconsin's broken school funding formula.

In addition, he advocates for green schools and is dedicated to seeing the idea actually funded. The latter point is a critical distinction and demonstrates Price's real dedication to sustainability and clean air and clean water.

Please vote for Todd Price on Feb. 17.

Lukas Diaz Madison

Israel striving to prevent its own annihilation

Dear Editor: I personally have no problem with people like John Costello disagreeing with my opinions, but I do take offense when I am misquoted and that it is used as proof of my being wrong-minded. I never said, "Unlike the Palestinians, European Jews and Israelis didn't bomb themselves to kill their neighbors people who never provoked them in another way than having a religion different than their own." His coalescing parts of two sentences I used gives it a different meaning, in addition to his leaving out parts of what I said that didn't fit his obvious anti-Israeli rhetoric.

While it is true that the original Ten Commandments did not contain "Love thy neighbor as thyself," those words are found in both the Bible and the Torah. I am confident that Moses, who brought down the Ten Commandments from

WOMEN DESERVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

the Mount Sinai, understood as most people do that in war killing is necessary to preserve our freedoms, as was done in WWII. The Israeli "refuseniks" as Costello calls them are just like the pacifists in America who opposed our getting involved in WWII, and unfortunately they will be some of the first to be slaughtered by <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah when they run to them waving their white flags.

Unfortunately, Costello doesn't understand the meaning of annihilation when he thinks the refuseniks don't want to see their country annihilate their neighbors. It is not and has never been the purpose of the Israeli defense forces to cause their neighbors to cease to exist, something that cannot be said for <u>Hamas</u>, Hezbollah and Iran, which supports and supplies them. The Israelis' intention is to kill those who want to annihilate them, not the innocent Palestinians who are used as human shields by the actions of <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah.

Ernie Pellegrino Madison

Editor's note: When Pellegrino pointed out to The Capital Times that Costello did not quote Pellegrino exactly (partly because of a software error), we substituted Pellegrino's exact words into Costello's letter.

Story misstated my opinion on skin care

Dear Editor: I truly am fit to be tied. I cooperated fully when interviewed by Shawn Doherty for the story that ran Jan. 28 in the Cap Times about my willingness to be open about the fact that I've had facial care (although not "work") including Botox injections. I was at pains to say that I was NOT in favor of cosmetic surgery, had not had facial surgery, and employed the painless and curative methods employed by Kim Schuthardt at Lasting Skin Solutions to avoid consideration of cosmetic surgery. I told her that Kim, who is not a cosmetic surgeon but a nurse practitioner, had helped me use a series of cleansing and moisturizing products that had given me skin as good as I had in my 30s. I repeated the name of my skin care specialist carefully so that the reporter would understand that I do not see a surgeon.

Instead, Doherty described me as an enthusiastic "fan" of cosmetic surgery. Receiving Botox injections is not surgery in anyone's book.

I never got away with that kind of sloppy reporting when I worked for The Capital Times. What's changed?

Jacquelyn Mitchard Oregon

Madison Surgery Center should get OK to offer mid-trimester abortions

Dear Editor: We must applaud the consciousness and compassion of the health care providers and professionals who took the initiative in making sure abortion services remain available and accessible to <u>women</u> in south-central Wisconsin. We must also thank Meriter Hospital and the UW Medical Foundation for already voting to provide second-trimester abortion care at their Madison Surgery Center.

The final vote of the UW Hospital and Clinic's Authority Board is scheduled for Wednesday. As a community we must urge the vote to be in support of **women**'s health and safety.

Only 1 percent of abortions in Wisconsin happen after the 20th week of pregnancy; however, the accessibility of this procedure is crucial. Ninety-seven percent of rural counties in the United States have no abortion provider; therefore <u>women</u> are already traveling, taking days off work, and finding child care and a place to stay when they are vulnerable and making one of the most difficult decisions of their lives. Let's ensure that this procedure can take place as close to home as possible, in a safe medical setting like our very own Madison Surgery Center.

Sara Eskrich Verona

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5 UW student groups support abortion options

WOMEN DESERVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Dear Editor: Five University of Wisconsin-Madison student groups -- Sex Out Loud, College Democrats of Madison, UW Students for Choice, Medical Students for Choice, and Wisconsin Law Students for Reproductive Justice -- commend the UW Hospital and Clinics and the Madison Surgery Center for demonstrating their commitment to <u>women</u>'s health care. We would like to take this opportunity to further urge the UW Hospital and Clinics and the Madison Surgery Center to fully incorporate second-trimester abortion procedures into their health care services.

We applaud their stance at the forefront of <u>women</u>'s health care despite the aggressive, misleading, and inflammatory rhetoric put forth by anti-choice individuals and groups. We are proud to represent a university system which believes meeting the needs of <u>women</u> and families is more important than placating ill-informed organizations and the politicians who pander to the small minority of their constituencies.

Limiting access to these procedures denies <u>women</u> their rights to privacy, autonomy, and potentially life. We thank the UW Hospital and Clinics and the Madison Surgery Center for expanding our access to these vital health care services, and we thank them for upholding this university's image as a progressive, pioneering institution which works to improve the health and quality of life for every person in this state.

With gratitude and pride, Sex Out Loud College Democrats of Madison UW Students for Choice Medical Students for Choice Wisconsin Law Students for Reproductive Justice

The Capital Times - 2/02/2009 5:35 pm

Load-Date: February 4, 2009



<u>HOW THEY VOTED: MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, JAN. 9-15, 2009 ECONOMIC BAILOUT, GAZA CAMPAIGN, PRESIDENTIAL RECORDS IN SPOTLIGHT</u>

Bangor Daily News (Maine)
January 20, 2009 Tuesday
All Editions

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Section: Pg. C8

Length: 1256 words

Body

House votes

Democratic Reps. Mike Michaud and Chellie Pingree

Vote 1: Presidential records rule change: The House passed a bill (HR 35) sponsored by Rep. Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., to govern and require the release of presidential records. Supporters said the bill reversed a 2001 executive order by President Bush that authorized presidents to delay the release of their records and gave vice presidents executive privilege authority to keep records private. The bill also limited the ability of past presidents to keep their records hidden from the public. They added that the bill clearly states that an administration's records are public property and clarifies an administration's obligation to preserve its records. The vote, on Jan. 6, was 359 yeas to 58 nays.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 2: Disclosure of donations to presidential libraries: The House passed a bill (HR 36) sponsored by Rep. Edolphus Towns, D-N.Y., to amend the United States Code and establish disclosure requirements for donors who raise money to build presidential libraries. Supporters said the unregulated donor process created the danger of large hidden donations being made in order to influence an administration. There were no speakers in opposition. The vote, on Jan. 6, was 388 yeas to 31 nays.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 3: Rejecting cap on attorney's fees in discrimination lawsuits: The House rejected amendments to a bill (HR 11) sponsored by Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., that would have established a \$2,000-per-hour cap on attorney's fees for employee discrimination lawsuits. Supporters said the amendments would discourage frivolous lawsuits and encourage attorneys to take cases based solely on merit. Opponents said Congress should not regulate payments for attorney services. The vote, on Jan. 8, was 240 nays to 178 yeas.

NAYS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 4: Changing rules for employee discrimination lawsuit: The House approved the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (HR 11) sponsored by Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., to amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act and other bills by stating

HOW THEY VOTED: MAINE 'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, JAN. 9-15, 2009 ECONOMIC BAILOUT, GAZA CAMPAIGN, PRESIDENTIAL RECORDS IN SPOTLIGHT

that employees could seek redress for recurring compensation discrimination up to 180 days after receiving their final paycheck. Supporters said the bill restored needed civil rights protections after a faulty Supreme Court decision. Opponents said it would abolish longstanding statute of limitations rules and encourage the filing of frivolous lawsuits against employers. The vote, on Jan. 8, was 247 yeas to 171 nays.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 5: Supporting Israeli military campaign against <u>Hamas</u>: The House approved a resolution (H Res. 34) sponsored by Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to express support for Israel's military campaign in Gaza as a safeguard against attacks from <u>Hamas</u> while also supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Supporters said <u>Hamas</u> had provoked the Israeli campaign by launching rockets against its citizens, and the campaign was fully justified by those attacks. They also expressed support for a sustainable cease-fire based on the co-existence of Palestinian and Israeli states. Opponents said the bill was an inaccurate depiction of the situation in Israel and would harm efforts to bring peace to that country. Those voting "present" expressed similar concerns. The vote, on Jan. 9, was 390 yeas to 5 nays, with 22 voting "present."

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 6: Chip improvements: The House passed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (HR 2) sponsored by Rep. Frank Pallone Jr., D-N.J., that would improve the Children's Health Insurance Program by amending the Social Security Act to focus on low-income children and pregnant <u>women</u>, improving access to benefits and reducing barriers to enrollment. Proponents of the bill said it would give 11 million more children in the U.S. access to good health care. Opponents said the bill would make a number of promises to Americans it wouldn't be able to live up to and that the very rich and the very poor would be taken care of while those in between would be left with no options. The vote, on Jan. 14, was 289 yeas to 139 nays.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 7: Committee oversight required: The House passed an amendment to the Rules of the House (H. Res. 40) sponsored by Rep. John Tanner, D-Tenn., to require all standing committees to conduct periodic hearings to examine any waste, fraud, abuses or mismanagement in government programs authorized by that committee. Hearings would be required to take place every 120 days from the creation of any committee. Proponents said the amendment was a good opportunity to "audit America's books" and raise accountability. The vote, on Jan. 15, was unanimous with 423 yeas.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 8: Economic bailout: The House passed an amendment sponsored by Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., to the Troubled Assets Relief Program Reform and Accountability Act (HR 384) that made clarifications to the law regarding the use of TARP funds including renter protections, the inclusion of <u>women</u> and minorities and the creation of a database that discloses the names of those receiving funds under the law. The vote, on Jan. 15, was 275 yeas to 152 nays.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 9: Changes to Hope rejected: The House rejected an amendment sponsored by Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., to the Troubled Assets Relief Program Reform and Accountability Act (HR 384) that would have eliminated additional funding for the Hope for Homeowners program and would have eliminated any future changes. Proponents of the amendment called the Hope for Homeowners program "misguided" and an "enormous waste of time" and said the amendment would strengthen protections for taxpayers whose money aided in the purchase of a home and who would then receive money back should that home increase in value. Opponents of the amendment said that while the Hope for Homeowners program wasn't a success, it was due to excessive restrictions and could be improved upon. The vote, on Jan. 15, was 142 yeas to 282 nays.

HOW THEY VOTED: MAINE 'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, JAN. 9-15, 2009 ECONOMIC BAILOUT, GAZA CAMPAIGN, PRESIDENTIAL RECORDS IN SPOTLIGHT

NAYS: Michaud, Pingree

Vote 10: Troubled Assets Relief Program information disclosure: The House passed an amendment sponsored by Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Pa., to the Troubled Assets Relief Program Reform and Accountability Act (HR 384) that will require the disclosure of information of any Federal Reserves mortgage-backed securities purchase programs detailing any RFQ processes used to select investment managers for the programs and any payments or other information pertaining to those managers. The amendment also places restrictions on conflicts of interest among investment managers. Proponents of the amendment said the it would go far in forcing reluctant financial institutions to release details pertaining to TARP funds. The vote, on Jan. 15, was unanimous at 426 yeas.

YEAS: Michaud, Pingree

Senate votes

Republican Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins

Vote 1: More money for economic stimulation: The Senate failed to pass the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act Obligations Disapproval Resolution (SJ Res. 5) sponsored by Sen. David Vitter, R-La., that refused to recognize obligations to exceed amounts provided for in the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act. Proponents of the disapproval noted that there had been no progress resulting from the first \$350 billion in the stimulus package and that more money wouldn't help the situation and that the core issue of the credit market should be addressed. The vote, on Jan. 15, was 42 yeas to 52 nays.

YEAS: Collins

NAYS: Snowe

Compiled by Targeted News Service for the Bangor Daily News.

Load-Date: January 20, 2009



<u>Turk-Israeli rift growing; The war in Gaza has severely damaged the good</u> <u>relations between Israel and Turkey</u>

The Gazette (Montreal)
February 1, 2009 Sunday
Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A17; HARRY STERLING

Length: 698 words

Byline: HARRY STERLING, FREELANCE

Body

An unexpected casualty of Israel's attack on Gaza might be Israel's relations with Turkey.

To the shock of some of the world's elite attending the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stormed out of a panel discussion after a heated exchange with Israeli President Shimon Peres over Israel's attack on Gaza and the panel moderator's refusal to give him additional time to refute Peres's presentation.

During his own presentation, Erdogan described Gaza as an "open-air prison" and criticized Israel for killing innocent civilians, including children.

Erdogan later said he left the meeting abruptly because he had been given less time to speak than Peres. He also said Peres had not told the truth.

The Turkish prime minister added: "I did not target at all in any way the Israeli people, President Peres or the Jewish people. I am a prime minister, a leader who has specifically expressly stated that anti-Semitism is a crime against humanity."

Although officials in Israel were quick to insist relations between the countries would not be affected by the incident in Davos, Erdogan's outburst is only the latest in a series of incidents that raise serious questions about the countries' relations over Israel's military operations in Gaza.

According to Israel's Haaretz newspaper, "Israel's Gaza operation has put an end to the honeymoon in Turkish-Israeli relations and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's good relationship with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan."

Haaretz said that during a meeting to discuss Turkey's role as a mediator between Israel and Syria, Olmert had given Erdogan "no inkling of the punishment his hosts were planning to inflict on *Hamas*."

Turkish sources reported Erdogan was furious over Israel's attack on Gaza. Erdogan said he felt betrayed and Israel had "harmed the honour of Turkey." (Turkish officials involved in the mediation talks said the Israeli action "ruined everything" when Israel and Syria were so close to direct talks.)

Turk- Israeli rift growing; The war in Gaza has severely damaged the good relations between Israel and Turkey

But some Israelis suggest Erdogan's strong reaction is linked to Turkey's forthcoming local elections.

In a speech to his ruling AK Party on Jan. 13, Erdogan described Israel's military offensive against Gaza as "a crime against humanity."

Erdogan's tough talk won't be appreciated by the Turkish military which, urged on by Washington, has developed close relations with Israel, including joint military manoeuvres and sharing of intelligence. Israel has also reportedly sold the Turkish military more than \$100 million in arms.

The Turkish military has never trusted Erdogan's AK Party's Islamic roots, especially after he used his parliamentary majority to lift a ban on <u>women</u> wearing headscarves in universities - the constitutional court later threw out the legislation for violating Turkey's secular constitution.

Last year, the military implicitly backed efforts by ultra nationalists and Kemalists to have the constitutional court ban the AK Party and its top members, including Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul, founding members of the party, for undermining the secular state. The AK Party avoided being banned by a single vote, but it was put on notice that it better change its ways.

While the Turkish military elite clearly won't appreciate the Davos incident, they, too, can't ignore that much of the Turkish population is strongly opposed to the devastation and the 1,300 deaths in Gaza. Since the initial bombing of Gaza there have been large-scale anti-Israeli demonstrations in Istanbul, Ankara and other cities.

Thousands gave Erdogan a hero's welcome upon his return to Istanbul, voicing their support for his actions in Davos, some calling for the government to break off relations with Israel.

Although Erdogan's strong words directed at Israel might be as much about his own irritation at the way he perceived the Olmert government abusing his goodwill - and blocking his desire to play a role in Gaza ceasefire negotiations - like many Muslims, he might also have been genuinely appalled by the destruction in Gaza, seen as totally disproportionate to any threat or damage caused by *Hamas*.

Harry Sterling is a former Canadian diplomat who served in Turkey.

Graphic

Colour Photo: MUSTAFA OZER AFP/GETTY IMAGES; Holding signs reading "Any dealing with Israel is a crime," and the like, Turks welcome their prime minister back from Davos.;

Load-Date: March 23, 2009



Palestinians have the key

Daily News Egypt

January 19, 2009 Monday

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Length: 815 words

Body

PALM BEACH, Florida: As the war of Gaza worsened, the prospects for peace looked grim. But crises can be turned into opportunities by visionary eyes, caring hearts and thoughtful minds. The cycle of violence may continue for some time. But ultimately, Israelis and Palestinians will have to think outside the box in order to achieve a just and peaceful resolution to their conflict. This could take months, years or decades.

If Palestinians unite in their resistance and organize for peace and democracy, they could inspire Israelis to end the occupation. In the face of a nonviolent Palestinian struggle of civic, legal and political liberation, Israel would quickly lose its capacity to sustain a military occupation.

The kind of peaceful resistance that would end the occupation by softening the attitudes of the occupier, shifting the opinion of the international community and strengthening the Israeli peace camp is unlimited in scope: e.g. labor strikes, massive demonstrations, interfaith advocacy, student protest, <u>women</u>-solidarity marches, peace camp rallies involving Israelis, political theatre and parent protests.

Those Palestinians who support leadership that does not believe in the existence of Israel tempt extreme or opportune Israeli leaders to think of unthinkable alternatives to the status-quo, such as the ongoing ruthless assault in Gaza, forced Arab emigration, ethnic cleansing or displacement to Jordan.

Israel needs an Obama-like leader to stimulate hope in people; instead, Israel entertains the likes of Benjamin Netanyahu, a status-quo politician, returning to power. Similarly, Palestinians need a Mandela-like leader to anchor the struggle on co-existence; what they have now are short-sighted leaders.

While Americans have elected Obama in hopes that he will take a new approach to resolving domestic and international conflicts, the results of the Israeli election on Feb. 10, 2009 may not reflect the will of a population ready for change. Israelis appear comfortable, or at least not compelled to change, when it comes to their continued settlement expansion €" in the West Bank and East Jerusalem €" and building a monumental exclusive wall to handle a threatening, albeit ineffective Palestinian resistance.

The Gaza war may be a game-changing political development with an impact on the coming Israeli national elections and the future relations between the Arab world and Israel. The Gaza war is reinforcing Palestinian and Arab doubt in Israel's willingness to relinquish the occupied territories in exchange for peace.

Palestinians have the key

Regrettably, today, Palestinians are poorly led, war fatigued and too ideologically divided to plan creative solutions for ending the occupation of their land. To gain decisive power in negotiating peace with Israel, Palestinians must unite, commit to civic struggle and govern democratically. By establishing one authority in Gaza and another in the West Bank in 2007, Palestinians weakened their negotiating power. By settling their internal conflict with force, Palestinians unwittingly send a message to Israel that force is the "celanguage" of the region.

Palestinians need more friends in Israel to activate the engines of reconciliation. For most Israelis, peacemaking is risk taking. Israeli public sentiment is key for peace. As long as Israelis lack trust in others, their steps to peace falter. When Palestinians are divided, they limit the chances for Israeli moderates to lobby for reconciliation, compromise and concessions. When Palestinians fight each other, they offer extreme Israeli politicians an excuse, if not a rationale, to advocate shelving the peace process.

Neither side of the conflict is on the side of angels. Some Palestinians dream of re-possessing Palestine through rapid demographic growth, and some Israelis dream of ethnic cleansing. Without intending to do so, extremes on both sides are working to fulfill each others' nightmares.

As the Gaza war expanded and as the images of civilian casualties were repeatedly displayed on the TV screen, <u>Hamas</u> popularity was boosted among Palestinians. Similarly, as <u>Hamas</u> continues to shell rockets on civilians and rejects Israel's existence, it offers extremists in Israel a chance to regain power and continue the rule of force.

The key to the Palestinian struggle for justice is peaceful and well organized resistance against the occupation. As Israelis get the message that the occupation is the only barrier to peace, moderates will take over from the extremists in defending the true interest of their state: security through co-existence.

Dr. Ghassan Michel Rubeiz (<u>grubeiz @comcast.net</u>) is an Arab American commentator and former Secretary of the Middle East for the Geneva-based World Council of Churches. This article first appeared in Washington Post/Newsweek's On Faith and was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

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Load-Date: January 21, 2009



Beware of the nerds

The Jerusalem Post February 6, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 12

Length: 1166 words

Byline: JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

Highlight: Think Again

Body

The older I get the more I see how overrated brains are," an older friend said to me recently. Even in talmudic learning - on its face an intellectual exercise - pure intellectual firepower is an unreliable predictor of long- range achievement. So when I see the The New York Times becoming all hot and bothered by the multiplicity of Ivy League degrees in the new administration, I get nervous.

There are many good reasons for Israelis to be concerned about a shift in American policy toward us. One is the appointment of Harvard professor Samantha Powers, who has called for the stationing of a "mammoth [American] force" here to protect Palestinians from genocide, to a senior position in the National Security Council.

A second is President Barack Obama's Alice in Wonderland portrayal on Al Arabiya of some halcyon era of "respect and partnership" between America and the Muslim world "as recently as 20 or 30 years ago." That period includes the seizure of the American embassy in Teheran, Hizbullah's bombing of a US Marine barracks in Beirut, the Lockerbie bombing and a ruinous Arab oil embargo, just for starters. No one begrudges the president a few rhetorical flourishes and outreach toward the Moslem world, as long as we know he doesn't really believe what he is saying.

But of no less concern is the misplaced confidence in their ability to solve all the world's problems of all those high IQ types in the new administration. Nobel Laureate in Economics Robert Lucas declared in 1996 that economists now possess sufficient knowledge and tools to end the threat of another worldwide depression forever - a boast that appears less and less well-founded by the day. The US Congress issued the economic wizards of the Treasury a blank check to free up credit markets, but so far more than \$350 billion have been spent to no effect.

Hints of similar hubris with respect to forging a Arab-Israeli peace are flying fast and furious from Washington. Obama's first phone call was to Mahmoud Abbas, the present or former head of the Palestinian Authority, depending on whom you ask, and one of his first newsworthy acts in office was the appointment of former senator George Mitchell as his special envoy to the region.

The president has pronounced the Palestinian-Israeli conflict "ripe" for resolution, and even allowed on Al Arabiya that "there are Israelis who think that it is important to achieve peace." But wherefore the ripening of hopes? Has there been an end to anti-Israel incitement in the PA media? Some new polls showing a growing Palestinian rejection of terrorism? Has Fatah shown itself capable of running a state?

Beware of the nerds

Someone should send the president the collected news reports of Khaled Abu Toameh on the PA. Abu Toameh told an audience in Philadelphia this week that Americans have no idea with whom they are dealing if they think peace is to be had with either Fatah or <u>Hamas</u>. Peace will only come, he said, when the Palestinians and Israel are forced to deal with one another alone, without the former looking for an outside savior.

The main lessons learned since the last bout of hyperactive American peacemaking, in the dying days of the Clinton administration, are that territorial withdrawals lead to missile fire and only an IDF ground presence can protect against missiles and terrorist attacks.

Mitchell's denial that there is such a thing "as a conflict without end," prior to leaving for the Middle East reflects the same dangerous belief that to every problem there is a solution. The successful peace negotiations in which Mitchell participated in Northern Ireland did not bring about a dramatic shift in attitudes between Catholics and Protestants. Rather those negotiations followed the emergence of a Protestant leader, David Trimble, eager to put aside old hatreds, and a radical shift in attitudes by the leadership of the IRA on the Catholic side.

No such shift of attitudes has taken place among Palestinians, nor has a Palestinian civil society begun to emerge that can underpin a stable, democratic state as our neighbor. As long as the conflict remains one over Israel's legitimacy - i.e., essentially theological in nature - there can be no permanent peace.

But smart technocrats are notoriously thick when it comes to apprehending the force of religion, either for good or bad, because it so rarely plays a role in their own lives. Those who entreat <u>Hamas</u> to recognize Israel's right to exist, for instance, fail to comprehend that they are asking <u>Hamas</u> to dissolve itself and to renounce its fundamental religious belief that all land which was ever under Muslim sovereignty must remain so forever.

A COROLLARY of the smarties' overconfidence in their own problem-solving ability is the tendency to reframe every situation as a technical problem. Thus after the first World Trade Center bombing, the Clinton administration did not awaken to the threat of Islamic terrorism, but rather treated the matter as a simple law enforcement issue of rounding up the relevant miscreants.

New York Times columnist Roger Cohen repeated the mistake last week when he waxed ecstatic about Obama's declaration, albeit sotto voce, of an end to the war on terror. From now on, no more talk of Islamic terrorism, only of defeating particular terrorist organizations. And that, declared Cohen, is "not a war, [but] a strategic challenge."

Dangerous talk of civilizational clash can now be canned, writes Cohen. Apart from a few Muslims who wish to violently destroy America (and who hopefully don't include the Iranian leadership), most Muslims, Cohen declares, "merely dislike, differ from or have been disappointed by America." In other words, they have a series of local grievances, many of which can be healed by ceasing to embrace "an Israel-can-do-no-wrong-policy."

Pattern recognition is one of the key indicators of intelligence, but apparently not when it cuts against the cherished belief that all problems are merely technical in nature. But some patterns cannot be safely ignored - e.g. the unique propensity of Muslims to react to grievances with murderous rage. Or the findings of a UN study written by Muslim scholars of high rates of illiteracy, scant scientific achievement, low democratic indicators and suppression of women in almost every Muslim country and every Arab one.

In the Arab-Israeli context, we continually witness attempts to frame the issues as technical ones, essentially no different than negotiations over a new union contract. Each side is portrayed as seeking a slightly larger slice of the pie, and the general contours of the final solution are said to be known in advance.

That picture, however, is predicated on a false equation of incommensurate items as the subject of trade- offs - e.g. recognition of Israel's right to exist versus settlements. To attempt to impose solutions without first eradicating a culture of Palestinian hatred, which has only intensified since the outset of Oslo, reflects not intelligence but a flight from reality.

Graphic

Photo: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas following his meeting with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in Paris on Tuesday. Barack Obama's first phone call as president was to Abbas. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Sheba director bemoans deaths of Palestinian colleague's relatives in Gaza by IDF fire

The Jerusalem Post January 18, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 644 words

Byline: JUDY SIEGEL

Body

Sheba Medical Center director Prof. Zeev Rothstein described the deaths from IDF fire of three daughters and one niece of a Gaza doctor doing research at Sheba as "one of the saddest events of the war for us."

Rothstein described the incident over the weekend as "a real tragedy" and Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a 55-year-old gynecologist, as "a symbol of the tragedy of the Palestinian people."

He noted that that the physician from Gaza had "worked before at Soroka University Medical Center and had very good connections with Israelis. He is very friendly and always sought peace between the two peoples."

In IDF fire on Abuelaish's home near Beit Lahiya in Gaza, three of the doctor's daughters - aged 20, 15 and 13 - and a niece were killed on the second floor.

Another of his daughters and a son were wounded, along with his brother. All three of them are now being treated at Sheba.

Abuelaish was on the ground floor with his small son at the time of of the attack. The physician's wife died of cancer three months ago.

When Rothstein heard of the tragic incident, he immediately made arrangements to bring the wounded to his hospital and assist the family.

"We feel responsibility for him," he said.

Rothstein said he was certain there were "no <u>Hamas</u> terrorists in his house and that the firing must have been a mistake."

The IDF Spokesman said soldiers "opened fire in the direction of the home of the Palestinian doctor... A preliminary probe by the IDF revealed that shots had been fired at Israeli forces from an apartment near Abuelaish's home. The troops returned fire and accidentally hit Abuelaish's home."

For the past two years, the Palestinian physician has been doing research with Dr. Liat Lerner at Sheba's Gertner Institute for Health Policy Research on sharing infrastructures to improve medical treatment for Palestinian children in Gaza.

Sheba director bemoans deaths of Palestinian colleague's relatives in Gaza by IDF fire

"He knows Sheba does much to promote peace and treats everyone, no matter who he is," Rothstein declared. "Dr. Abuelaish does not make accusations.

"Even thought I don't know exactly what happened, I myself do not criticize the IDF," Rothstein continued. "I trust the IDF will do an honest investigation. Mistakes occur; I have no doubt the soldiers did not purposely shoot innocent civilians. If it was a mistake, let the IDF say so. Such things can happen in war."

The hospital director added: "It is a justified war. We have to defeat <u>Hamas</u>, which is an inhumane organization and uses <u>women</u> and children as human shields. It acts not only against Israel but against its own people."

Because many journalists sought to interview him at Sheba, Abuelaish asked permission from Rothstein to hold a press conference on Saturday and speak to them all at once. It was held in the lobby.

The Gaza doctor said the location of his house was known to the IDF and that Defense Minister Ehud Barak was photographed with him in Soroka when he was the only Gaza Palestinian working in the hospital.

When a tank stood in front of the house a few days ago, the doctor called journalists who contacted security officials, and the tank was moved, Abuelaish said.

A woman passerby in Sheba's lobby shouted at Abuelaish that she has three sons fighting in Gaza and that the doctor was "propagandizing."

She and other passersby demanded that the doctor halt the press conference.

The Palestinian physician said he hoped his daughters would be the "last sacrifices of this war."

Rothstein commented: "We don't prevent anybody from speaking. We organized the press conference so it would be easier for him."

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry said that on Sunday it is opening a regional clinic at the Erez Crossing to Gaza to treat civilian wounded from the Strip.

It is hoped that after a cease-fire is reached, wounded will be brought by the International Committee of the Red Cross to be treated there and if needed, be sent on to Israeli hospitals.

Graphic

Photo: DR. IZZELDIN ABUELAISH of Gaza, who lost three daughters when IDF fire erroneously hit his house, speaks to the press at Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer yesterday. (Credit: Channel 2)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Where the Still Flourishing Underground Economy Is the Only Economy

The New York Times

January 30, 2009 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 13; RAFAH JOURNAL

Length: 1068 words

Byline: By MICHAEL SLACKMAN

Body

RAFAH, Egypt -- From the rooftops you can see tall buildings, and trucks pulling through streets teeming with people. You can hear generators humming, and the rumble of construction gear. From the rooftops, you can see Gaza.

But down below on the streets here, it is quiet, the kind of quiet that says people have been driven out. Stores were long ago abandoned. The street is buckled in places, and litter is piled along the curb. Residents have fled the war over the border, the heavy pressure from Egyptian security, the emptiness of life in Rafah.

"All we have," said Muhammad Sha'er, as he looked from a rooftop into Gaza, "are the tunnels."

Early Wednesday morning, Israel again bombed the tunnels that stretch under the border from Gaza into Egypt. The bombings followed a 22-day Israeli offensive to stop *Hamas*'s rocket fire, which was followed by international negotiations aimed at ending smuggling into Gaza.

But here in Rafah, people were still trying to smuggle goods through tunnels, hours before and hours after the bombing Wednesday morning. Rafah is a bleak, rutted, dusty town that bears more than passing resemblance to Baghdad after years of international sanctions.

"On the other side, they want to eat," said Ayed el-Sayah, a furniture maker in town, referring to Gaza. "Here we want to eat, too. That's why we have the tunnels."

These are tense days in this shattered town of about 50,000 in the northeastern corner of Sinai. It has become the focus of an intense effort to stop smuggling activities, but the focus has been exclusively on security. Checkpoints have been set up, and the police often stop young men in cars and demand to see identification. The center of the town feels as if it is occupied.

But with every Israeli bomb just over the border, and with every increase in Egyptian security, there is less and less room for any kind of normal life. The streets are filled with idle young men, children and old men, all with nowhere to go and little to do. **Women** stay at home.

"We only wish we didn't have to do this, that we had another job or a project, something else we can do," said a 22-year-old, who asked not to be identified for fear of being imprisoned for his work as a smuggler.

Where the Still Flourishing Underground Economy Is the Only Economy

The young man graduated with a degree in commerce from the equivalent here of a junior college. He said he began working a tunnel only recently because there was nothing else for him to do to make a living, or to occupy his time.

He and a cousin, 19, who also is a smuggler, were huddled together in a new imported car, one of the fruits of the trade, parked outside a friend's house. It was a chilly desert night, the sky shocked with stars, and the young men were wired and nervous, smoking one cigarette after another.

The broad outlines of the tunnels are well known from the Gaza side. They are about 6 feet high and 3 feet wide. They are typically 65 feet or so below the surface, have pulley systems and lighting and ventilation. The <u>Hamas</u> government charges for the electricity used.

Little discussed is how the tunnels work on the Egyptian side, and why state security has been so unsuccessful in finding them. They are begun in Gaza in full view of Egypt's border guards, after all, and nearly everyone here admits to either working in the tunnels or being related to someone who is.

The young men say that most people no longer have the tunnels come up inside their homes, because if they are caught they have no room for denial, and the whole family could be imprisoned. The openings are lined with tarps and filled with sand. When the tunnel owner in Gaza wants to make a run, he phones and the young men assemble a small group of trusted partners. They then dig out the sand, pull out the plastic tarps and pass through food, clothing or whatever has been ordered.

"It is a family affair, but not everyone knows where the hole is," said the 19-year-old. "There are only a very few people you can trust and rely on. You make a deal with four or five other guys and that's it, it stays between you."

The young men said that most tunnels also have a pipe running through, a couple of inches in diameter. They said the pipes were used to funnel fuel, mostly diesel, to Gaza. Even when Israeli bombs managed to damage the tunnel entrances, or cause a collapse, the pipes were often undamaged and the fuel smuggling went on uninterrupted. They said they did not know anyone who smuggled weapons -- only food, fuel and clothing.

There was a time, more than a year ago, when smuggling was extremely lucrative, people here said. One bag of clothing could bring \$200. But when the borders were closed after *Hamas* took control, the number of tunnels exploded from about 30 to between 200 and 300, according to residents here. With that, prices dropped, and that same bag of clothing came down to \$80.

With the recent conflict, prices have risen again, because many tunnels are inoperable and because of the increased risk of getting caught or injured. Driving through Rafah at night, a friend of the smugglers, Ahmed, pointed to a convoy of white pickup trucks, all loaded with cans of fuel. "They are for the tunnels," he said, "all headed to Gaza."

How Ahmed -- whose identity also is being hidden to protect him from arrest -- could know that the trucks were smuggling fuel when security officials did not was not immediately clear. Ahmed introduced another friend, a smuggler, whose towering new home rose from the desert near Rafah, a mansion by local standards, and an absolute advertisement for his line of work.

On Thursday, the Obama administration's new Middle East envoy, George J. Mitchell, said that opening Gaza to commercial goods would help stamp out smuggling, of arms as well as goods. But Ahmed and his friends said that the authorities were reluctant to take measures to end the smuggling, of commodities at least.

How else, they asked, is anyone here going to make a decent living?

From the rooftop, Mr. Sha'er pointed to where Israeli planes bombed Gaza early Wednesday morning, flattening buildings, churning up huge mounds of sand. A few hours after the bombs fell, the people of Gaza were back at it, he said, trying to restore the tunnel openings. In Rafah many people said they were waiting for the call telling them their tunnel was working again and it was time to make another delivery.

"We are farmers," Mr. Sha'er said. "But we live off the tunnels."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTOS: At left, out-of-work men in Rafah, Egypt, where the war over the border and heavy security have driven people out. At right, Gaza can be seen from a rooftop.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHAWN BALDWIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) MAPS: Many people in Rafah still rely on the smugglers' tunnels. Map details Rafah, Egypt.

Load-Date: July 16, 2011



Israel and the devious timing

New Straits Times (Malaysia)
January 25, 2009 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 23; LOCAL

Length: 1107 words

Byline: Zaini Mohd Said

Body

THE occasion of the Barack Obama inauguration as president of the United States can only be described as astounding. Even the momentary stumble when he took his oath of office did little to lessen its significance and lustre.

In fact it became better after he issued his first orders from the Oval Office which were to close down the hell of Guantanamo prison and to put on hold for 120 days any trial of the inmates by a military tribunal.

He further ordered his generals to draw plans for a draw down of forces in Iraq and then topped it all by reiterating that transparency and accountability shall be forthwith the hallmark of his administration.

I, like many others, must congratulate Obama for his success, which in many respects is like a fantastic fairy tale come true.

Just over three years ago, he was practically an unknown senator with no one giving him an iota of a chance of ascending to the presidency.

The hope of many now is that he would be a smarter and more humane president, and, a world leader, who would bring more good than otherwise to the multitude of others living in America and in the world.

These wonderful happenings and hopeful feelings, however, could still not take away my mind from the plight of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

They had and continue to suffer incredibly, no thanks to the Israeli defence forces, for its disproportionate acts of retributive violence, killings and destruction.

Over 1,300 men, <u>women</u> and children had been killed along with 5,000 others wounded as well as tens of thousands of homes razed to the ground as a response to eight years of ineffectual rocket attacks by <u>Hamas</u> that had killed only three Israelis.

Israel has always had a strong defence force with an even more aggressive policy for its national defence. But it never came crossed my mind that I would be witnessing the day when this force with all its strength and brutality would be used against a defenceless population trapped and confined in a small piece of land.

I say it again that this is a cruel and barbaric act to bring upon the Palestinians.

Israel and the devious timing

And should anyone think that I am stating this only because of my own cultural and religious denomination, let me say that I would feel and express the same disgust should any other community be subjected to the same kind of terror and injustice as the IDF has done to the Palestinians.

The closest I ever got to be with an Israeli soldier was during a one-year stint at the United States Marine Corps Command and General Staff College near the small town of Quantico in the state of Virginia, between 1978 and 1979.

He was a Lt-Col and I a major.

The only things we had in common were that firstly, both of us were paratroopers, and secondly, that he was just like any other soldier, not really any different from the rest of us, American and foreign officers.

He was definitely not the super-soldier, a myth often ascribed to the military personnel of the IDF, a point also emphasised by one of the Marine Corps officer instructors of our class.

This Israeli officer mostly kept to himself and talked little.

Even the other American officers received scant attention from him despite their frequent attempts to get to be close.

He would only open up, even then sparingly at that, when it came to discussing military strategies and tactics during which he would betray his preference for hard-hitting and overwhelming use of force against the enemy.

To him this was the only necessary and best way. Mercy and legal considerations were the least of his concerns.

Surprisingly and despite the fact that Israel and the IDF had always been strongly backed and supported by the US, he did not hide his disdain nor the poor regard he had for the war fighting abilities of the US forces.

Additionally, the IDF's spectacular successes in thrashing the combined Arab armies during the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur war in 1973 must have also hardened his own sense of war fighting superiority as well as that of the IDF.

He was convincing on this matter for he had fought in both wars.

He personified the philosophy, doctrine and fighting spirit of the IDF which resorts primarily to the merciless and excessive use of force to obliterate the enemy in the shortest time possible.

Thus I was not actually surprised when the IDF bombed, shelled and pounded Gaza and its population.

In fact it even went beyond my own realm of imagination and reason when they maintained this brutal onslaught for 22 straight days against an essentially defenceless piece of territory and terrified civilians within.

How cleverly they timed their operation while George W. Bush was still in office but then to suddenly and unilaterally declare a cessation of hostilities followed by a withdrawal before Obama was sworn in.

It is incredible that they could just do this when their earlier statements vowed that they would continue attacking indefinitely to stop the rocket attacks, to destroy <u>Hamas</u>, and prevent the inflow of arms and weaponry through the tunnels.

Sadly, the present cessation of hostilities and withdrawal are still but part of the overall charade. It is not going to be the end of the nightmare for the Palestinians in Gaza.

It is actually a cruel continuation of violence and pain to be subjected on the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who now have no homes to live in or have homes without electricity, clean water, food and medicine.

Israel and the devious timing

The infrastructure of Gaza has been destroyed and the strip is a huge humanitarian problem which the IDF will not want to be responsible for.

To ensure that this shall be the case, Gaza continues to be under siege by a ring of steel on land made up of hundreds of 65-tonne Israeli-made Mekrava monster tanks (not Abrams tanks which I erroneously posted in my last article) and thousands of infantrymen.

Gunboats maintain the blockade on the seaward side and helicopter gunships and hundreds of F16 are ready to strike from the air at a moment's notice.

If all of the resultant suffering and ignominy would still not stop <u>Hamas</u> from launching rocket attacks into Israel then another round of violence would be unleashed by these encircling forces.

How I wish Obama would tell Israel the same he told the Islamic world of a need for "a new approach based on mutual trust and respect" in its conduct of relations with other cultures and states.

But then again I do not think he could.

He wants his presidency to last and in any case he needs the complete and undisturbed two terms of office in order to remake America.

Happy New Year to all of my Chinese friends!

The writer is a former army field commander. He can be contacted at panglima_sauk70@hotmail.com

Load-Date: January 27, 2009



Ceasefire allows Gazans to search for loved ones

Financial Times (London, England)

January 19, 2009 Monday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 713 words

Highlight: News analysis

After 1,300 deaths and \$1.4bn of devastation, rescue teams and residents get to work, write Anna Fifield in the

Gaza Strip and Andrew England in Jerusalem

Body

Many broke down in tears, others wandered in a daze. Gazans cautiously ventured outside to assess the damage to their homes or search for missing relatives yesterday, while rescue teams began to pull out bodies buried deep beneath rubble in previously inaccessible areas.

Israel's unilateral decision to halt its offensive on Gaza brought some respite to the strip's 1.5m residents, who have endured three weeks of day-and-night bombardments from the air, land and sea. As more cars took to the crumbling streets and more shops opened their doors, the Israeli truce also gave Gazans a frightening glimpse of the full scale of destruction the Israeli offensive wrought.

"This reminds us of the film *The Day After*," said Jaber Wishah, deputy director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, referring to the film about a nuclear catastrophe. "People are in compete shock."

The offensive killed 1,300 Palestinians, including about 700 civilians, and wiped out entire families. More than 5,000 others were wounded and, with Israeli troops still deep inside the territory, the mood was one of caution, anger and fear amid concerns that the violence could resume at any time.

At one point, teams of people searching for corpses in the remains of a building fled over mounds of debris as Israeli tanks were seen moving towards the site. In total, some 95 bodies were dug out from between layers of smashed concrete yesterday, Palestinians said.

Bulldozers attempted to clear roads, while tearful <u>women</u>, children and men dug through the ruins in search of any possessions that could be salvaged - wedding photos, a notebook, copies of the Koran from the remains of mosques.

"What should I say? Should I speak of my house that was destroyed or of my land that was bulldozed?" one old woman told Reuters as she wandered through the ruins of what had been her home. "I got out with only what I'm wearing."

Since launching its offensive on December 27, Israel has carried out more than 2,500 air strikes on Gaza - in addition to a constant barrage of naval, tank and artillery fire - destroying and damaging thousands of buildings, including mosques, hospitals, government offices and countless homes. The Jewish state said its assault was

Ceasefire allows Gazans to search for loved ones

primarily intended to halt Palestinian militants in Gaza firing rockets at southern Israeli towns, destroy weapons smuggling routes into the strip and weaken the infrastructure of <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist movement that runs Gaza. - Thirteen Israelis were killed during the three-week offensive, including three civilians.

Some 50,000 people fled to UN shelters during the onslaught, while others took refuge in their homes without electricity, as shells and bombs rained around them.

Experts say it is too early to assess the full extent of the physical damage, but the offensive has caused at least \$1.4bn (EUR1bn, £950m) of material and econ-omic damage, according to provisional estimates by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

It says more than 4,000 houses have been destroyed and another 17,000 damaged. Twenty mosques, 16 government ministries and 1,500 factories and other commercial properties were destroyed. The United Na-tions said 53 of its buildings, most of them schools, were either damaged or destroyed.

Israel has refused to re-open Gaza's borders, maintaining the sense of siege on the impoverished territory. As long as Israeli troops remain in the strip, Gazans will consider themselves under occupation.

In the morning Israel dropped leaflets on Gaza warning Palestinians to stay away from its troops' positions and saying it would react with "full force" if <u>Hamas</u> targeted Israeli citizens. "It means the continuation of the crimes against the Palestinian people . . . and Gaza is under occupation," says Atiah Abu Khader, who left his house for the first time in days.

Even before the offensive, Gazans had endured a more than 18-month blockade that -exacerbated their dire conditions, destroyed the economy and led to shortages of food, fuel and electricity.

Lost property

Buildings destroyedNumber

Houses 4,100

Houses (damaged) 17,000

Mosques 20

Education and health buildings 25

Security headquarters 31

Ministry buildings 16

Factories, shops, workshops and other commercial facilities 1,500

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Load-Date: January 18, 2009



The mideast - in Montreal

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 17, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: SATURDAY EXTRA; Pg. B3

Length: 1197 words

Byline: RENE BRUEMMER, The Gazette

Body

If you are 60 years old or younger, the Arab-Israeli conflict has raged or simmered in the background your entire life.

More than half a century after the creation of Israel, a conflict whose focal point is a nation of just 7 million people still dominates headlines, the content depressingly repetitive - a litany of failed ceasefires giving way to violence and escalating reprisals until the next temporary truce is cobbled.

Montreal, with its population of almost 100,000 people who have family ties to Arab countries, according to the 2006 census, and close to 90,000 Jews, is finely attuned to both sides of the debate. Rather than change opinions, the latest upsurge in violence has served only to harden attitudes, community leaders from both sides say.

While the opinions of the divergent groups remain worlds apart, Montreal's example of relatively harmonious relationships, and the willingness of opposite sides to talk, in contrast to their counterparts in the Mideast, brings hope.

"In our beautiful city here, thank God, we live in a different situation," said Salam Elmenyawi, president of the Muslim Council of Montreal. "Let us export our peaceful coexistence and good understanding with one another.

"Because by coming together, maybe you can have an influence." - - - Despite the conflict's media prominence and the draw of demonstrations across the country, most Montrealers and Canadians don't have strongly formed opinions, says Harold Waller, a political science professor at McGill specializing in Israel.

"I would say that the people really engaged are a small proportion of the population," Waller said. "I don't think the average person feels an obligation to be fully informed about the situation because it doesn't impact on their lives. They have other matters to worry about, like the economy, or things happening in Canada." Why then does it make front-page headlines repeatedly? "Jews are news," Waller said, repeating an oft-used expression. Add to that the Holy Land's significance to Christians, Muslims and Jews, the fact that hundreds of thousands of people on both sides in the West have family in the region, and the large number of journalists in Jerusalem.

"It is geostrategically so important," said James Devine, a lecturer on Middle East politics at Concordia University. "Regardless of the nature of the conflict ... there's a reason the U.S. gets involved in conflicts in the Mideast, when conflicts in Africa get so little attention. Simply put, the reason is oil. Oil is a strategic resource. Beyond issues of the

The mideast - in Montreal

price, the U.S. needs to be sure that it will always have access to Middle Eastern oil - if not for itself, then for its western allies and their economies. This has kept the US involved in the region since the Cold War.

"And it feeds into this left-right schism in politics in general, where the right tends to be more supportive of Israel and the left more supportive of Palestinians and more critical of foreign policy as well." People with no ties are apt to tune out to what they see as "just another war, like the last war," Devine said. But for those with family background or religious affiliations or who are highly politicized, "when conflicts take place people tend to take a harder position on things, are less likely to look at the other's point of view, become more defensive." Elmenyawi sees another reason the conflict has garnered so many headlines: "Imbalance." To date, about 1,100 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, roughly half of them civilians, according to United Nations and Palestinian health officials. (The numbers fluctuate depending on the source, and are impossible to verify because Israel won't allow journalists in.) Thirteen Israelis have been killed, three of them civilians.

"The imbalance that has been there for a long time - the fact that people talk endlessly about political solutions, but it always comes back to violence, this is making people angry." Arab and Jewish leaders both said members of their community were very upset by the way in which the conflict was being reported by networks like CNN and local media, but for very different reasons.

"We don't feel the situation is being reported properly," Elmenyawi said. "Blaming only one people and demonizing the enemy of Israel. As long as you demonize them, you can do whatever you want." Deaths are reported in numbers, but images of the dead, especially <u>women</u> and children, are practically non-existent on western media, but prominent on Arab networks like Al-Jazeera, Elmenyawi said.

Rabbi Michael Whitman of the Adath Israel synagogue in Hampstead, who serves as president of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Montreal, says members of his community are equally frustrated by inaccuracies they perceive, such as stories of Israel shelling UN drivers that turn out to be false.

Overall, the Jewish community is in favour of Israel's movements against <u>Hamas</u>, he said, a belief echoed by Rabbi Reuben Poupko of the Beth Israel Beth Aaron synagogue in Côte St. Luc.

"There is a sense of palpable relief that the government is finally defending its own citizens (from <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks targeting Israeli towns for the last eight years) in a way that seems appropriate and reasonable." People like Hasan Al-Shawa vehemently disagree. A Canadian citizen of Palestinian descent with 1,500 family members living in Gaza, the former president of the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations sees nothing appropriate in what he calls the indiscriminate shelling of streets where children play, resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths.

This in retaliation for rocket attacks that have killed eight people in 2008, six of them civilians, according to Israeli authorities. (The Israeli ministry of foreign affairs says 3,000 rockets and mortars were launched from Gaza into Israel in 2008 alone.) Al-Shawa condemns the rocket attacks by "fringe groups" in *Hamas* that are difficult to control, but said it can in no way justify the civilian death toll in Gaza, "the largest open-air prison in the world." "On the Palestinian side, there is huge frustration," he said. "You see the whole western world standing against what is fundamentally basic human rights. ... Canada and the U.S. and Britain are sitting back and clapping and approving what do you expect our reaction to be?" The huge turnout at protests worldwide and in Montreal - police estimated about 5,000 people were in last weekend's march against Israel's actions in Gaza - and the number of Jewish friends Al-Shawa said have apologized to him for the events of the last three weeks are signs of hope.

"It tells you that the days of those generals leading Israel are numbered." The efforts of Elmenyawi of the Muslim Council and Rabbi Whitman to open a line of discussion between the two sides in Montreal also serve as a reason to hope. The two have been speaking, and hope to open the forum to others, on a small scale.

"Even though we're going to disagree and we're going to get upset with each other, at least we will recognize that we're brothers, or at least cousins," Whitman said.

"Because that's the most important thing that there is." rbruemmer@ thegazette.canwest.com

Graphic

Colour Photo: JOHN KENNEY GAZETTE FILE PHOTO; Demonstrators walk along Ste. Catherine St. this week. The latest upsurge in Mideast violence has served only to harden Montrealers' attitudes, community leaders from both sides say.;

Load-Date: March 21, 2009



TODAY IN HISTORY

The Daily Mercury and Rural Weekly (Mackay, Queensland)

June 13, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 9

Length: 334 words

Body

Today is Saturday, June 13, the 164th day of 2009. There are 201 days left in the year.

Highlights in history on this date:

- 1835 Batmania is suggested as named for proposed settlement which later becomes Melbourne.
- 1878 The phonograph is demonstrated for the first time at the Royal Society of Victoria.
- 1893 First women's golf tournament is played at Royal Lytham, England.
- 1927 US aviator Charles Lindbergh is honoured with a ticker-tape parade in New York City after his pioneering transatlantic flight.
- 1945 Australian forces capture Brunei.
- 1951 Death of Ben Chifley, Australian Labor prime minister (1945-49).
- 1962 Death of Sir Eugene Goossens, English composer and conductor; he spent his later years conducting in Australia where he trained many musicians.
- 1971 Australian woman Geraldine Brodrick gives birth to nine babies.
- 1985 Plans are announced for the establishment of the first museum of Australian-Chinese history in Melbourne.
- 1993 Kim Campbell becomes Canada's first *female* prime minister.
- 1996– The longest siege in US federal history ends when 16 anti-government Freemen surrender in Montana after 81 days.
- 2000— Italy pardons the Turkish gunman who tried to kill Pope John Paul II in 1981. Mehmet Ali Agca is then turned over to authorities in Turkey, where he must serve time for a killing that occurred before the attack on the pope.

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 2001– Retired spy chief Sir David Spedding, once the real-life embodiment of James Bond's fictional boss M, dies. After nearly 30 years as a spy, Spedding was appointed in 1994 to head the service long known to thriller readers and the general public as MI6.
- 2005– US pop star Michael Jackson is cleared of all charges in a sex abuse trial that threatened to destroy his career.
- **2007** <u>Hamas</u> launches a battle for control of the entire Gaza Strip, pounding Gaza City's three main security compounds with mortars, grenades and assault rifles and calling on beleaguered Fatah forces to surrender.

Load-Date: June 12, 2009



U.S. Envoy Reassures and Presses a Wary Israel

The New York Times

June 10, 2009 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 14

Length: 831 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

President Obama's Middle East envoy sought Tuesday to allay fears here of a fundamental breakdown in Israeli-American relations while alluding to abiding differences over Israeli settlement building in the West Bank and the formula for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

After meeting with Israeli leaders in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the American envoy, George J. Mitchell, said it was "beyond any doubt that the United States' commitment to the security of Israel remains unshakeable." But he also pressed for a peace effort, saying that Israelis, Palestinians and other parties "share an obligation to create the conditions for the prompt resumption and early conclusion of negotiations."

Mr. Mitchell, a former Senate majority leader who helped to forge a peace deal in Northern Ireland, came to Israel amid a rare public dispute over settlement activity. The Obama administration has called for an unequivocal halt to all settlement activity. Israel's hawkish prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, says there will be no new settlements but insists that building within existing ones should be allowed.

Israeli officials said they had understandings with the Bush administration that allowed for limited building. The Obama administration has not acknowledged any such understandings.

There has also been friction over Mr. Netanyahu's refusal so far to endorse the notion of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The Obama administration has said that the two-state solution is the only route to Israeli-Palestinian peace.

On Tuesday, Mr. Mitchell, who met with Israel's president, prime minister, foreign minister and defense minister, made only oblique reference to the dispute. In his meeting with President Shimon Peres, whose post is largely ceremonial, he said Israelis and Palestinians "have a responsibility to meet their obligations under the road map," the 2003 plan for the creation of a Palestinian state as a way to end the Middle East conflict. The plan called for Israel to stop all settlement activity and for the Palestinians to dismantle terrorism networks, reform their political institutions and curb any incitement to violence.

"It's not just their responsibility," Mr. Mitchell said, according to remarks released by Mr. Peres's office. "We believe it's in their security interest as well."

But he added: "Let me be clear. These are not disagreements among adversaries. The United States and Israel are and will remain close allies and friends."

Mr. Mitchell also referred to Israel as the "Jewish state" in a nod to Mr. Netanyahu, who says that Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state is essential for any peace deal. The Palestinians have refused such recognition, saying that it would contradict the Palestinian refugees' demand for a right of return and that it is detrimental to the status of Israel's Arab citizens.

Mr. Netanyahu has announced that he will soon make a much-anticipated major policy speech on his plans for achieving peace and security. The speech is being described here as a response to Mr. Obama's landmark address in Cairo last week. There has been much speculation in the Israeli news media about whether the prime minister will move closer to endorsing the two-state principle.

Mr. Netanyahu said he told Mr. Obama of his intention to lay out his policies during a telephone conversation on Monday. Mr. Obama said that he was "looking forward" to hearing the speech, according to the prime minister's office and the White House. The White House said the conversation was "constructive."

While the Israeli leadership does not speak in one voice on all issues -- the more dovish Mr. Peres and the defense minister, Ehud Barak, of the center-left Labor Party, have long favored the two-state solution -- there has been a certain uniformity regarding the settlements.

Mr. Peres told Mr. Mitchell on Monday that "a two-state solution based on the road map" and "independence for the Palestinians" were important points that "needed to be emphasized en route to peace."

On the settlements, Mr. Peres said there was agreement in Israel regarding the evacuation of illegal outposts and not building new settlements. But he said the issue of "natural growth in the settlement blocs must continue to be discussed intensively in order to reach agreement" with the American administration.

Mr. Mitchell was expected to meet with Palestinian leaders in the West Bank on Wednesday. Underlining the schism between the Western-backed Palestinian Authority there and <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamic militant group that controls Gaza, Agence France-Presse reported that the Palestinian police in the northern West Bank recently arrested six <u>Hamas</u> members, including at least two <u>women</u>, suspected of planning acts against the Palestinian Authority and that the police seized more than a million euros, or about \$1.4 million, from them.

This is a more complete version of the story than appeared in print.

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: June 10, 2009



Laudable sentiments, now for action; COMMENT & DEBATE

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 6, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Opinion; Pg. 7

Length: 796 words

Byline: JONATHAN FREEDLAND - Jonathan Freedland is a Guardian columnist.

Body

Obama is taking a different path in dealing with the Muslim and Arab worlds.

IN AN ancient city, America's still-new President aimed to heal a rift that has endured for decades, if not centuries. Barack Obama stood before a crowd of 3000 in the great hall of Cairo University on Thursday to deliver a speech that demonstrated not only his trademark eloquence, but also the sheer ambition of his purpose - nothing less than bridging the divide between Islam and the West.

"No single speech can eradicate years of mistrust," Obama began, mindful of the expectations that preceded this event. Still, as he has proved, a major address can have a major impact, and there will be few more masterful speeches than this one.

Obama did not announce a new policy program or Middle East peace plan. Instead, it will be the tone - even the vocabulary - he used that will have the greatest impact. For the thread that ran through every paragraph was a simple but radical idea: respect for the Arab and Muslim world.

It was there in Obama's use of the traditional Muslim greeting, met with cheering applause: "Assalamu alaykum" (peace be upon you). There, too, in his quotations from "the holy Koran" - pronouncing the word the way his Cairo audience would. "I know civilisation's debt to Islam," he declared, before listing a Muslim record of achievement that stretched from algebra to poetry.

All of this was a world away from former president George Bush, who was unable to address Muslims in a tone that was not bellicose or patronising. If Bush had said the same words, they would have sounded phoney. But Obama had the credibility of his own life story: the Muslims in his father's family, the childhood years in Indonesia. What had threatened to be a liability for Barack Hussein Obama in the 2008 election campaign was deployed yesterday as an asset.

But it went deeper than flattery about the great Islamic past. He showed understanding, if not always acceptance, of what one might call the Arab and Muslim narrative. So he spoke of past "colonialism", a word shocking to hear from a US president. He admitted the Cold War use of Muslim nations as "proxies", and confessed to US involvement in the toppling of Iran's elected prime minister in 1953. One analyst noted references to "dignity" and "justice" and against "humiliation", words that resonate in Muslim discourse. Obama's aim was to break through the suspicion and cynicism that have accreted over decades and show that America is under truly new management. So he did not defend the invasion of Iraq, but called it a "war of choice".

Laudable sentiments, now for action COMMENT & DEBATE

Nowhere was the effort to acknowledge the Arab and Muslim narrative more dramatic than in the long passage on Israel-Palestine. There had, reportedly, been a debate among Obama aides over whether he should use the charged word "occupation" to describe Israel's hold of the territories it gained in 1967. Obama used it - and spoke of "Palestine", not a "future Palestinian state".

More striking, he did not confine his recognition of Palestinian suffering to the situation since 1967.

"For more than 60 years, they have endured the pain of dislocation," he said, surely coming closer than any previous US president to acknowledging what Palestinians call the "nakba" - catastrophe - of 1948. And he repeated his demand for Israeli settlement activity to stop.

But make no mistake: this was no exercise in pandering to the Muslim world. He passionately defended Jews' right to a homeland, before condemning Muslim anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial as "baseless ... ignorant ... hateful". He recognised that <u>Hamas</u> has genuine support among Palestinians, but excoriated the group's methods: "It is a sign neither of courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old <u>women</u> on a bus," he said. "That's not how moral authority is claimed; that's how it is surrendered."

He invoked the struggles for civil rights in the US, against apartheid and slavery, urging <u>Hamas</u> to follow the path of non-violent resistance. From any of his predecessors, that would have rung hollow. From the first African-American president, it carried great weight.

Obama navigated perilous terrain. He urged the Muslim and Arab world to embrace democracy, <u>women</u>'s rights and economic development - difficult to do from the capital of a sclerotic regime.

And when he called on the Muslim world to respect <u>women</u>'s rights, he stressed his respect for the hijab and his opposition to Westerners "dictating what clothes a Muslim woman should wear".

Whether this sensitive, supple and sophisticated speech will be remembered will depend on whether the rhetoric of respect is matched by a change in action. And that, as Obama admitted, is more than the work of one day. -- Jonathan Freedland is a Guardian columnist.

Load-Date: June 5, 2009



International: The US and Islam: The speech no other president could make

The Guardian - Final Edition
June 5, 2009 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 21

Length: 774 words

Byline: Jonathan Freedland

Body

In an ancient city, America's still-new president aimed to heal a rift that has endured for decades, if not centuries. Barack Obama stood before a crowd of 3,000 in the great hall of Cairo University yesterday to deliver a speech that demonstrated not only his trademark eloquence but also the sheer ambition of his purpose - nothing less than bridging the divide between Islam and the west.

"No single speech can eradicate years of mistrust," Obama began, mindful of the expectations that preceded yesterday's event. Still, as he has proved, a major address can have a major impact - and there will be few more masterful speeches than this one.

The president did not unveil a new policy programme or Middle East peace plan. Instead, it will be the tone - even the vocabulary - he used that will have the greatest impact. For the thread that ran through every paragraph was a simple but radical idea: respect for the Arab and Muslim world.

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International: The US and Islam: The speech no other president could make

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Whether this sensitive, supple and sophisticated speech will be remembered will depend on whether the rhetoric of respect is matched by a change in action. And that, as Obama admitted, is more than the work of one day.

Load-Date: June 5, 2009



World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation

Chicago Daily Herald

June 10, 2009 Wednesday

L2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 800 words

Body

New forces a 'game changer':

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — New U.S. forces in Afghanistan will target insurgents passing into Pakistan and be a "game changer" in a region long dominated by the Taliban, Col. George Amland said Tuesday at Camp Leatherneck, a rapidly expanding base now home to around 7,000 U.S. Marines.

Hamas: Building freeze key:

CAIRO — Khaled Mashaal, leader of militant <u>Hamas</u>, said Tuesday that President Barack Obama's pressure on Israel to freeze construction in West Bank settlements was an essential step toward restarting peace efforts. The militant group has tried to sound more pragmatic since Israel's punishing offensive early this year.

Hariri Lebanon's next PM?

BEIRUT — Saad Hariri, son of a slain former prime minister, is emerging as the favorite to lead Lebanon's government after his pro-Western coalition fended off a challenge from Hezbollah in weekend elections. Hariri, 39, is the moderate leader of the largest parliamentary bloc in the coalition.

Pandemic declaration soon?

GENEVA — The World Health Organization said Tuesday a spike in swine flu cases in Australia may push it to finally announce the first flu pandemic in 41 years. It also expressed concern about an unusual rise in severe illness from the disease in Canada.

WHO wants to avoid "adverse effects" if it announces a global outbreak.

N. Korean prisons brutal:

SEOUL, South Korea — Prisoners spend long days toiling in rice paddies and factories. Survivors say beatings are frequent, hunger is constant and clothing scarce in the freezing winter. But experts said two U.S. journalists recently sentenced to 12 years in a North Korean labor prison probably won't see that brutality.

10 big banks repay bailout:

World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation

WASHINGTON — Ten of the nation's largest banks were given the green light Tuesday to repay \$68 billion in government bailout money, freeing them of restrictions on executive pay they say makes it hard to keep top-performing executives. The banks received funds last October, at the height of the financial crisis.

Kansas abortion clinic closes:

WICHITA, Kan. — The Wichita clinic of slain abortion provider George Tiller will be "permanently closed," his family said Tuesday. Operations at <u>Women</u>'s Health Care Services Inc. were suspended with Tiller's death May 31. In a statement released by his attorneys, Tiller's family said it will close immediately.

Suspect says he was justified:

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — A Muslim convert charged with fatally shooting an American soldier at a recruiting center said Tuesday he doesn't consider the killing a murder because U.S. military action in the Mideast made the killing justified. "I do feel I'm not guilty," Abdulhakim Muhammad said in a call from jail.

Online poker winnings frozen:

WASHINGTON — An advocacy group for online poker says the federal government froze the accounts of payment processors that handle winnings of thousands of online poker players. The Poker Players Alliance says those winnings are worth \$30 million. The Justice Department has long maintained Internet gambling is illegal.

Sotomayor hearing date set:

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans protested Democrats' decision to schedule confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor for July 13, saying they need more time to review her record. Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, top Republican on the Judiciary Committee, says the date is too early and unrealistic.

Court OKs Chrysler sale to Fiat:

NEW YORK — The Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared the way for Chrysler's partnership with Italy's Fiat, rejecting an appeal by a trio of Indiana pension and contruction funds, consumer groups and others to block the automaker's sale. Also, a federal court backed Chrysler's termination of franchise agreements with hundreds of dealers.

Obama backs pay-as-you-go:

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Tuesday challenged Congress to pay for increases in federal benefit programs as it goes rather than sink the nation deeper into a debt, calling it a matter of public responsibility. Republicans lashed back that Obama is no voice of fiscal restraint as the deficit continues to soar.

Iraqi spy gets nearly 4 years:

DETROIT — A man described by Saddam Hussein's regime as "our good cooperating source" was sentenced Tuesday to nearly four years in prison for supplying information to Iraq before the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. The federal judge rejected Najib Shemami's claim he acted under duress from the Iraqi government.

Two killed in factory blast:

GARNER, N.C. — A blast at a Slim Jim meat products plant in North Carolina Tuesday killed two workers whose bodies were found in the rubble of the building that is missing part of its roof. The explosion critically burned four people and one worker was still unaccounted for Tuesday evening. More than 40 others were taken to hospitals.

Load-Date: June 10, 2009



In Cairo, Barack Obama had it both ways on Palestine

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
June 12, 2009 Friday

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Length: 862 words **Byline:** Yossi Alpher

Body

US President Barack Obama's speech in Cairo last week devoted unusual emphasis to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this respect, the message was quantitative. Obama never mentioned the prospect of an Israeli-Syrian peace process and he devoted barely a sentence to the Arab Peace Initiative.

US President Barack Obama's speech in Cairo last week devoted unusual emphasis to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this respect, the message was quantitative. Obama never mentioned the prospect of an Israeli-Syrian peace process and he devoted barely a sentence to the Arab Peace Initiative and little more to key issues like democratization and <u>women</u>'s rights. But the Israeli-Palestinian issue got huge play, clearly reflecting the US administration's recognition of its centrality to the Arab discourse and its decision to concentrate on it in the months ahead.

The speech also presented a calculated effort to balance statements deemed friendly to Israel with those friendly to the Palestinian and Arab cause in general. Israel got a "Jewish homeland;" Palestinians an end to the occupation, a two-state solution and repeated use of the term "Palestine." The *Hamas* movement was told to accept the Quartet's three conditions, but Israel was told to end the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Arabs were asked to recognize Israel's right to exist, abandon violence, end Holocaust denial and to put an end to using the conflict with Israel as a distraction from other problems. Israel was told to freeze settlement construction on occupied land and remove settlement outposts. The Arabs were informed that the Arab Peace Initiative is "an important beginning, but not the end of [Arab states'] responsibilities;" Israelis noticed that Obama never used the words "terrorism" and "normalization" even as he talked at length about these very issues.

At a broader level, the Cairo speech appeared to be an attempt to cultivate the more moderate forces of political Islam, offering dialogue to anyone who is "peaceful and law-abiding" and, perhaps symbolically, repeatedly recognizing <u>women</u>'s right to wear the hijab. The speech barely confronted Iran's drive for nuclear weapons and seemingly hinted at Israel's arsenal in presenting a demand to eliminate all nuclear weapons (from the region? From the world?).

The speech also, not once but twice, referred to the need for Palestinians, with Arab help, to develop their "capacity to govern" and build the "institutions that will sustain their state." Herein lies an important message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. While Obama insists that Netanyahu endorse the two-state solution and cease

settlement expansion - two very problematic demands for the ruling Israeli coalition - he also seemingly endorsed Netanyahu's vision of an Israeli-Palestinian peace process built from the bottom up, with special emphasis on institution-building.

Netanyahu can also find solace in Obama's avoidance of presenting a major new Israel-Arab peace initiative that the current Israeli governing coalition would find hard to digest. That may still be in the works, particularly if Netanyahu fails to come up with a viable initiative of his own (he has now committed to present his own plan next Sunday). Meanwhile, in view of Obama's demand that <u>Hamas</u> recognize Israel's right to exist, cease violence, and accept past agreements, the likelihood of the Palestinians fielding a united and viable negotiating team in the near future is low. That means that it will be extremely difficult to translate Obama's vision into a peace process.

Obama set out in Cairo to reverse the damage wrought by eight years of the George W. Bush administration and to level the playing field between the United States and the Arab world, between Americans and Muslims. This largely explains the extensive retelling of America's interaction with the Muslim world, juxtapositions like Holocaust-Nakba and the indirect comparison between the saga of blacks in America and the plight of the Palestinians.

Many Israelis and supporters of Israel are inevitably uncomfortable with these themes, which can be construed to adopt the Palestinian narrative without recourse to historic criteria and objective analysis. By the by, it is easy to ignore how this way of dealing with the issues also facilitated Obama's exhortation to Arabs "to choose progress over a self-defeating focus on the past" and his recommendation to the Palestinians to adopt non-violence.

If Obama's approach does the job of restoring American credibility and boosting his moral authority in the Middle East, the exercise may prove useful. This could happen if and when this US president exercises that authority at critical times ahead, for example to persuade the Palestinians to drop their demand for the right of return or to rally Arab countries, alongside Israel, against Iran and its allies.

Yossi Alpher is a former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, and was a senior adviser to Prime Minister Ehud Barak. This commentary first appeared at bitterlemons.org, an online newsletter publishing contending views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Load-Date: June 12, 2009



<u>Mideast gets mediator in the form of an ex-spy; Former British agent uses</u> <u>backdoor meetings to reach out to Islamists</u>

The International Herald Tribune
May 2, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 782 words

Byline: Andrew Jacobs - The New York Times

Dateline: BEIJING

Body

Talking to Islamists is the new order of the day in Washington and London. The Obama administration wants a dialogue with Iran, and the British Foreign office has decided to reopen diplomatic contacts with Hezbollah, the Shiite militant group here.

But for several years now, small groups of Western diplomats have been making quiet trips to Beirut for confidential sessions with members of <u>Hamas</u>, Hezbollah and other Islamist groups they did not want to be seen talking to. In hotel conference rooms, they would warily shake hands, then spend hours listening and hashing out accusations of terrorism on one side and imperial arrogance on the other.

The organizer of these backdoor encounters is Alastair Crooke, a quiet, sandy-haired man of 59 who spent three decades working for MI6, the British secret intelligence service. He now runs a research organization here called Conflicts Forum, with an unusual board of advisers that includes former spies, diplomats and peace activists.

Mr. Crooke has spent much of his career talking to Islamists. In the 1980s, as a young undercover agent in Pakistan and Afghanistan, he helped funnel weapons to jihadists fighting the Soviets. Later, he spent years working with <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah as a negotiator for the European Union and helped broker a number of cease-fires with Israel from 2001 to 2003. He earned a reputation for courage and tenacity, but in person he is disarmingly polite and mild-mannered, a slight-figured man with a beaky, impish smile.

The mission of Conflicts Forum, which he created in 2004, resembles a kind of blueprint for the Obama administration's outreach efforts: to "open a new relationship between the West and Muslim world" through dialogue and mutual understanding.

Yet Mr. Crooke, who is legendary for his deep network of contacts among Islamist groups across the Middle East, is not sanguine about the prospects for mere dialogue, especially with Iran.

"I think there is a real fear there will be a process of talking past each other," he said. "The Iranians will say, 'We want to talk about justice and respect.' The U.S. will say, 'Are you willing to give up enrichment or not?"

To get past that impasse with Iran, and with Islamist groups generally, the West will need to change its diplomatic language of threats and rewards, Mr. Crooke said, and show more respect for their adversaries' point of view.

Mideast gets mediator in the form of an ex-spy Former British agent uses backdoor meetings to reach out to Islamists

Mr. Crooke has spent the past few years trying to explain that to suspicious Westerners, in a stream of articles, speeches and conferences. Although not an Arabist by training, he has developed a deep knowledge of modern Islamist movements and launches easily into analyses of Palestinian politics, or even of medieval Islamic philosophy.

Now he has taken his explanatory efforts a bit further. In a book, "Resistance: The Essence of the Islamist Revolution," he deliberately avoids the most controversial subjects, like Israel and the status of <u>women</u> in the Islamic world. Instead, he focuses on what he calls the core of the Islamist revolution, which he defines as a metaphysical resistance to the West's market-based definition of the individual and society.

Not surprisingly, the book has received some stinging reviews and renewed accusations that Mr. Crooke has gone native. Even some of his fellow board members at Conflicts Forum say they are a little baffled.

Mr. Crooke said the book grew out of his own efforts to find common ground with Islamists and to look beyond the usual stumbling blocks.

"It seemed to me there was a real need to understand what was happening inside Islamism better, and to valorize what they were saying in ways that could be understood in the West," he said.

That project seems inseparable from his broader argument about dialogue. To illustrate it, Mr. Crooke describes an episode from the conflict in Northern Ireland in which the British put two opposing factions into a room for talks, "naïvely imagining that talking would help." It did the opposite, reinforcing their anger.

So the negotiators tried another approach: They asked both sides to write down their histories and their visions for the future. After three more years of talks, the factions finally reached the point at which they acknowledged the legitimacy of the other side's positions.

"George Mitchell once said to me, 'You don't even have a political process until you accept that the other side has a legitimate point of view," Mr. Crooke said, referring to Mr. Mitchell's landmark 1998 Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland and relating it to the many obstacles between the United States and Iran.

"Does America have the will and the patience for that?" he said. "I'm not sure we're there yet."

Load-Date: May 19, 2009



Contrary viewpoints on Israel

The Toronto Star March 28, 2009 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. IN07

Length: 295 words

Body

Israeli soldiers ran wild in Gaza,

March 20

I take issue with this headline, and the one on page 19 the same day, "Palestinian lives less important." The allegations by a couple of soldiers as to the killing of one innocent family have been refuted by the Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak. An investigation is underway.

This is another example of your one-sided reporting when it comes to Israel. For days, you reported that Israeli troops during the Gaza incursion had attacked a UN school. It later turned out that the UN officials themselves said that was not true, but that there had been firing near the school by <u>Hamas</u> militants and Israel had simply returned fire.

Maybe the fiction that Palestinian lives are less valuable than those of Israelis is fuelled by the Palestinian demand that 450 Palestinian prisoners be released for one Israeli soldier. One expects more objectivity and honest reporting from a newspaper that has Canada's largest circulation.

Bert Raphael, Chairman, Canadian Lawyers and Jurists for World Jewry, Toronto

The T-shirt pictured is not "tasteless" humour, as protrayed by the Israeli military. It is obscene, at the very least. I ask those who say that any criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic to tell me what this is. It is a flagrant attack against **women** and children in a world where **women** and children obviously count for nothing.

With recent information about how the Israeli army disregarded normal terms of engagement in a war and admissions of illegal acts committed against its enemy, the Israeli military has indeed crossed the line and has no respect for anyone raising a contrary voice.

You can get rid of the T-shirts, but how do you get rid of this toxic mindset and convince the world that you are for peace?

Janet Lee, Brampton

Load-Date: March 28, 2009



<u>TODAY IN HISTORY</u>

The Daily Mercury and Rural Weekly (Mackay, Queensland)
February 16, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 9

Length: 311 words

Body

Today is Monday, February 16, the 47th day of 2009. There are 318 days left in the year.

Highlights in history on this date:

- 1754 Richard Mead, physician to King George II of England and promoter of smallpox inoculations, dies.
- 1791 –First boat of the third fleet to Australia the Mary Anne with 150 <u>female</u> convicts on board sets out from England.
- 1793 Free immigrant settlers from England arrive in Sydney.
- 1948 –NBC-TV begins airing its first nightly newscast.
- 1959 Fidel Castro is sworn in as prime minister of Cuba after leading a guerrilla campaign that ousted right-wing dictator Fulgencio Batista.
- 1960 –US nuclear submarine Triton begins its underwater round-the-world trip.
- 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires in Victoria and South Australia claim more than 70 lives.
- 1995 Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agrees to gradually lift the closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and permit 15,000 Palestinian workers to return to their jobs in Israel.
- **2000** –A former Bank of New York executive and her husband plead guilty to laundering billions of dollars from Russian bankers in one of the biggest such schemes in US history.
- 2001 –A member of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement, Tan Yihui, dies after setting himself on fire in the Wanshoulu district in western Beijing.
- **2005** –The Kyoto Protocol on curbing human emissions of heat-trapping gases by 2012 comes into force, but is rejected by the United States, the world's top polluter.

TODAY IN HISTORY

- **2006** –Haitians celebrate as word spreads that Rene Preval is declared the winner of the presidential election; Islamist group *Hamas* choose Ismail Haniyeh to be the next Palestinian prime minister.
- 2008 –Hundreds of Maoist militants attack six police compounds in eastern India, killing 13 police personnel, a village guard and a civilian and seizing at least 1,000 stolen pistols.

Load-Date: May 8, 2009



<u>Israel's actions in Gaza have killed any chance for peace; Gazans are</u> confident they can build prosperous country if given a chance

The Gazette (Montreal)

March 27, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A15

Length: 786 words

Byline: EHAB LOTAYEF, Freelance

Body

Gaza is an Arabic word that translates as "a poke." Yet visiting the nine-by-40 kilometre strip of land on the Mediterranean, you feel like the place has been repeatedly stabbed, rather than poked.

Reaching Gaza was an ordeal in itself. I left Montreal in mid-February. A few days later I arrived at the Egyptian border town of Rafah, the only access point to Gaza not directly controlled by Israel.

My Canadian passport was of no help in persuadng the Egyptian gatekeepers to let me through. Many others were also there, waiting days to cross. I was told I needed a letter from my embassy. Back in Cairo, the Canadian embassy charged me \$130 for two forms, absolving it of any responsibility if I went to Gaza. These were my "letters."

Back at Rafah (with a couple of U.S. activists carrying similar, but less-costly, letters from their embassy) we were again denied access although Egyptians were admitting Gazans returning home.

Frustrated, I contacted international delegations on their way to Gaza. Code Pink, a group of more than 50, planned to be in Gaza for International *Women*'s Day. I was welcome to join them.

Third time lucky! It seems the Egyptians did not want bad press for denying passage to hundreds of politicians, activists and journalists travelling to Gaza with messages of support and aid.

Despite this, it was clear that the Egyptian government was a willing enforcer of the siege of Gaza. Israel and Egypt, with the support of other countries including Canada, are taking the people of Gaza hostage in the fight against the <u>Hamas</u>-led, democratically-elected government. It is one of the confusing messages the international community has sent the Palestinians over the years: We want you to accept democracy but we do not accept your democratic choice.

Arriving in Gaza March 7, we visited schools and children's centres, travelled through devastated border areas and refugee camps, talked to people on the street, and met with doctors, activists, UN personnel and politicians. We heard pro-<u>Hamas</u> arguments as well as harsh criticism of the movement.

It is shocking when a young teen tells you that he does not want to make new friends any more, because it is so painful to lose them in air raids. Nearly everyone in the Jabalia refugee camp (pop. 125,000 and one of the most

Israel 's actions in Gaza have killed any chance for peace; Gazans are confident they can build prosperous country if given a chance

crowded areas in the Gaza Strip, itself one of the most densely-populated areas in the world) had lost someone in the fighting.

Despite this, the message we heard most was one of persistence and pride. This is strange coming from people who have nothing, not even the support of fellow Arabs beyond words of sympathy.

The people of Gaza do not want handouts. They are confident that they are capable of building a flourishing society. What they want is normal access to the world and a guarantee from the international community that Israel will not destroy the houses, mosques, schools, hospitals and factories they build.

So why does Israel attack and destroy? Rockets fired from Gaza into Israel and tunnels used to smuggle weapons from Egypt are the main reasons given.

The tunnels are sustainable only because of the need to smuggle basic supplies that Gazans have been denied: food and fuel. To stop the tunnel smuggling (of which weapons are just a small fraction) simply allow monitored trade and open merchandise routes to Gaza through Egypt and Israel and by sea.

As for the rockets (which are primitive compared with the weapons used by the Israeli army), Gazans agree on one thing: These rockets are their only way of telling a world that is ignoring them that their suffering and problems exist.

It's an argument that can be understood in the context of the huge increase in settlement on the West Bank over the years of "peace negotiations" with Israel since the Oslo agreement of 1993.

Palestinians are losing faith in a peace process that has brought them nothing but more losses. The international community has failed them, and Israel takes more away when they deal with it in good faith than when they don't.

In areas in the north and east of Gaza, Israeli forces killed hundreds and flattened houses, mosques, schools, factories and plantations to end rocket attacks against nearby Israeli towns.

Still, the rockets are being fired, which should tell us something about the effectiveness of the Israeli tactics. It raises the guestion of what these attacks really achieve.

In previous visits to Palestine, I found nothing like the hate and anger toward Israel as I did this time.

What Israel is doing, with the help of other countries, including Egypt and Canada, is killing any chance for peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis.

Ehab Lotayef is a Montreal activist, writer and engineer. www.lotayef.com

Load-Date: March 27, 2009



Drunk blamed for deadly fire

The Star (South Africa)
February 16, 2009 Monday
e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4 Length: 771 words

Body

A fire in a dilapidated three-storey wooden building near the Volga City of Astrakhan in Russia has killed at least 16 people, with the blame being quickly placed on a drunken woman resident. About 50 residents were rescued and were given shelter in a school. The woman had stored several petrol canisters in her apartment, where the fire started. The building was declared unsafe some time ago.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy believes the country's generous leave for new mothers|could hinder <u>women</u>'s careers. He told family organisations in Paris that he would like to see more new mothers put in reduced hours instead of stopping work altogether. The long period off work was "sometimes a waste". France's family leave system costs about e80-million (R1-billion) a year.

A man gets his eye tested at a free eye-care camp set up by a voluntary organisation, Karm, in Mumbai, India, yesterday. A World Health Organisation report says 90% of the world's blind people live in developing countries, with at least |9-million of them in India, where they are often|the victims of poverty and lack of access to quality eye care.

Iraqi officials have nullified election results in more than 30 polling stations across the country's 14 provinces due to fraud in last month's provincial balloting. "But we won't cancel the election in any province," election chief Faraj al-Haidari said yesterday, adding that the final results of the January 31 voting would be certified and announced this week.

The population of the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Gaza Strip has passed 1,4-million people, according to an official Palestinian 2008 census released in Ramallah yesterday. It found that in 2007 the population had reached 1 416 543, compared to 1 022 207 in 1997, with an estimated annual growth rate of 3,3%. Most Palestinians - 2 345 107 - live in the West Bank, an increase of 30% in 10 years.

Indian police detained up to 600 right-wing Hindu activists on Saturday following sporadic protests and harassment against young couples celebrating Valentine's Day. Members of the hardline Shiv-Sena group blackened the faces of couples at a park at the Moradabad city in northern Uttar Pradesh and attacked three couples and cut their hair at India's famous monument to love, the Taj Mahal in Agra.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's political fortunes have suffered a new blow as a poll showed support for his Labour Party sliding seven points to 25%. The poll for The Independent on Sunday newspaper gives the main opposition Conservative Party a 16-point lead, with its rating at an unchanged 41%. Labour is only three points ahead of the Liberal Democrats, the poll found.

Drunk blamed for deadly fire

President Muammar Gaddafi, in another jab at a government that he says is failing the people, has called for Libya's oil revenues to be distributed directly to the people. He told the People's Congress that \$32-billion (R318-billion) - roughly Libya's annual oil revenues - should be given to the country's 5-million people. He said the plan would help overcome corruption in the government.

Syria's ambassador in Washington says the US Treasury Department has authorised the transfer of \$500 000 (R5-million) to a Syrian charity. Imad Mustafa said in Damascus yesterday the money for the Children with Cancer Support Association was raised by Syrians living in the US. If confirmed, the transfer would be the latest sign that the US is easing its economic embargo on Syria.

A federal aviation official says the plane that crashed into a house near Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people, last week was on autopilot when it went down, a possible violation of airline policy in icy weather. Colgan Air recommends pilots fly manually in icy conditions; it is compulsory in severe ice. Pilots of the plane discussed "significant" ice build-up on the wings and windshield just before crashing.

The release of soldier Gilad Shalit, seized in 2006, has become Israel's top priority, even above the aims it set for its offensive against *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday. Second was an end to smuggling from Egypt to the Gaza Strip, and third a total ceasefire. The return of Shalit has become a precondition to any truce with Gaza.

.Sixty-five historians have ranked Abraham Lincoln best US president, with George Bush placed 36th out of the 42 leaders to the end of last year. Bush scored lowest in international relations (41st) and in economic management (40th). His highest ranking was in pursuing equal justice for all (24th). After Lincoln, George Washington, Franklin D Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt and Harry Truman were rated as the best leaders overall.

Load-Date: February 17, 2009



Ryan's university ban against civil liberties

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL/OPINION; Pg. A7; Letter of the Day

Length: 300 words

Byline: Erin Glatter, Windsor Star

Body

Re: CUPE Urges Ban On Israeli Academics At Universities, Jan. 6.

Throughout the conflict between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>, I cannot help but to be appalled by the response of the academic community. The recent proposal by Sid Ryan to ban Israeli academics is preposterous.

Why is it that CUPE feels a need to "take a side" in this matter? Banning Israeli academics from teaching and speaking on campuses is allowing universities to censor one side of a discussion, which goes against the fundamentals of what academia stands for.

Universities are forums for debate. A place where peoples of all faiths, countries and backgrounds can come together under the freedom of what Canada prides its self on, free speech.

If this motion is passed, universities in Ontario will be setting a dangerous precedent and will be taking a huge step backwards. Instead of being democratic, free-thinking institutions, universities will become dictatorships.

Furthermore, if this is the thinking of CUPE, where is the calling for Chinese academics to be banned because of the situation with Tibet? Or the call for many Middle Eastern academics to be banned, as the treatment of <u>women</u> in their home countries as second-class citizens is shocking to say the least. What about motions banning anyone who is an academic from Zimbabwe? One has to wonder why Israel is singled out as the only one that is called to be boycotted.

Instead of polarizing the sides of this conflict, universities should be looking for ways to create harmony on campus. Sid Ryan's proposal is biased and hypocritical at best. Canadian universities should pride themselves in being forums where balanced debate is welcomed and not limited to one-sided arguments. A vote passing this motion is a vote against our civil liberties and integrity.

ERIN GLATTER

Tecumseh

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



Drunk blamed for deadly fire

The Star (South Africa)
February 16, 2009 Monday
e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4 **Length:** 771 words

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A federal aviation official says the plane that crashed into a house near Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people, last week was on autopilot when it went down, a possible violation of airline policy in icy weather. Colgan Air recommends pilots fly manually in icy conditions; it is compulsory in severe ice. Pilots of the plane discussed "significant" ice build-up on the wings and windshield just before crashing.

The release of soldier Gilad Shalit, seized in 2006, has become Israel's top priority, even above the aims it set for its offensive against *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday. Second was an end to smuggling from Egypt to the Gaza Strip, and third a total ceasefire. The return of Shalit has become a precondition to any truce with Gaza.

.Sixty-five historians have ranked Abraham Lincoln best US president, with George Bush placed 36th out of the 42 leaders to the end of last year. Bush scored lowest in international relations (41st) and in economic management (40th). His highest ranking was in pursuing equal justice for all (24th). After Lincoln, George Washington, Franklin D Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt and Harry Truman were rated as the best leaders overall.

Load-Date: February 15, 2009



your say

The Cairns Post (Australia)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: AGENDA; Pg. 13

Length: 787 words

Body

Motorists ignoring simple road rules

AS the death toll rises significantly year after year, you would think that motorists would be more aware of road rules.

I'm a 22-year-old *female* driver and take great care when I drive.

I drive Mulgrave Rd every day and am tired of people blatantly ignoring rules that are put in place to protect us.

There are two places on Mulgrave Rd I'm specifically talking about: outside Honeycombe Motors and up further outside Yamaha.

People continue to U-turn there when it is not allowed. It is illegal, holds up traffic, but most of all, it is downright dangerous.

Why are there no police patrolling this section?

I have seen too many near misses. Wake up everybody.

Sarah Mulligan, Earlville.

Israel has right to defend itself

IT is commendable that Mr Caycedo feels so strongly about the plight of the people who live in the Gaza Strip, and is prepared to stand on the side of a busy street with a placard (10-1-09).

But I doubt whether he would last long if he stood on the street in Gaza city with a placard stating "To hell with <u>Hamas</u>".

Of all member states of the Arab league only three recognise Israel, have peace treaties with Israel and live in peace with each other: Egypt, Jordan and Mauritania.

Three members of the Islamic conference, which are near neighbours of ours, only partially recognise Israel and have no established diplomatic relations: Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

your say

Israel is a sovereign, democratic, secular state with a population of seven million, recognised by 163 countries and the United Nations.

It is surrounded by its enemies with a combined population of more than 100 million, and none of its known enemies could be called democratic or secular.

The biggest threat to the Palestinians in Gaza comes from <u>Hamas</u>, a proscribed terrorist organisation, who took control from the elected government to harass Israel.

Israel is not the antagonist; it has a right to defend itself from attack and to protect its citizens.

Ron Eadie, Kewarra Beach.

Impose heavy fines for level crossings

WITH regards to your push for boom gates to be installed at level crossings (2-1-09), I would like to point the failings of the idea.

What happens when the gates fail in the closed position out in the middle of nowhere: for instance, halfway between Cardwell and Ingham where the closest technician would be at either Cairns or Townsville?

Now the traffic would be held up for hours on end with the result people would be driving around the booms and becoming stuck in the middle, and then a train would definitely come along, and then an absolute disaster.

Now, at least with flashing lights you can cross over very carefully, for only a fool would do otherwise.

I believe that the answer to the current crisis would be to educate the public the hard way, with a \$300 fine, and then the message would soon spread.

E. C. Burgdorf, Mourilyan.

English monarchy is a racist system

PRINCE Harry (12-1-09) may not be a racist himself, but he represents one of the most racist systems that has ever existed, namely the English monarchy.

His ancestors, in whose name many of the world's most highly functional and humanly and ecologically appropriate societies were invaded, oppressed or virtually destroyed, profited handsomely, and continue to profit, from an ill-founded philosophy of self-interest that has few equals in history.

The fact that this line continues as though it were somehow valid is an insult to many, especially if one considers the ongoing divisions and problems they have caused.

Perhaps this is unfair, however, as the idea of a monarchy is hardly an English invention, but rather a symptom of an immature conceptualisation of humanity, an outpouring expressed in militarism, greed, classism and the slavery of organised religion.

The Australian Republic is way overdue as the representation of our national identity is dominated by symbols that no longer truly represent us.

David Barnes, Mornington Island.

Fluoride costing one man's vote

I DON'T know how many pro and con articles on fluoride I have read in the past 50 years.

I find myself thinking that people in government trying to force fluoridation of drinking water are doing it because they have been bribed to do so.

your say

Having said that, and as a former ALP supporter for 34 years, and as an enlightened swinging voter ever since, I assure our ALP MPs that, come the next state election, I will try to persuade voters to vote against them, unless the poisoning of our drinking water is stopped.

The feedback that I get indicates that most readers agree, but quite a few disagree and are quite upset at what I write.

But I go by the motto "If what one has to say, does not upset anybody it is not worth saying it".

George Manier, Whitfield.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Turkey's friendship is in doubt; TURKEY: Long Friendship with Israel in Peril

IPS (Latin America)

February 5, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 798 words

Byline: Analysis by Hilmi Toros

Body

And Turkey, a bridge between East and West, was seen as a credible broker in mediating a settlement in the region. That, too, is now in doubt.

The ties between Turkey and Israel that had been simmering for a few weeks suddenly hit boiling point at the usually sedate World Economic Forum in Davos in Switzerland. Israeli President Shimon Peres and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan got into a public showdown over Gaza; Erdogan stormed out of a panel discussion with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa.

Peres defended Israeli strikes as a response to rocket attacks by <u>Hamas</u>. Erdogan denounced Israeli raids and the death and destruction among civilians, many **women** and children among them, and on UN compounds.

The fine print of the confrontation was that Erdogan, despite the reports in most media, did not storm out of the meeting because of Peres. He had said his bit to Peres in no uncertain terms ('Israel knows how to kill well') and was elaborating when moderator David Ignatius of The Washington Post said the panel discussion was running over the allocated time, and persistently attempted to cut off Erdogan.

Erdogan collected his notes and stormed out, telling Ignatius: 'You gave him 23 minutes and only 13 to me.'

In a reported telephone call to Erdogan after the incident, Peres praised longstanding Turkish-Israel ties, and expressed the hope they would continue unhindered. But for the time being, and for some time to come, gone are any major joint Israeli-Turkish projects in many fields, certainly the military one.

'There is a storm, but it will blow over,' Istanbul-based French author Jerome Bastion told IPS. 'Turkey and Israel are too important to each other, and Turkey is too important for the Middle East.'

Some consider that view too optimistic. 'There is damage and it will take time to repair,' Ilter Turan, political science professor and a former vice-president of the International Political Scientists Association told IPS.

Turkey is now seen as taking sides in the Israel-Palestine quagmire to a degree that its potential as an 'honest broker' is questioned. Until a few weeks before Israel's Gaza onslaught, Turkey was playing the go-between in negotiations between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights that Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 war.

'Turkey's credibility as an objective mediator has been undermined,' says Turan. 'Its close relationship with <u>Hamas</u> makes it difficult to have relations with others.'

Turkey 's friendship is in doubt TURKEY: Long Friendship with Israel in Peril

Following his walkout, Erdogan has become a folk hero of the Arabs, particularly in Gaza, unlike other 'conservative and cautions' leaders in the region, writes chief editorialist of the daily Sabah Mehmet Barlas.

The opposite, inevitably is the response among Jews. 'Prime Minister Erdogan's tantrum at Davos throws gasoline on the fire of surging anti- Semitism,' David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee was quoted as saying in Turkey's English language Daily News. 'There has been a worrying surge of anti-Semitism in Turkey in recent weeks.'

Through the assault, the Turkish public sided squarely with Palestinians in Gaza, denouncing Israel at mass demonstrations and collecting funds. There is little in the protests that is anti-Semitic, but media picked on a placard at a restaurant saying 'No entry to Jews'.

Normally, as a sign of sympathy with Jews, Turks point out that their forbearers, the Ottomans, accepted Jews to the empire after they were expelled from Spain in the 15th century. Turkey, which now has a thriving Jewish community of some 20,000, recognised Israel long before Egypt did. Turkey and Israel once considered building a pipeline or a tanker route to ship fresh water from Turkey to Israel, but the project was found too costly.

The Davos spat has suddenly called into question such assumed ties. Through his outburst, Erdogan has certainly raised his stature at home. He was welcomed home with signs of 'World Leader' and 'Conqueror of Davos'.

The flap may have a little to do with personality, and not just politics. Erdogan is known to be a firebrand? with impulsive mood swings from charming to damning. As he said after Davos, he does not belong to the 'Mon Cher ('My Dear') crowd of affable and cautious diplomats trained in the best tradition of the French diplomatic lexicon. He comes 'from the seeds of politics,' telling it as it is.

In a sharp break from the past, Palestinian flags were hoisted at the boisterous post-midnight welcome for Erdogan at Istanbul airport, and Turkish flags fluttered in Gaza at a gratitude demonstration. It will be a long time before Turkish and Israeli flags adorn one another's countries.

The 'Mon Cher' diplomatic world has its work cut out. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: February 5, 2009



World & nation in 60 seconds The nation The world

Chicago Daily Herald
February 21, 2009 Saturday
L2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 **Length:** 774 words

Body

Students elect drag queen:

FAIRFAX, Va. — George Mason University students have elected a drag queen as homecoming queen. Student Ryan Allen beat out two <u>women</u> for the title at the 30,000-student school in suburban Washington, D.C., famous for its run to the Final Four a few years back.

Court backs disclosure:

WASHINGTON — A federal judge has ordered the Treasury Department to give the Fox Business Network records by March 23 about how the agency spent billions in bailout money. The network filed requests under The Freedom of Information Act for records related to the funds spent on American International Group, the Bank of New York Mellon and Citigroup.

DNA clears death row inmate:

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — DNA from key evidence in a Tennessee woman's slaying does not match the man who spent more than two decades on death row for killing her, according to new FBI lab tests.

Paul House, 47, who uses a wheelchair because he developed multiple sclerosis in prison, was convicted of killing Carolyn Muncey nearly 23 years ago. House was released last year after the Supreme Court concluded no reasonable juror would have found him guilty based on DNA tests of semen stains on Muncey's clothing.

Farms losing water:

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Federal water managers said Friday that they plan to cut off water, at least temporarily, to thousands of California farms as a result of the deepening drought gripping the state.

Video game law loses:

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A federal appeals court on Friday struck down a California law that sought to ban the sale or rental of violent video games to minors. The court ruled that the 2005 law violates minors' rights under the Constitution's First and 14th amendments. The law would have prohibited the sale or rental of violent games to anyone under 18.

Madoff invested nothing:

World & nation in 60 seconds The nation The world

NEW YORK — Investors wiped out by the Bernard Madoff scandal got more bad news on Friday: Investigators have confirmed suspicions that the monthly statements showing the disgraced financier was making stock trades for them were pure fiction. "We have no evidence to indicate securities were purchased for customer accounts" in the past 13 years, said court-appointed trustee Irving Picard at a packed, town-hall style meeting at U.S. Bankruptcy Court in lower Manhattan.

Police shooting suspect dies:

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A man suspected of shooting two Indiana police officers in an ambush has been found dead in Louisville, Ky., of a self-inflicted gunshot after an all-day standoff. Louisville Metro Police spokesman Robert Biven would not identify the dead man, but police had earlier said the suspect in the house was Robert Datillo, 37, of Jeffersonville, Ind. Datillo was wanted in the shootings Thursday night at a motel in southern Indiana. The two officers shot were in stable condition Friday.

Mileage tax not an option:

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama will not adopt a policy to tax motorists based on how many miles they drive instead of how much gasoline they buy, his chief spokesman said Friday. Press secretary Robert Gibbs commented after Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said he wants to consider the idea.

Dolphins freed from ice:

TORONTO — Fishermen and a teenage boy from an eastern Canadian town rescued three exhausted dolphins that had been trapped behind drifting pack ice for nearly a week, the wife of the town's mayor said Friday. Sadie May said the men cut a path through the sludgy ice in Newfoundland's Seal Cove harbor with their 18-foot trawler Thursday night, freeing the dolphins from an oval-shaped hole in the ice they had been swimming in for days.

Kerry receives mystery letter:

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — A U.N. relief official in the Gaza Strip said Friday he believes <u>Hamas</u> was the author of a letter his agency received with a request that it be delivered to President Barack Obama by visiting U.S. Sen. John Kerry. <u>Hamas</u> denied writing the letter.

Are drug gangs winning?

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico — The police chief of Mexico's largest border city has stepped down after criminal gangs threatened to kill more cops if he didn't resign. Public Safety Secretary Roberto Orduna's decision to quit came hours after a Ciudad Juarez officer and jail guard turned up dead. Both bodies had messages from unnamed criminal gangs saying at least one officer would be killed every two days until he quits.

Rebels attack with planes:

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Defying the government's efforts to destroy them, Sri Lanka's rebels sent two planes on a surprise raid over the capital Friday night before anti-aircraft fire shot both of them out of the sky, the military said. One plane crashed into a government office building.

Load-Date: February 22, 2009



Support people who live in terror; LETTERS

Daily Mail (London)

January 15, 2009 Thursday

IRE Edition

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Section: Pg. 49

Length: 809 words

Body

I'M HORRIFIED at the state-sanctioned massacre which has been taking place in Gaza over the past few weeks.

I'm particularly worried because the rockets that the Israeli government initially claimed to be responding to were not fired by *Hamas* and did not kill anyone.

How does this justify the murder of 800 innocent people, half of whom are <u>women</u> and children? In fact, Israel broke the ceasefire in November by killing 25 people In Gaza.

Israel is blatantly the aggressor in this conflict. It is illegally occupying Palestinian territory and during the truce from July to December imposed a savage siege on the civilian population of Gaza that starved them of food, drinking water and basic supplies such as paper, electricity and medicine.

Yet Israel has unabated support from the U.S., and has managed to evade blanket condemnation from the international community.

Why? <u>Hamas</u> is the elected government of the Palestinian people. It does not matter if we like them or not, we need to recognise them and listen to them. They have declared their military campaign will stop once Israel respects international law and withdraws from the Occupied Territories.

Millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have lived in terror for the past 40 years. It is they who we should be supporting.

KARLA HEALION, Cork.

SINCE December 27, the world media has rightly focused its attention on the situation in Gaza and on the humanitarian implications in particular.

But the current situation is merely an escalation of a humanitarian crisis of acute proportions that has been going on for some time. I witnessed this crisis firsthand when I visited Gaza last November.

Each successive humanitarian crisis has its roots in the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel. The focus of the international community must be on introducing a lasting solution that addresses the source of the problem.

Recent Israeli actions amount to genocide and should be responded to as such. We are witnessing a cynical campaign of slaughter by a belligerent state for electoral purposes.

Support people who live in terror LETTERS

The future safety of Israeli citizens has not been enhanced by their invasion of Gaza and the indiscriminate bombing of schools, houses, mosques, etc.

There is an urgent need for all governments to demand: the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the cessation of military action; the opening of Gaza's international borders to allow the safe passage of humanitarian aid, fuel and other blocked supplies and to enable the commerce that is essential to its sustainable well-being; Israeli funds for reconstruction work and financial recompense for affected families targeted by Israel in this current onslaught; Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian waters and the cessation of naval attacks on local fishermen; and the dismantling of all illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territories.

Failure to comply on Israel's part must result in diplomatic ostracisation, economic sanctions and the convening of international criminal courts to investigate and prosecute Israeli war crimes.

AENGUS Ó SNODAIGH, TD, Dublin 2.

IN 2000, I was your average Irish male in his 20s and left my initial career in science to move to Galway to figure out what to do with my life.

After the start of the Intifada (War of Independence), I became increasingly aware that any Israeli death was reported prominently in the news with background information on the victim's life. However, this never happened for the Palestinians.

It culminated one weekend when more than 50 Palestinian men, <u>women</u> and children were killed and I realised there was something very wrong with the world.

I joined the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, helping to set up the Galway branch.

We worked hard, visiting the Occupied Territories, doing our best to inform people of what was really going on in the Holy Land, how the people of the Middle East were being made to pay for crimes committed by Europeans in the Holocaust.

I went into teaching, a profession I love dearly, and stayed out of the conflict until now. But I've been so distressed by the slaughter in what I call 'Concentration Camp Gaza' that I had to write.

I know journalists have to report on both sides of a conflict, but the proper context must be set. The reason for the end of the ceasefire was Israeli attacks coupled with the siege of Gaza for months on end.

The existence of Israel as a 'Jewish' state can lead only to increasing violence on a global scale. The only true hope for peace is a Holy Land where no religion claims supremacy, where Christians, Muslims and Jews live side by side as equals, with Jerusalem as a city under UN control, owned by none and shared by all.

How to achieve this 'one state solution' peacefully is not something I know how to achieve. But the alternative is too terrible to contemplate.

ADRIAN PARKES, Enfield, Co. Meath. .

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



Israel's rare opportunity

The Jerusalem Post June 19, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 24

Length: 1873 words

Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK Highlight: Column One

Body

Israel today finds itself in unfamiliar territory. The revolutionary atmosphere building in Iran presents Israel with a prospect it has rarely confronted: a safe bet. With the Obama administration refusing to back the anti-regime protesters, and the European Union similarly hemming and hawing, millions of Iranians who are on the streets, risking their lives to protest a stolen election and a tyrannical regime, have been cast adrift by those they thought would support them. To date, Israel has joined the US and Europe in rejecting the protesters. This should change.

In refusing to stick their necks out - and so effectively siding with the mullahs against the pro- democracy activists in the streets - US President Barack Obama, like Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Mossad chief Meir Dagan, have all rightly pointed out that Mir Hossein Mousavi, Iran's former prime minister and the titular head of the protest movement, is just as radical and extreme as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad whom he seeks to unseat.

Moreover, Western officials and analysts point out that Mousavi's primary backers from within the regime - former presidents Muhammad Khatami and Rafsanjani - are themselves anything but anti-regime revolutionaries.

What apparently motivates these men is the sense that through Ahmadinejad's heavy-handed attacks against the revolution's "old guard," the presidential incumbent has shunted them aside. They feel slighted. And they are doubly humiliated by the fact that Ahmadinejad has acted with the open support of Iran's real dictator - so-called "Supreme Leader" Ali Khamenei. The likes of Mousavi, Khatami and Rafsanjani don't want to overthrow the regime whose aims they share. They just want to restore their power within the regime.

It is these twin assessments of Mousavi and his backers that stand at the center of Western leaders' decision to give a wide berth both to the presidential race and to the protests that have arisen in its aftermath.

For Israel, the arguments for staying clear of events in Iran align with those informing much of the rest of the Western world. Israel's primary concern is Iran's foreign policy and specifically its nuclear weapons program and its support for anti-Israel terror groups. There is no reason for Israel to believe that a Mousavi government will be more inclined to end Iran's race to the bomb or diminish its support for terror groups like Hizbullah and *Hamas* than Ahmadinejad's government is. As prime minister in the 1980s, Mousavi was a major instigator of Iran's nuclear program and he oversaw the establishment of Hizbullah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Beyond that, there is the fact that Israel - like the US - is the regime's bogeyman. If Israel is identified with the protesters, the likes of Khamenei will use this connection to justify their brutal repression.

Israel 's rare opportunity

Finally, there is the distinct possibility, indeed the likelihood, that these protests will go nowhere. They will be brutally repressed or fizzle out of their own accord. So would Israel gain by sticking its neck out?

While reasonable on their face, these arguments for doing nothing all ignore the significance of recent developments. Consequently they fail to grasp the new opportunities that have arisen - opportunities which left untouched will likely disappear in short order.

The fact of the matter is that with each passing day, Mousavi's personal views and interests are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Whether he realized it or not, Mousavi was transformed last Friday night. When Khamenei embraced the obviously falsified official election results as a "divine victory" for Ahmadinejad, Mousavi was widely expected by Western observers to accept the dictator's verdict. When instead he sided with his own supporters who took to the streets to oppose their disenfranchisement, Mousavi became a revolutionary. Whether he had planned to do so or not, a week ago Mousavi became an enemy of the regime.

The significance of Mousavi's decision could not be more profound. As Michael Ledeen from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies wrote Wednesday at the Pajamas Media Web site, last Friday night Mousavi tied his personal survival to the success of the protesters - and pitted his life against Khamenei's. In Ledeen's words, "Both Khamenei and Mousavi - the two opposed icons of the moment, at least - know that they will either win or die."

For their part, by the end of this week, the protesters themselves had been transformed. If last week they were simply angry that they had been ignored, by Thursday they had become a revolutionary force apparently dedicated to the overthrow of the regime. This was made clear by a list of demands circulating among the protesters on Wednesday. As Pepe Escobar reported in Thursday's Asia Times, the protesters demands include Khamenei's removal from power, the dissolution of the secret police, the reform of the constitution under anti-regime Ayatollah Hossein Montazeri, who has been living under house arrest for the past 12 years, and the installation of Mousavi as president. These demands make clear where the protesters are leading. They are leading to the overthrow of one of the most heinous regimes on the face of the earth and its replacement by a liberal democracy.

As far as Israel is concerned, this is a win-win situation. If the protesters successfully overthrow the regime, they will have neutralized the greatest security threat facing the Jewish state. And if they fail, Israel will still probably be better off than it is today. For if the mullahs violently repress the pro-democracy dissidents, the Obama administration will be hard-pressed to legitimize their blood bath by embracing them as negotiating partners.

Were Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to publicly announce Israel's support for the protesters, Israel would stand to gain politically in a number of ways. First and foremost, it would be doing the right thing morally and so would earn the respect of millions of people throughout the world who are dismayed at their own governments' silence in the face of the brave Iranian protesters risking their lives for freedom.

Moreover, by acting as the loudest and first democratic champion of the protesters, Israel would catapult itself to the forefront of the campaign for democracy in the Muslim world. Doing so would make it far easier for Israel's representatives throughout the world to defend against false accusations by self-described human rights organizations that Israel is a human rights abuser.

Beyond that, Israel would be building an important alliance with the Iranian people themselves. Contrary to what the mullahs would have us believe, Iranians by and large do not share the widespread hatred of Israel and the Jews that their regime promotes and the Arab world embraces. Over the years, Iranian regime opponents - from the students to the trade unionists to <u>women</u>'s rights activists to minority Kurds, Azeris, Ahwaz Arabs and Baluchis - have all appealed to Israel for support. Israel Radio in Farsi, which broadcasts into Iran daily, has more than a million regular listeners.

Were Netanyahu to explain that the same mullahs who seek to disenfranchise and repress the Iranian people seek to destroy Israel with nuclear bombs; were he to call for Iran to stop financing <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah terrorists who are reportedly now deployed in Iran to brutalize the protesters, and instead invest in the Iranian economy for the benefit of Iran's people, he would be sending a message that already resonates with the people of Iran.

Israel 's rare opportunity

Finally, Israeli outreach to the Iranian people now struggling to overthrow the regime would expose the Obama administration's effective support for the mullahs against their people in all its absurdity and moral blindness. What's more, the administration would be unable to launch a counterattack. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Obama would be in no position to attack Israel for supporting Iranian dissidents demanding freedom. And their stammering reaction would make their attacks against Jewish building in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria look ever more ridiculous.

Although Israel is far away from Iran, it has significant capacity to help the demonstrators. It could use its communication satellites to break through the communications blackout the regime has attempted to enforce. Its Internet capabilities can be offered to the protesters to reopen closed networks. Israel could temporarily expand its radio broadcasts into the country and allow its airwaves to be used to broadcast events on the ground in real time so that protesters won't have to rely on word of mouth to know what is happening or where things are leading.

Again, it is more than possible that Khamenei will move to crush the dissidents or successfully buy enough of them off to subvert them. But in the meantime, Israel has a clear interest in keeping the Iranian cauldron boiling. The mullahs can only concentrate on so much at once. If they are preoccupied with domestic dissent, they will have less time to devote to <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah. If they are busy quelling armed insurrections by Kurds or Azeris or Baluchis, they will have less time to devote to negotiating the purchase of the S-300 anti-aircraft system with Russia, or keeping tabs on their nuclear scientists. Strategically, Israel stands only to gain - either marginally or massively - from the ayatollahs' discomfort.

In an interview this week with National Review Online, Iranian expatriate Amir Taheri explained that Iran suffers from a divided psyche. On the one hand, the mullahs view Iran as a revolutionary vanguard of Islam. They do not see Iran as a nation-state. For them, the normal things that make up a life - economic stability, public safety and the hope that one's children will do better - are of little use as they march forward under the flag of jihad. Israel and the US are necessary enemies.

On the other hand, the vast majority of Iran's people wish to live in a normal and free nation-state. For them, the revolution means nothing but privation, suffering, repression and death. They do not hate America and they do not hate Israel. They do not seek nuclear weapons and they do not support the likes of *Hamas* and Hizbullah.

As Taheri put it, "When we consider Iran as a nation- state, we see Israel as its natural ally. The reason is that Israel, like Iran, is opposed to an exclusively Arab Middle East. Both want a pluralist Middle East in which there is room for diversity; a Middle East where one finds Iranians, Turks, Kurds, Christians and Jews, as well as Arabs."

If Israel extends a hand in friendship to these Iranian patriots, the worst that can happen is that they fail to overthrow the mullahs and we are left to acknowledge that we wished them well. There is no shame in that.

Indeed, if they fail to overthrow the regime, and Israel is compelled to attack their country's nuclear installations, it is hard to imagine that they will take it personally. Rather, recalling that it was Israel that stood with them first, they would no doubt understand why we were forced to act, and perhaps be inspired to try again to free themselves from the shackles of their hideous regime.

caroline@carolineglick.com

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Can the Koran be compared to 'Mein Kampf'?

The Jerusalem Post January 27, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 763 words

Byline: MANFRED GERSTENFELD

Highlight: The trial of a controversial Dutch politician will soon decide. The author has written 14 books, several of

which deal with anti-Semitism.

Body

Last week the Amsterdam Court of Appeal ruled that the attorney-general should bring a case against Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders. This leader of the right- wing Freedom Party has made a number of extreme remarks about Islam and Muslims, such as calling the Koran the "Islamic Mein Kampf" and referring to "fascist Islam." The Amsterdam court contends that these and other such statements "affect the dignity of Muslims." The attorney- general's office had previously concluded that these and similar remarks were not punishable.

Wilders was initially shocked by the court's decision, but he may well turn the case into a show trial outlining the threat to Western society from violent and hate- inciting forces in the Muslim world. His lawyers only have to go through websites such as FrontpageMagazine, Jihad Watch and MEMRI to bring overwhelming proof for two central claims.

The first is that there are many radical Muslim authorities, Sunni and Shi'ite, whose incitement to murder and other crimes is similar to that of the Nazis. The same goes for Muslim lay leaders such as Iranian Prime Minister Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The second claim is that these inciters are rarely expelled from Muslim communities, or even strongly contradicted.

Wilders' lawyers may bring evidence of multiple calls for genocide intended to encourage the establishment of Islamic rule over the world as well as fatwas and statements by Muslim religious authorities supporting suicide attacks, or comparing non-believers to animals. All these are usually based on the Koran and hadiths (Islamic religious traditions).

The lawyers could quote Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the highest-ranking cleric in the Sunni world, who has come out in favor of suicide bombings. Tantawi has also called Jews the descendants of apes and pigs. Only the choice of animals differs from Nazi language; they preferred rats and vermin.

Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi, living in Qatar, is a spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood who has approved suicide bombings against Israeli <u>women</u> and children. Despite this, Ahmed Marcouch, a prominent Amsterdam member of the Labor Party, in 2005 asked the municipality for a subsidy to bring Al-Qaradawi to the Netherlands. Leaders of several Dutch Muslim religious bodies did the same. The Amsterdam municipality refused.

DUTCH PUBLIC opinion is divided on the court decision. Fifty percent oppose the trial of the parliamentarian, while 43% are in favor. A similar percentage expects that relations with Muslims will worsen as a result of the case. Theodor Holman, a columnist with the Amsterdam daily Het Parool, writes that he also thinks the Koran is as bad as Mein Kampf.

The court decision has further increased Wilders' popularity. A new poll gives the Freedom Party 20 seats in parliament, as against the nine it currently holds.

Wilders is the only internationally known Dutch politician, and has gained much publicity with his 2008 documentary Fitna, which highlights Islam's radical aspects. Over the past several years, hundreds of death threats have been made against the heavily guarded politician. This is the likely reason for the statement by his lawyer that in the meantime he wants to remain anonymous.

The trial is likely to draw major international attention. The Wall Street Journal wrote that the Dutch are importing Saudi rules, as the court seems to be suggesting that people who blaspheme God can be punished. An international campaign to finance Wilders' defense has already started.

There are Jewish aspects to this case as well. In the past few weeks participants in various anti-Israeli demonstrations in the Netherlands have been shouting anti- Semitic slogans, including "Hamas! Hamas! Jews to the gas!" Several of these demonstrations were organized by major Dutch Muslim organizations, yet the police took little action. Even more important is that Wilders' lawyers are likely to bring at least some proof for his positions from the huge collection of Muslim calls for the extermination of Jews and Israelis. Yet other aspects are what the trial's verdict will mean for speaking about the Bible.

Whatever the outcome, Wilders' notoriety is likely to increase. If he is convicted, many will view him as a martyr, in light of increasing evidence that the greatest threat to humanity - including to moderate and dissident Muslims - indeed comes from the world of Islam. If Wilders is acquitted, many will begin to repeat his statements.

In either case the Amsterdam court may have opened a Pandora's box of a yet-unknown size.

Graphic

Photo: GEERT WILDERS at his office in The Hague last Wednesday. Initially shocked by the decision to prosecute him, the lawmaker might well turn the case into a show trial. (Credit: Evert-Jan Daniels/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



My message to the West - Israel must stop the slaughter; Comment

The Independent (London)
January 15, 2009 Thursday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 22

Length: 790 words

Byline: Ismail Haniyeh Prime Minister of Gaza

Body

I write this article to Western readers across the social and political spectrum as the Israeli war machine continues to massacre my people in Gaza. To date, almost 1,000 have been killed, nearly half of whom are <u>women</u> and children. Last week's bombing of the UNRWA (UN Relief Works Agency) school in the Jabalya refugee camp was one of the most despicable crimes imaginable, as hundreds of civilians had abandoned their homes and sought refuge with the international agency only to be mercilessly shelled and bombed by Israel. Forty-six children and <u>women</u> were killed in that heinous attack while scores were injured.

Evidently, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 did not end its occupation nor, as a result, its international obligations as an occupying power. It continued to control and dominate our borders by land, sea and air. Indeed the UN has confirmed that between 2005 and 2008, the Israeli army killed nearly 1,250 Palestinians in Gaza, including 222 children. For most of that period the border crossings have remained effectively closed, with only limited quantities of food, industrial fuel, animal feed and a few other essential items, allowed in.

Despite its frantic efforts to conceal it, the root cause of Israel's criminal war on Gaza is the elections of January 2006, which saw *Hamas* win by a substantial majority. What occurred next was that Israel alongside the United States and the European Union joined forces in an attempt to quash the democratic will of the Palestinian people. They set about reversing the decision first by obstructing the formation of a national unity government and then by making a living hell for the Palestinian people through economic strangulation. The abject failure of all these machinations finally led to this vicious war. Israel's objective is to silence all voices that express the will of the Palestinian; thereafter it would impose its own terms for a final settlement depriving us of our land, our right to Jerusalem as the rightful capital of our future state and the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homes.

Ultimately, the comprehensive siege on Gaza, which manifestly violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibited the most basic medical supplies to our hospitals. It disallowed the delivery of fuel and supply of electricity to our population. And on top of all of this inhumanity, it denied them food and the freedom of movement, even to seek treatment. This led to the avoidable death of hundreds of patients and the spiralling rise of malnutrition among our children.

My message to the West - Israel must stop the slaughter Comment

Palestinians are appalled that the members of the European Union do not view this obscene siege as a form of aggression. Despite the overwhelming evidence, they shamelessly assert that <u>Hamas</u> brought this catastrophe upon the Palestinian people because it did not renew the truce. Yet we ask, did Israel honour the terms of the ceasefire mediated by Egypt in June? It did not. The agreement stipulated a lifting of the siege and an end to attacks in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Despite our full compliance, the Israelis persisted in murdering Palestinians in Gaza as well as the West Bank during what became known as the year of the Annapolis peace.

None of the atrocities committed against our schools, universities, mosques, ministries and civil infra-structure would deter us in the pursuit of our national rights. Undoubtedly, Israel could demolish every building in the Gaza Strip but it would never shatter our determination or steadfastness to live in dignity on our land. Surely, if the gathering of civilians in a building only to then bomb it or the use of phosphorous bombs and missiles are not war crimes, then what is? How many more international treaties and conventions must Zionist Israel breach before it is held accountable? There is not a capital in the world today where free and decent people are not outraged by this brutal oppression. Neither Palestine nor the world would be the same after these crimes.

There is only one way forward and no other. Our condition for a new ceasefire is clear and simple. Israel must end its criminal war and slaughter of our people, lift completely and unconditionally its illegal siege of the Gaza Strip, open all our border crossings and completely withdraw from Gaza. After this we would consider future options. Ultimately, the Palestinians are a people struggling for freedom from occupation and the establishment of an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital and the return of refugees to their villages from which they were expelled. Whatever the cost, the continuation of Israel's massacres will neither break our will nor our aspiration for freedom and independence.

The writer is the Prime Minister of Gaza

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



International: Obama presidency: Quest begins for peace between Israel and the Palestinians: Veteran peacemaker to be special Middle East envoy: Clinton follows Obama and calls regional leaders

The Guardian - Final Edition
January 23, 2009 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 20

Length: 772 words

Byline: Ewen MacAskill, Washington

Body

President Barack Obama yesterday promised the US will "actively and aggressively" work for an elusive Middle East peace deal and will dispatch a high-powered envoy to the region as a matter of urgency.

Speaking to diplomats at the state department on his second day in office, he set out his widely-awaited views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ending the near silence he had maintained over the last few weeks.

Putting the conflict at the heart of US foreign policy for the first time in eight years, he said he would invest time, political capital and cash in the peace effort.

Intent on reshaping foreign policy as quickly as possible, he named the veteran mediator George Mitchell as his Middle East envoy. He also named another veteran diplomat, Richard Holbrooke, as his special envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

He pledged to continue US support for Israel but his tone was more balanced than that of George Bush, who uncritically sided with Israel.

Obama, speaking alongside his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, called for a durable ceasefire in Gaza. He urged <u>Hamas</u> to stop firing rockets into Israel, as Bush had done, but he also called on Israel to "complete the withdrawal of its forces from Gaza".

The president expressed concern at the loss of life among Israelis and Palestinians, and at the suffering in Gaza. He said his heart went out to "civilians who are going without food, water or medical care".

He said he would help Egypt to try to curb smuggling of weapons through underground tunnels to Gaza and would also provide and seek donations from other countries for the development of Gaza.

Obama's promise of intervention comes at a time when feelings are running high in the region over the high death toll in Gaza. Though there is a ceasefire in place, it remains fragile.

International: Obama presidency: Quest begins for peace between Israel and the Palestinians: Veteran peacemaker to be special Middle East envoy: Clinton follows....

It is also a politically difficult time in the region, with Israelis scheduled to go to the polls next month and the Palestinians badly divided.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, welcomed Obama's comments but a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman in Beirut, Osama Hamdan, told al-Jazeera that Obama's comments did not represent change and, unless he did so, he would be doomed to the same failure as Bush.

Obama signalled a willingness to pick up from where President Bill Clinton left off. Clinton tried to broker a peace deal in 2000 and 20001 between the then Palestinian president Yasser Arafat and the then Israeli prime minister, Ehud Barak, but ran out of time.

Bush only intermittently engaged in the Middle East, choosing to side almost uncritically with Israel. He held a peace conference at Annapolis, Maryland, in 2007, but failed to throw his weight behind it.

At the state department, Obama confirmed that Mitchell, 75, the former senator, whose appointment had been leaked to the press this week, would be his Middle East envoy.

Mitchell, appointed by Bill Clinton to help as a mediator in the Northern Ireland peace process, played a pivotal role in Belfast.

He won the respect of both the IRA and the Loyalist paramilitaries for his efforts at bringing about decommissioning. He also reported to Bill Clinton on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling for the Palestinian authority to crack down on militant groups but for Israel too to freeze the expansion of Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

Mitchell told diplomats at the state department: "I believe deeply that with committed persevering and patient diplomacy peace and stability can be achieved in the Middle East."

The appointment of Mitchell undercuts the role of Tony Blair, who since 2007 has been working as a Middle East mediator of the Quartet, which is made up of the UN, the US, the EU and Russia. But Blair yesterday welcomed Mitchell's appointment. A spokesman for Blair said it would renew their close and productive relationship in Northern Ireland. "It shows the true commitment President Obama and Secretary Clinton have to making real progress in the Middle East," the spokesman said.

As well as naming Mitchell, Obama and Clinton yesterday confirmed that Holbrooke, 67, another veteran of the Bill Clinton administration who was US ambassador to the United Nations and brokered the Bosnia peace agreement, is to be a special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Holbrooke said Americans and their foreign partners in Afghanistan were fighting "a ruthless and determined enemy without any scruples at all, an enemy that is willing to behead <u>women</u> who dare to teach in a school to young girls, an enemy that has done some of the most odious things on Earth. And across the border lurks the greater enemy still: the people who committed the atrocities of 11 September 2001."

Load-Date: January 23, 2009



MY TURN: 'WHATEVER THE SOLUTION, VIOLENCE WILL NOT LEAD THE WAY'

The Taos News (New Mexico)
January 15, 2009 Thursday

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Section: FAVOR Y CONTRA/OPINION; Pg. A-7

Length: 770 words

Byline: TANIA ZIVKOVICH

Body

Under the banner "Israel has a right to defend itself," the Israeli military has been committing unspeakable atrocities against the Palestinians.

For two weeks now the world has watched in horror as Israel bombards Gaza from air, land and sea killing many hundreds, wounding thousands, destroying everything. Many of the victims are **women**, children and babies!

The entire population is terrorized. There is no safe place to take refuge, the people cannot flee. The Vatican has likened Gaza to a concentration camp. An Israeli-built wall completely surrounds Gaza. A long-term Israeli blockade has already caused great suffering, denying people access to many basic needs including vital medicines.

Unlike the genocides in Sudan and Rwanda, this horror could be stopped in a heartbeat by the U.S., who provides Israel with \$3 billion in military aid annually. Instead, the U.S. abstained from the recent U.N. Security Council vote mandating a ceasefire, which Israel ignored.

Israel insists that <u>Hamas</u> is the root of the problem, yet were it not for Israeli aggression and occupation, <u>Hamas</u> would not exist. The heart of the whole world is with the Palestinian people in their hour of great suffering.

Across the globe people are protesting. In the Middle East hundreds of thousands have hit the streets to demonstrate, including thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and thousands of Israeli Jews within Israel.

A new generation of young Israeli war-resisters is choosing prison rather than serve in the military against the Palestinians. And the courageous Jews and Palestinians who do work together for peace and justice are an inspiration.

The Palestinians have an inalienable right to life and self-defense as do the Israeli people. Israel, as the Jewish State, however, has bloodily established itself right on top of Palestinian land. It wiped Palestine right off the map. Herein lies the real root of the problem, a huge problem for Jews and Arabs alike.

Apparently, the big Western Powers used the terrible suffering of the Jews during World War II for their own opportunistic ends. They needed a loyal outpost in the oil-rich Middle East, so they pushed the Zionist agenda.

MY TURN: 'WHATEVER THE SOLUTION, VIOLENCE WILL NOT LEAD THE WAY'

Even the most compliant Arab leaders could never serve them as Israel could. And who but a traumatized refugee population would move en masse to colonize an already-existing country, Palestine? A land they were also powerfully linked to by ancient roots. The Jews came longing for sanctuary. So did the pilgrims who came here.

But when you seize, by force, another peoples' land for your own, peace does not follow. And the resistance is always branded "terrorist." They may do horrible things, like firing missiles indiscriminately at civilian populations, but they act in response to invasion and oppression. This bloodbath in Gaza will not bring lasting peace to the conflict, rather it will continue to cause both sides untold suffering into future generations.

Whatever the solution, violence will not lead the way.

Both the U.N. and the Red Cross are highly critical of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The U.N. has demanded an impartial investigation into the shelling of a clearly marked U.N. school by the IDF. Hundreds had taken refuge there, final death toll: 46 killed by red-hot flying shrapnel. The dead were everywhere, lying in pools of blood.

The Red Cross has denounced the IDF for chasing them away from a massacre site for four days. Soldiers had ordered 30 people to take shelter in a building and then shelled it. When the Red Cross finally got in, most people had died. A few were barely alive, including several emaciated children found lying next to their dead mothers.

These are war crimes! They demand justice!

Here in Taos, we too, are responding with protests and an upcoming fundraiser for Gaza Refugees. As long as the invasion continues, we will meet at the plaza at 2 p.m. on Saturdays and then move to the Kit Carson/Pueblo Norte intersection with our signs. Please come and express your support.

On Monday, Jan. 19 at 6:30 p.m., Kit Carson Electric boardroom, "Taos Aid to Gaza" will have an informational fundraiser for Doctors Without Borders, who are, right now, in Gaza providing emergency medical care. Speakers will compliment a short film, and include Lori Rudolph, UNM professor who just returned from Occupied Palestine and Iris Keltz, author and peace activist, among others. There will be Middle Eastern refreshments. Free admission. Donations accepted.

Please, everyone, join with us to help the healing begin and build world peace.

Tania Zivkovich is a Taos resident who gives a voice to the voiceless.

Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

Load-Date: January 14, 2010



International: Gaza: Amid dust and death, a family's story speaks for the terror of war: 48 members of the Samouni family were killed in one day when Israel's battle with Hamas suddenly centred on their homes

The Guardian - Final Edition
January 20, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 18

Length: 1395 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Zeitoun

Body

Helmi Samouni knelt yesterday on the floor of the bedroom he once shared with his wife and their five-month old son, scraping his fingers through a thick layer of ash and broken glass looking for mementoes of their life together. "I found a ring. I might find more," he said.

His wife Maha and their child Muhammad were killed in the second week of Israel's 22-day war in Gaza when they were shelled by Israeli forces as they took shelter nearby along with dozens of relatives. In total 48 people from one family are now known to have died that Monday morning, 5 January, in Zeitoun, on the southern outskirts of Gaza City.

Of all the horrors visited on the civilians of Gaza in this war the fate of the Samounis, a family of farmers who lived close together in simple breeze-block homes, was perhaps the gravest.

Around a dozen homes in this small area were destroyed, no more than piles of rubble in the sand yesterday. Helmi Samouni's two-storey house was one of the few left standing, despite the gaping hole from a large tank shell that pierced his blackened bedroom wall. During the invasion it had been taken over by Israeli soldiers, who wrecked the furniture and set up sand-bagged shooting positions throughout.

They left behind their own unique detritus: bullet casings, roasted peanuts in tins with Hebrew script, a plastic bag containing a "High Quality Body Warmer", dozens of olive-green waste disposal bags, some empty, some stinking full - the troops' portable toilets.

But most disturbing of all was the graffiti they daubed on the walls of the ground floor. Some was in Hebrew, but much was naively written in English: "Arabs need 2 die", "Die you all", "Make war not peace", "1 is down, 999,999 to go", and scrawled on an image of a gravestone the words: "Arabs 1948-2009".

There were several sketches of the Star of David flag. "Gaza here we are," it said in English next to one.

International: Gaza: Amid dust and death, a family's story speaks for the terror of war: 48 members of the Samouni family were killed in one day when Israel 's

Helmi's brother Salah, 30, had an apartment in the same house. He too was pulling out what he could, including an Israeli work permit once issued to his father. "They gave him a permit and then they came from Israel and they killed him," said Salah. In the attack he lost both his parents, Talal and Rahma, and his two-year-old daughter Aza.

During the war, Israel banned journalists from entering Gaza. But the accounts of Salah and his neighbours outside the rubble of their homes yesterday corroborate the accounts from witnesses given in the days after the attack, accounts which led the UN to describe the killings at Zeitoun as one of the gravest episodes of the war and the Red Cross to call it, in a rare public rebuke, "a shocking incident".

More than a dozen bodies were pulled from the rubble on Sunday, and one more yesterday, bringing the Samouni death toll to 48, according to Dr Mouawia Hassanein, head of Gaza's Emergency Medical Services. With more bodies being recovered each day, the death toll from Israel's three-week war now stands at 1,360. On the Israeli side, 13 were killed.

On the second Saturday of the war, after a week of Israeli air strikes, there came a wave of heavy artillery shelling which preceded the ground invasion of Gaza. That night, Salah Samouni took shelter on the ground floor with 16 others from his family. By the next morning, Sunday 4 January, more neighbours had come looking for shelter and the number now there was approaching 50.

"They fired a shell into the upstairs floor and it started a fire," said Salah. "We called the ambulance and the fire service, but no one was able to reach us." Soon a group of Israeli soldiers approached. "They came and banged on the door and told everyone to leave the house," he said. They walked a few metres down the dirt road and entered the large, single-storey home of Wa'el Samouni.

There they stayed for the rest of the day, now a group of around 100 men, <u>women</u> and children, with no food and little water. Though there may have been Palestinian fighters operating in the open fields around the houses, all the witnesses are adamant that those gathered in Wa'el Samouni's house were all civilians and all from the same extended family.

On the Monday morning, four of the men - Salah among them - decided to go out to bring back firewood for cooking. "They fired a shell straight at us," Salah said. Two of the four were killed instantly, the other two were injured. Salah was hit by shrapnel on his forehead, his back and his legs. Moments later, he said, two more shells struck the house, killing dozens of them.

Salah and a group of around 70 fled the house, shouting to the soldiers that there were <u>women</u> and children with them. They ran to the main road and on for a kilometre until ambulances could reach them. Others stayed behind.

Wa'el Samouni's father, Faris, 59, lived next door to the house where the crowd had taken shelter. He had a single-storey house with only a corrugated iron roof and so his family had moved next door to shelter, but he had stayed behind. He was unable to leave his building for fear of being shot, but on the Tuesday the survivors called to him to bring water. He ran quickly the short distance and joined them.

"Dead bodies were lying on the ground. Some people were injured, they were just trying to help each other," he said. There among the dead Faris found his wife Rizka, 50; his daughter-in-law Anan; and his granddaughter Huda, 16.

Only on the afternoon of the following day, the Wednesday, were the survivors rescued when the Red Cross arrived to carry them out to hospital.

The Israeli military has said it is investigating what happened at Zeitoun. It has repeatedly denied that its troops ordered the residents to gather in one house and said its troops do not intentionally target civilians.

Others in the family saw a different but equally grim fate. Faraj Samouni, 22, lived with his family next door to Helmi and Salah. Again on the Saturday evening the family had sought shelter from the heavy shelling, a group of 18 of them gathering in one room for the night. On the Sunday morning the Israeli soldiers approached. "They shouted

International: Gaza: Amid dust and death, a family's story speaks for the terror of war: 48 members of the Samouni family were killed in one day when Israel 's

for the owner of the house to come out. My father opened the door and went out and they shot him right there," said Faraj.

With the body of his father Atiya, 45, slumped on the ground outside, the soldiers fired more shots into the room, he said, this time killing Faraj's younger half-brother Ahmad, who was four years old, and the child's mother.

Yesterday there was blood on the wall of the small room where the child had been sitting.

Then the troops ordered them to lie on the floor. But when a fire started burning in the room next door, sending in acrid smoke, they began shouting to be allowed out. "We were shouting 'babies, children'," Faraj said.

Eventually the soldiers let them out and they ran along the street, passing the others who had gathered in Wa'el Samouni's house and making their way out on to the main road and to safety.

When Faraj returned, he found his home completely destroyed, a pile of twisted iron bars and concrete. On a small outdoor grill were the charred remains of the eight aubergines that the family had been cooking that Sunday morning for their breakfast.

Only on Sunday was he able to bury his father's body and even then there was a final injustice: Gaza's graves are now so crowded and concrete so scarce because of Israel's long blockade that he had to break open an older family grave and put his father in with the other corpse.

"How can we have peace when they are killing civilians, even children?" said Faraj. "I support the ceasefire now. We have no power. If there wasn't a ceasefire we couldn't even bury our dead."

Some Gazans speak privately of their anger at <u>Hamas</u>, blaming the Islamist movement that rules the small territory for dragging them into this conflict. But by far the larger majority are speaking now of their bitter anger at Israel and their deep resentment at the apathy of the Arab world and the rest of the international community, which failed to halt the destruction and the killing.

"We blame everyone," said Ibrahim Samouni, 45, who lost his wife and four of his sons in the killings at Zeitoun. "We need everyone to look at us and see what has happened here. We are not resistance fighters. We are ordinary people."

Ian Black, page 27

1,360

The Palestinian death toll for the three-week war in Gaza. The Israeli death toll for the same period is 13

Load-Date: January 20, 2009



Obama reaches out

The Toronto Star

June 5, 2009 Friday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A24

Length: 341 words

Body

U.S. President Barack Obama reached out to the Muslim world yesterday with a welcome, landmark speech of rare grace and eloquence. He called for "a new beginning" between the United States and the Muslim world after George Bush's abrasive presidency. And he paid generous tribute to Islam's civilizing role, its rich culture, its roots in North America and the values it shares with Christianity and Judaism.

The address to a young, educated audience at Cairo University was by any standard a success. Obama drew shouts of "we love you" and more than 40 rounds of applause.

He was cheered for citing the Qur'an, for declaring that "America is not ... at war with Islam," for vowing to fight "negative stereotypes" of Islam, and for quitting Iraq, closing Guantanamo Bay and ending torture. He drew accolades for speaking of Palestine, for calling the Palestinians' plight "intolerable," for promising to "personally pursue" a two-state solution, for likening Palestinians to slaves under the lash and for decrying Israeli settlements as illegitimate. His support for democracy, religious tolerance and <u>women</u>'s rights also drew applause.

Few can have doubted his sincerity in wanting to "find common ground" with most Muslims against the extremists who preach endless conflict and to push harder for Mideast peace.

But the moments of silence in Cairo spoke volumes as well. When Obama urged his audience to make extremists "unwelcome in Muslim communities," no applause followed. Ditto for his view that denying the Holocaust is hateful, that <u>Hamas</u> must end its violence and accept Israel's right to exist, and that the Arab states must press the Palestinians to accept Israel's legitimacy. The silence that greeted all this was not golden.

Many in the Muslim world are understandably skeptical, waiting to see whether Obama can persuade Israel's new leadership to accept that Palestinians, too, have a right to a state.

Still, Obama challenged his audience to look into their hearts, as well. That made the silence in Cairo as poignant as the applause.

Load-Date: June 5, 2009



The deaths of children - and sense

The Independent (London)
January 17, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 18

Length: 1344 words **Byline:** Deborah Orr

Body

Many may imagine that the deaths of almost 300 children during the latest Gaza offensive, and the photographs the world has seen of Palestinian children maimed or killed, will give even the most right-wing of Israelis pause for thought. Unfortunately, as far as the hardliners are concerned, the opposite is the case.

Former Israeli prime minister, and one of the founders of the Israeli state, Golda Meir (pictured below), long ago came up with a much-quoted formula which defined the killing of Palestinian children by Israelis as just another of the crimes that Arabs committed against Israel. "We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children," she claimed. "We cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children."

So there we have it. According to this specious logic, the more Palestinian children the Israeli army kills, the more wronged and the more victimised the most enthusiastic perpetrators and supporters of such indiscriminate inhumanity believe themselves to be.

This is just one of the many reasons why the Israeli right is so impervious to accusations of disproportionality. Every crime Israel commits against Palestinians is widely rationalised instead as a crime the Palestinians have committed against Israel. There is no disproportionality, because all wrongs are Palestinian wrongs. Even the use of white phosphorus is, no doubt, the inevitable result of the Palestinians' refusal to submit to Israel's devout wish for peace, on its terms.

There was a second part to Meir's quote. She also claimed: "We will have peace with the Arabs when they love their children more than they hate us." The essential truth, really, is that neither people loves its children quite enough to give up its desire for a national homeland, just so that its children can be protected from what is, in essence, a 60-year-long civil war. In that alone, these two Semite peoples can claim some equality.

One people has such a homeland, however, while the other still does not. It is always important to declare one's support for the state of Israel, if not its actions. But it is important as well to remember exactly where all these troublesome and aggressive Palestinians came from, at the start of Israel's great struggle for peace.

The deaths of children - and sense

The 700,000 Palestinians expelled from Israel when it was created in 1948 have grown in six decades to four million stateless individuals. Initially, the 700,000 wanted to be allowed to return to their homes, and it also has to be remembered that many of those were as opposed to the existence of Israel then as *Hamas* still are.

Only since the Oslo accords failed, largely because they did not address the fundamental Palestinian demand of the right to return, have Palestinians begun to accept that this demand will never be met by Israel. The majority now realise, belatedly, that the two-state solution offered at Oslo is the best deal they, or their children, are ever likely to get.

Yet this massive, and welcome, concession to the reality of the situation is still not quite enough for Israel's leaders, or for the diplomatic quartet of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU, even though it has ostensibly dedicated itself to achieving a two-state solution. The demand now is for "Palestinian unity". It is not enough for most Palestinians to concede to the two-state solution. All Palestinians must do so before any practical progress can begin.

Yet surely this position is entirely fallacious. At least the continued and vigorous pursuit of a Palestinian homeland on the West Bank (or Judea and Samaria, as Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu prefers to call it, in his own strange interpretation of the word "conciliatory") would give a clear choice to those many Palestinians in Gaza who do wish to keep their children safe, above all else. The funds and the means for relocation that should have been made available to the Palestinians in 1948 still could be, and a partial solution, at least, would be in sight. This might not solve all of Israel's problems, but it would at least solve some of Palestine's.

The provocations of <u>Hamas</u> have indeed been a contributory factor in the reduction of the children of Gaza into sitting ducks. But if Israelis really believe that <u>Hamas</u> is "forcing" them to kill children, then it is time that they started thinking more creatively and generously about how they can desist from falling prey so very regularly to the manipulations of their enemies. The Israelis are never keen to give the Palestinians what they want. Why, if they really believe the rhetoric that says it is the Palestinians who want their babies to die, do the Israelis so readily make that lonely exception?

Maybe Dati really wanted to get back to work

RACHIDA DATI, the French foreign minister, does not look like a woman who is too much in need of sympathy. At 43, the single mother has given birth, then hopped straight back to work, Caesarean stitches in place, after just five days. That, as anyone who has ever had a baby knows, is seriously tough behaviour, even with a partner giving as much support as he can.

But what is astonishing is that far from attracting admiration, or even understanding, Dati has been the butt of quite virulent criticism. She is a bad example to <u>women</u>, apparently. She has undermined hard-earned maternity rights. She has sent "a dangerous message". By going out of her way to protect her career, she has made <u>women</u> less keen to make such enormous sacrifices seem like wimps.

It took a while for feminists to cotton on to the fact that it was hard for <u>women</u> to "have it all". Now <u>women</u> are pilloried even for attempting to. What next? Will the <u>women</u> who don't have children at all, because they are so dedicated to their work, start attracting disapproval because there are practising some sort of psychological sterilisation in order to get on in a man's world? Must every woman be a synecdoche for all **women**?

<u>Women</u> have learnt from trial and error that it is hard to forge a career and look after a family. Dati is at the beginning of that process, and no matter how many times <u>women</u> are told that having children usually changes everything, it's hard to grasp quite how much until it happens.

It was probably bloody hard for Dati hand over her new-born baby, drag herself, wincing, out of bed, put on her warpaint and to step out in style. Or maybe it wasn't. Maybe she was itching to get back to work. And maybe, just maybe, she can carry on doing that. Others have.

The deaths of children - and sense

Perhaps such exceptional <u>women</u> should be accepted for what they are - unusual. The idea that they have some sort of duty to hide their singularity, and pretend they are not unusual at all, is unrealistic and, quite simply, oppressive.

Blue Smarties return, and life gets complicated

* THERE'S A very jolly advert showing at the cinema, which hails the return of the blue Smartie to the box, after a long exile. The ad appeals to parents and children by using humour alongside serious nutritional information about the safety of the new blue colouring, which is extracted from seaweed.

Not everyone is happy, though. The food journalist Alex Renton argues that we are now being suckered because we fall for the idea that natural equals good. In a recent article he warned: "Nestle's large tube of Smarties includes the following 'non-artificial' colourings: titanium dioxide, carminic acid and copper complexes of chlorophyllins. Carminic acid, for one, is made from insects and has been linked with the severe skin condition urticaria." And there were we, merrily thinking that Smarties had the answer. Ain't life complicated?

* The Labour MP Graham Stringer has labelled dyslexia - which by coincidence has been around for as long as mass literacy - as a "cruel fiction". I do hope he's going to publish this "cruel fiction" as a talking book. Then all those labouring under its delusion can understand what he's going on about. The fool has got the wrong end of the stick. The real problem is that teachers are not trained to diagnose dyslexia. They are not equipped to use dyslexia as an "excuse" as much as they should.

Load-Date: January 16, 2009



<u>Feature - The die is cast; How far-right Israeli politician Avigdor Lieberman</u> <u>could rip away any pretence of moderate democracy</u>

Morning Star March 3, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1751 words **Byline:** Uri Avnery

Body

"lacta alea est" - the die is cast - said Julius Caesar as he crossed the river Rubicon on his way to conquer Rome. That was the end of Roman democracy.

Israel doesn't have a Julius Caesar, but we do have an Avigdor Lieberman.

When he announced his support for a government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu, that was the crossing of his Rubicon.

I hope that this is not the beginning of the end of Israeli democracy.

Lieberman held the Israeli public in suspense until the last moment. Would he join Netanyahu? Would he join Tzipi Livni?

Those who participated in the guessing game were divided in their view of Lieberman.

Some said that he is indeed what he pretends to be, an extreme nationalist racist.

They said that his real aim was to turn Israel into a Jewish state cleansed of Arabs - Araberrein in German - that he has only contempt for democracy both in the country and in his own party, which consists of yes-men and yes-women devoid of any identity of their own.

People said that, like similar parties in the past, Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party is based on a cult of personality, the worship of brute force, contempt for democracy and disdain for the judicial system. In other countries, this is called fascism.

But others said that this is all a facade. Lieberman is no Israeli fuhrer because he is nothing but a cheat and a cynic. The police investigations against him and his business dealings with Palestinians show him to be a corrupt opportunist. He is also a friend of Livni. They said that he had cultivated a fascist image to pave his way to power and that he will sell all his slogans for a piece of government.

The first Lieberman would support the setting up of an extreme-right government by Netanyahu. The second Lieberman could support a Livni government. For a whole week, he juggled the balls.

Now he has decided. He is indeed an extreme nationalist racist.

As they say in the US, if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck.

Feature - The die is cast How far-right Israeli politician Avigdor Lieberman could rip away any pretence of moderate democracy

For appearance's sake he told President Barack Obama that his proposal to entrust Netanyahu with the establishment of a government applies only to a broad-based coalition encompassing Likud, Kadima and his own party.

But that is just a gimmick. Such a government will probably not come into being and the next government will be a coalition of Likud, Lieberman, the disciples of Rabbi Meir Kahane and the religious parties.

Some on the left say: "Excellent - the voters will get exactly what they deserve. At long last, there will be an exclusively rightist government."

One of the proponents of this attitude is Gideon Levy, a consistent advocate of peace, democracy and civil equality.

He and those who think like him say that Israel simply has to pass through this phase before it can recover.

The right must get unlimited power to realise its programme without the pretext of being hindered by leftist or centrist members of the coalition.

Let them try, in full view of the world, to pursue a policy of war, the overthrow of <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza, the avoidance of any peace negotiations, unfettered settlement, spitting in the face of world public opinion and collision with the United States.

In this view, such a government cannot last for long. Obama's administration will not allow it. The world will boycott it. US Jewry will be shocked. And, if Netanyahu strays even slightly from the right's narrow path, his government will fall apart.

The Kahanists, who up to then would have been Netanyahu's full partners, would divorce him on the spot.

After all, the last Netanyahu government was overthrown 10 years ago by the extreme right after he sat down with Yasser Arafat and signed an agreement that gave part of the West Bank city of Hebron to the Palestinian Authority.

After the fall of the government, according to this prognosis, the public will understand that there is no rightist option, that the slogans of the right are nothing but nonsense.

Only then will they arrive at the conclusion that there is no alternative to the path of peace. The voters will elect a government that will end the occupation, clear the way for a free Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem and withdraw to the green line borders, with slight, mutually acceptable, adjustments.

For the public to accept this, a shock is needed. The fall of this far-right government could supply such a shock.

According to a saying attributed - mistakenly, it appears - to Lenin: "The worse, the better."

Or, put another way, it must become much worse before it can get any better.

This is a seductive theory. But it is also very frightening.

How can we be sure that the Obama administration will indeed put irresistible pressure on Netanyahu? That is possible. Let's hope that it happens. But it is not certain at all.

Obama has not yet passed a real test on any issue. It is already clear that there is a marked difference between what he promised in the election campaign and what he is doing in practice.

In several matters he is continuing the policies of George Bush with slight alterations.

That was, of course, to be expected. But Obama has not yet shown how he would act under real pressure. When Netanyahu mobilises the full might of the pro-Israel lobby, will Obama surrender like all preceding presidents?

Feature - The die is cast How far-right Israeli politician Avigdor Lieberman could rip away any pretence of moderate democracy

And world public opinion - how united will it be? How much pressure can it exert?

When Netanyahu declares that all criticism of his government is "anti-semitic" and that every boycott call is an echo of the nazi slogan "Kauft nicht bei Juden" (Don't buy from Jews), how many of the critics will stand up to the pressure?

How much courage will Merkel, Sarkozy, Berlusconi et al be able to muster?

And on the other side, a worldwide boycott could intensify the paranoia in Israel and push the public into the arms of the extreme right under the time-worn slogan, "All the world is against us."

In the best of circumstances, if all the pressures materialise and have a maximum impact, how long will it take?

What disasters can such a government bring about before the pressure starts to take effect? How many human beings will be killed and injured in attacks and acts of revenge by both sides?

Such a government would be dominated by the settlers. How many new settlements will spring up? How many existing settlements will be extended at a hectic pace?

And, in the meantime, won't the settlers intensify their harassment of the Palestinian population with the aim of bringing about ethnic cleansing?

The components of the rightist coalition have already declared that they do not agree to a ceasefire in Gaza because it would consolidate the rule of *Hamas* there.

They seek to renew the Gaza war under an even more brutal leadership to reconquer the strip and to return the settlers there.

Netanyahu's talk about an "economic peace" is complete nonsense because no economy can develop under an occupation regime and hundreds of roadblocks. Any peace process, real or virtual, will grind to a halt.

The result? The Palestinian Authority will collapse. Out of desperation, the West Bank population will turn further towards *Hamas* or the Fatah movement will become *Hamas* II.

Inside Israel, the government will have to confront the deepening depression and perhaps cause economic chaos.

All the sections of the government are united in their hatred of the Supreme Court and the crazy manipulations of Justice Minister Daniel Friedman will give way to even crazier ones.

Under the catchy slogan of "regime change," targeted assaults against the democratic system will take place.

All these things are possible. One or two years of a Bibi-Lieberman-Kahane government can cause irreparable damage to Israel's standing in the world, Israeli-US relations, the judicial system, Israeli democracy, national morale and national sanity.

The positive side of this situation is that the Knesset will, once again, include a large opposition. Perhaps even an effective opposition.

Kadima came into being as a government party. It will not be easy for it to adapt to the role of opposition. That will require an emotional and intellectual transformation.

For 10 years I conducted an uncompromising oppositional struggle in the Knesset and I know how difficult it is.

But, if Kadima manages to undergo such a transformation successfully - which is very doubtful - it may become an effective opposition.

Feature - The die is cast How far-right Israeli politician Avigdor Lieberman could rip away any pretence of moderate democracy

The necessity to present a clear alternative to the rightist government may lead it to discover unsuspected strengths within itself.

Livni's games with the Palestinians may turn into a serious programme for a two-state solution, a programme that will be strengthened and deepened by the daily parliamentary struggle against a government with an opposite programme.

Labour, too, will have to undergo a profound transformation.

Ehud Barak is certainly not the person to wage an oppositional fight, especially as he will not be the "head of the opposition," a title officially conferred by law on the leader of the largest opposition faction.

He will be second fiddle even in opposition. Labour will have to compete and perhaps this will lead to its recovery.

The Bible tells us of the miracle of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37) in which the bones of dead warriors come back to life.

Meretz needs to pull off a similar feat. It will have to compete with both Kadima and Labour to justify its place in the struggle for peace and social recovery.

A real optimist can even hope for the narrowing of the gap between the "Jewish left" and the "Arab parties," which the left has until now boycotted and left out of all coalition calculations.

The common struggle and the joint votes in the Knesset may bring about a positive development there too.

And, beyond the parliamentary arena, the government of the extreme right may change the atmosphere in the country and stimulate many well-intentioned people to leave the security of their ivory towers and start a process of intellectual rejuvenation in the circles from which a new, open and different left must spring.

All these are theoretical possibilities. What will happen in reality? What will be the consequences of a "pure" rightist regime if Livni maintains her determination not to join a Netanyahu government?

Will Israel set off down a suicidal road from which there is no return or will this be a passing phase before the wakeup call?

It is a great gamble and, like every gamble, it arouses both fear and hope.

- Uri Avnery is an Israeli journalist, peace activist and former Knesset member. He is one of the founders of Gush Shalom, a broad-based Israeli peace group.

Load-Date: March 3, 2009



Mothers of martyrdom

Guardian.com
June 14, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 855 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Nesrine Malik: What makes a woman become a suicide bomber? Mere manipulation is not sufficient explanation

FULL TEXT

In recent years, a new phenomenon, the <u>female</u> suicide bomber, has been on the rise. The deployment of <u>females</u> in such a fashion posed a dilemma for male masterminds in the Middle East, as not only was it immodest, but also an insult to their masculinity - the most extreme example of sending the <u>women</u> out to work while the men stayed at home. It seems this attitude is changing due to the obstacles faced by male attackers. <u>Sheikh Ahmed Yassin</u> of <u>Hamas</u> defended the use of the first <u>Hamas</u>-trained <u>female</u> suicide bomber in 2004 by saying that "<u>women</u> are like the reserve army: when there is a necessity, we use them."

More cynically, the media impact of a woman's suicide is more powerful for its novelty, and makes a case for an increasingly grave situation and provokes more sympathy for a cause.

In Iraq, an <u>elderly matriarchal figure nicknamed Um al-Mumineen</u>, meaning "Mother of the Faithful" was arrested in February for recruiting and training <u>women</u> as suicide bombers - a new breed of martyrs who, by virtue of their gender, manage to bypass security checks and are able to conceal explosive devices under their robes. Another woman, <u>Ibtisam Adwan</u>, was arrested in 2008 and warned of a rise in attacks.

The stereotype of the suicide attacker is that of a young male, radicalised either by frustration, group recruitment and/or coercion. It is just about fathomable that, for a man, the perceived helplessness, impotence and emasculation of occupation in Palestine or Iraq could lead one to desperate measures; to, once and for all, write himself large in one literal explosion of self-assertion. It is more difficult to understand why <u>women</u>, some of whom are mothers, choose to take this route. While they may not be the breadwinners in the average family, they nonetheless, mothers or not, usually have some caretaker role, rendering their suicides all the more traumatic to their dependants.

Having said that, I believe that the spirit of self-sacrifice is one that is easy to tap into where <u>women</u> in conservative societies are concerned; in this context, it is other <u>women</u> who play the role of the most convincing sales people of the fate of canonised dedication to others at the cost of one's own happiness. Whether it is to suffer an unsuitable husband or to uphold the honour of the family with dignity, the vision of a stoic woman, gracefully giving herself to

Mothers of martyrdom

infuse life into others is a powerful one, turning misery into a moral victory. One of Um al-Mumineen's recruits, who apparently had problems with her husband and his family, took only two weeks to convince.

Suffering from the ravages of conflict in such societies, <u>women</u> are victims twice over. They suffer the mental and practical consequences of war, while battling subjugation and a lack of prospects. Disenfranchised in so many ways and problems compounded, martyrdom to a higher cause may give meaning to a frustrated existence. Self-immolation, especially in a culture where it is prized, is tempting, and is a way to achieve glory and actualisation when other conventional means more open to men are precluded.

This is not to reduce the motivations of the <u>female</u> suicide bomber (or the male one for that matter) entirely to personal and social factors, or to deny them of volition. There must exist a framework where there is an aggressor, where there is a strong feeling of injustice, and countrymen killed or compromised, for anyone to contemplate such a fate.

While the common denominator seems to be Islam, the glorification of death for a higher purpose has spawned a culture where the religious definition of martyrdom has been secularised and expanded to encompass not only death for religion, but for country and liberty and even sect. It is becoming increasingly clear that terrorists have a fertile breeding ground in communities of <u>women</u> struck by grief and loss.

In Chechnya, for example, <u>females</u> execute the majority of suicide bombing campaigns, the most prominent group being <u>The Black Widows</u>, or Shahidka, believed to have been established by the bereaved who had lost husbands and male relatives in the war with Russia. In the light of a decimated and browbeaten male population, such a sorority creates a defiant <u>female</u> profile to bolster the effort and morale of other <u>women</u>, even eliciting some sympathy from the Russian survivors of the <u>Dubrovka theatre siege</u>.

There are reports of coercion and intimidation tactics employed in the recruitment drive for the Black Widows and, indeed, Um al-Mumineen proves that a manipulator is instrumental in upgrading disaffection to nihilism. While it is deplorable that some may prey on the vulnerable, it is important to understand the depths to which a person and society must plunge for death to be popularised and willing participants found. These <u>women</u> are not evildoers hellbent on bloodshed for its own sake, but young human beings driven to the brink, resigned to a bleak future and angry at a thwarted present. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghazi_Abdul_Rahman_Algosaibi

Load-Date: June 15, 2009



Health conditions worsening in Gaza as borders remain closed: UN agency

Daily Pak Banker May 25, 2009 Monday

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Length: 323 words

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS`

Body

UNITED NATIONS', May 25 -- The deteriorating health situationin Gaza has been intensified by Israel's blockade of crossings into the area, the U.N. agency tasked with assisting Palestinian refugeeshas warned. Even before Israel's military offensive targeting *Hamas* militantson the tiny strip of land earlier this year, which killed over 1,400people and injured 5,000 others, the border closures had a grave impacton the health of Gazans and the ability of the UN Relief and WorksAgency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to providehealth services. According to the agency's latest health report, some 4,000medical items per day on average could cross into Gaza before theconflict, whereas only 40 items are currently allowed to beimported daily.

UNRWA also reported that restrictions on building supplies have resulted in damaged health care centres being left in a state ofdisrepair and a scarcity of paper has led to difficulties inkeeping medical records. The new report also voiced deep concern over the lack of adequatefood to children, and said that on top of widespread unemployment, nopetrol or diesel has been delivered to Gaza and only very limitedamounts of cooking gas has made it into the Strip since November 2,causing anaemia in 30 percent of children below 36 months of ageand 50 percent of pregnant <u>women</u>. Guido Sabatinelli, UNRWA Director of Health, told reporters inGeneva today that the agency forecasted a 25 percent shortfall in its biennium budget for 2009-2010. Since needs were expanding, the agencysaid it would be obliged to suspend some of its services next year, including hospital closures. Sabatinelli said that the UNRWA health budget was \$80 millionto provide for four million persons, or \$20 per person per year, whichis well below the recommendation by the World Health Organization(WHO) of \$60 per person as an absolute minimum.Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Pak Banker.

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Load-Date: May 25, 2009



3-D cell phones become Japanese eye-catchers

Richmond Times Dispatch (Virginia)

March 9, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: METRO BUSINESS; Pg. E-20

Length: 365 words

Body

TOKYO - The Japanese already use their cell phones to shop, exchange e-mail and watch digital TV.

Now comes another dimension to the ever-growing list of eye-catching mobile features: the 3-D display.

The Hitachi Ltd.'s Wooo H001 cell phone, which went on sale last month in Japan for \$510, has a tiny button that says "3D" below the keyboard. Push it, and the screen's image will appear three-dimensional, seeming to protrude slightly from the 3.1-inch liquid crystal display.

The 3-D feature works for any image, but reading e-mail in 3-D is simply nerve-racking.

- The Associated Press

Calif. bill would restrict Internet map services

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - A California lawmaker wants to force Internet mapping services to blur detailed images of schools, hospitals, churches and all government buildings, reviving a debate over whether such images can assist terrorists.

Assemblyman Joel Anderson, a San Diego-area Republican, said he introduced his bill after reading that terrorists who plotted attacks in Israel and India used services such as Google Earth and Microsoft's Virtual Earth.

But even if his bill becomes law, it might be difficult to prohibit Google Inc., Microsoft Corp. and other mapping companies from posting such photographs. That's because those images already are public and often are posted on the institution's own Web site.

"Just taking a picture of a building is not a threat because these images have been available for decades," said Simon Davies, president of London-based Privacy International, which has been critical of Google for taking photographs without consent.

Google and Microsoft do voluntarily limit online images to some extent, particularly those of government and military installations.

Google also removed shelters for battered <u>women</u> before it unveiled panoramic street-level photographs that show buildings in much closer detail, including possibly who's coming and leaving.

3-D cell phones become Japanese eye-catchers

In addition, the company removed detailed Israeli street images from its Google Earth software after the government there raised concerns that *Hamas* used online satellite photos to aim rockets.

Anderson's bill would apply only in California.

- The Associated Press

Notes

GETTING TECHNICAL

Graphic

PHOTO

Load-Date: March 14, 2009



Commission takes a charitable view of terrorism

The Sunday Telegraph (London)

March 29, 2009

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The Sunday Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; Comment; Pg. 26

Length: 852 words

Byline: ALASDAIR PALMER

Body

Faisal Mostafa has twice been acquitted in Britain of conspiracy to cause explosions. In one of those trials, his codefendant was found guilty and received 20 years. Mr Mostafa himself has been given a suspended sentence for boarding a plane with a pistol in his luggage. Last week, he was arrested by the security forces in Bangladesh for suspected involvement in terrorism.

The Charity Commission, the body which regulates UK charities, nevertheless thought he was a fit and proper person to be a trustee of the Green Crescent, an Islamic charity based in the UK. The commission may change its mind about Mr Mostafa now that one of the schools that Green Crescent funds in Bangladesh has been searched and found to contain guns, 3,000 bullets, and enough explosive to make more than 200 grenades.

Or it may not. The commission can be surprisingly lax when it comes to evidence that charities may not provide the "public benefit" which it insists is essential to charitable status, but instead have links to groups which may be involved in advocating, or promoting, terrorism.

For instance, it is eight years since evidence first came to light that Interpal, a UK-based charity which aims to provide humanitarian relief in Palestine, is connected to the Union of the Good, an organisation which the US Treasury has designated as a terrorist entity on the grounds that it "facilitates the transfer of tens of millions of dollars a year to <u>Hamas</u>-managed associations in the West Bank and Gaza strip."

But it was only last month that the commission released its report into the matter. That report was a response to a programme made by the journalist John Ware for the BBC two years previously. While the commission failed to investigate many of the BBC's most serious charges against Interpal, it did at least conclude that the organisation should sever its ties with the Union of the Good. Those ties include the fact that Interpal has, as one of its trustees, a man who is also general secretary of the Union of the Good, and who may also have served on <u>Hamas</u>'s executive committee.

How will the commission check that Interpal has acted upon its demands? It is surprisingly coy about answering that question. It says it has received an assurance from Interpal that the link has been broken - but admits it has yet to check whether this is actually true. Suppose that, when the commission gets round to doing some checking of its own, it finds that Interpal still has ties to the Union of the Good. Then what will it do?

Commission takes a charitable view of terrorism

It could deprive the organisation of charitable status. That's what it did to Odstock, a not-for-profit organisation which charged patients fees for medical treatment. The commission would like to do the same to private schools which charge fees without providing what it deems to be adequate "public benefit".

So will the same sanction be applied to an organisation which the commission itself has ruled has links to a group that promotes terrorism? The answer to that question should surely be "Yes". Because to most people, a connection to or involvement with a group advocating terrorism is a much more serious violation of the rules governing charitable activity than, say, charging patients.

No one, however, thinks that the Charity Commission is going to remove Interpal's charitable status, or even the charitable status of the Green Crescent. You can be sure that some convenient form of words will be found to enable the commission to say that it has discharged its duty of ensuring that organisations it permits to be charities are not involved with groups linked to terrorism. Regulators in America, Germany and Australia take a more robust approach and prosecute charities they think have connections with terrorist groups. But we don't - and if you ask the commission why, you won't receive an adequate answer.

The Charity Commission is not the only government regulator that fails to do its job effectively. Ofsted is another. Just as it took media reports to bring Interpal and the Green Crescent to the commission's attention, so it has taken a report by the think tank Civitas to make Ofsted realise that a number of Islamic schools are unacceptably bad: not only do they fail to teach their pupils essential parts of the curriculum, but they also teach them that democracy is evil, that secular law must be replaced by sharia law, that <u>women</u> are inferior to men, and that homosexuals should be killed.

Ofsted, which was supposed to be inspecting the schools, hadn't noticed any of that - or if it had, hadn't thought it worth doing anything about it. It has now begun its own investigation, which I hope will be rather more thorough and effective than the Charity Commission's investigation into Interpal. I also hope it will have some serious consequences, such as the closing down of schools which attempt to poison the minds of the young.

But I'm not optimistic. The Financial Services Authority, the organisation responsible for failing to regulate the banks, was not a uniquely incompetent or ineffective regulator. They're all like that. And it means we're all in trouble.

Load-Date: March 29, 2009



EU aid has been given to an Israeli oil company recognised as illegal; MIDEAST: 'EU Paying for Gaza Blockade'

IPS (Latin America)
February 23, 2009 Monday

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Length: 838 words **Byline:** David Cronin

Body

Almost 97 million euros (124 million dollars) in funds managed by the European Commission, the executive arm of the EU, were handed over directly to the firm Dor Alon between February 2008 and January this year. Under orders from the Israeli authorities, Dor Alon has been rationing the amount of industrial diesel brought into Gaza in order to deprive its 1.5 million inhabitants of electricity. Power cuts have been a regular occurrence in Gaza because of Israeli actions undertaken since the militant party *Hamas* won an unexpected victory in Palestinian legislative elections during 2006.

Charles Shamas from the Mattin Group, an organisation based in the West Bank that monitors Europe's relationship with Israel, said that the EU has been helping to accommodate the economic blockade of Gaza. This is despite how the Union's most senior diplomats, including its foreign policy chief Javier Solana and the external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, have condemned the blockade as 'collective punishment' of a civilian population. Collective punishment constitutes a war crime, according to the 1949 Geneva convention.

'The European Union has to give aid lawfully,' said Shamas. 'That means a good faith effort not to conform to the wrongful acts of others. In this case, the EU is giving effect to wrongful measures by Israel. You can't really credibly call on Israel to correct its behaviour if you are adjusting what you do to fit in to that behaviour.'

Christiane Hohmann, spokeswoman on external relations for the European Commission, said that the diesel provided by Dor Alon is used in a power plant that meets 30 percent of Gaza's electricity requirements. Schools and hospitals are the primary beneficiaries of the EU's aid, she added, stating that Dor Alon delivered more than 96 million litres to Gaza as a result of the money it received from the Commission over the past 12 months. Dor Alon has also benefitted from aid granted by Germany and Belgium, both EU member states.

'This is not abetting the blockade,' she said. 'It is not part of it. What we are always saying to the Israelis is that they need to open the crossings (into Gaza). The heavy diesel needs to get in.'

The Commission's aid is administered through a mechanism known as Pegase. Beginning its operations last year, Pegase is designed to bypass *Hamas*, while supporting activities run by its rival Fatah, the party in charge of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Hohmann stressed, however, that aid to Dor Alon is paid to the company itself and 'doesn't go through any Palestinian structure.'

A spokesman for Dor Alon said that any reduction in its deliveries to Gaza has been the result of Israeli government policies. 'Dor Alon is a private company, it has to do whatever the ministry of defence tells us to do,' he added. 'I

EU aid has been given to an Israeli oil company recognised as illegal MIDEAST: 'EU Paying for Gaza Blockade'

cannot tell you that we deliver more one day and less another day. That doesn't concern us. We follow orders in that matter.'

One of the four largest fuel companies in Israel, Dor Alon also owns two chains of convenience stores, Alonit and AM:PM. As well as its activities in Gaza, it runs a network of petrol stations and shops in Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

'What's happening here is that the Israeli economy is controlling access to the Palestinian markets to ensure the benefit of certain Israeli companies,' said Merav Amir, campaigner with the Coalition of <u>Women</u> for Peace, an organisation that studies how Israeli firms can profit from the occupation of Palestine.

Amir pointed out that all international aid destined to the Palestinian Authority has been routed through Israel since the Oslo accords. Signed between Israel's president Shimon Peres, then foreign minister, and Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas in 1993, this was the first agreement negotiated face-to-face between the two sides. Yet while its official title referred to the self-government of the Palestinians, many observers feel that Israel has used the agreement to reinforce its control over the West Bank and Gaza.

'Israel holds a lot of money that actually belongs to the Palestinian Authority,' added Amir. 'With some of that money, it pays the suppliers in a way that sustains the dependence of the Palestinian economy (on Israel). The European Union is in a position to pressure Israel to change how all of this is done.'

Chris Davies, a British Liberal member of the European Parliament, this week described how the blockade of Gaza, which he recently visited, is having devastating consequences in a densely populated area that is struggling to come to terms with the 22-day bombardment that Israel launched in late December last year.

Although 500 lorry loads of food and other supplies are needed each day in Gaza, Israel is only allowing 130 to pass through checkpoints controlled by its troops. 'Paper for schools, nappies, water purifying tablets, concrete for rebuilding, they are all prohibited,' he said. 'The normal life of a big city is impossible. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: February 23, 2009



Untold stories lie buried in the rubble

The Independent (London)
January 19, 2009 Monday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 18

Length: 324 words **Byline:** Kim Sengupta

Body

As the guns fell silent in Gaza, the terrible human cost of the three weeks of bloody carnage began to be tallied.

After 22 days of air strikes and shelling, residents began emerging to search for the dead and the lost and pick over what was left of their shattered homes. The death toll at the time of ceasefire, according to the <u>Hamas</u>-run Ministry of Health, stood at 1,300, among them at least 410 children. Another 5,300 people were wounded.

Chris Gunness, the spokesman for the UN relief agency UNRWA, said: "We have untold stories literally buried under the rubble, each one of them will have to be found and what happened accounted for, it is impossible to say how long that will take.

"We have faced a huge amount of destruction - 53 out of our 200 facilities have been damaged, our headquarters was destroyed when the Israelis opened fire and the main workshop burned to a cinder when it was hit by white phosphorus shells.

"We have 50,000 people to feed and look after inside Gaza and we are still having problems getting to them."

The Shahadeh family was preparing to leave Gaza City and return home to the northern town of Beit Lahiya, targeted by the Israeli military. "I've been told that the devils have left," said Riyadh Shahadeh. "I'm going back to see how I'm going to start again ... I have no other option."

Classes were supposed to resume in Gaza this week but many schools, including the UN ones, have been damaged. "We found our books scattered, our desks broken," said Mohammed Yayya, 15.

"The Israelis did this because they do not want us to have an education, they see us as the enemy."

Kate Redman, from Save the Children in Jerusalem, said: "Children have borne the brunt of this conflict. Too many have lost their lives and loved ones. Many have spent weeks cold, hungry, afraid and deprived of food, clean water and health care."

After killing hundreds of women and children, Israel was the good guy again

Robert Fisk, page 20

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It's not about symmetry; it's about being locked in the same paradigms

Daily News Egypt February 27, 2009 Friday

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Body

JERUSALEM: The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. €"Albert Einstein

There is no symmetry or equality in the situation in Israel and Palestine €" not in terms of power, resources, privilege or the lived experience of each side. There are, however, shared paradigms and emotions that fuel the endless, tragic conflict.

In order for liberating perspectives to emerge, the parties must be willing to question the basic assumptions that underlie the definition of the problem itself. When will Israelis and Palestinians be ready to question some of the concepts that underlie both of their stories? When will they be able to move beyond the dualistic right-wrong, goodbad, us-them paradigms? When will they be willing to acknowledge the limitations of their particular view of the story and take the leap towards a more complex, nuanced meta-perspective of the system as a whole, and in so doing liberate themselves towards a different, more life-enhancing narrative?

€œThere is no parity between us!€ insists the Palestinian. "œThere can be no justification for Israel's horrific abuse of its military might, the flattening of homes and the killing of innocent Palestinians who are hostages in the war between *Hamas* and Israel. There is no limit to their cruelty! They will not stop until they destroy us completely.€

€œThere is no parity between us!€ insists the Israeli. "œThey intentionally kill civilians, blowing themselves up on buses and in malls. In Gaza they shoot from behind the skirts of <u>women</u>, knowing that we do all we can to avoid harming innocent people. There is no limit to their cruelty! They will not stop until they destroy us completely.€

€œAll we want is our land, the freedom for self-determination and the recognition of our right to exist as an independent people in our own land" cry both the Palestinian and the Israeli to the world.

€œWe are only responding to their actions €" it is their fault, their injustices, their inhumanity. How can you not see that we are right and they are wrong? Why do you only see their perspective? How can you support them against us?€ cry both the Israeli and the Palestinian to the world.

€œWe won!€ shout the Palestinians. "œThey have not managed to kill our spirit.

It's not about symmetry; it's about being locked in the same paradigms

The world has now seen the true, cruel face of the Zionist monster with which we have to contend!€

€œWe won!€ shout the Israelis. "œWe have shown we will not tolerate the constant attacks on our citizens. The world has now seen the true, cruel face of the *Hamas* and its Iranian connection!€

€œWe have no choice!€ insists the Palestinian. "œThey have taken our land and deprived us of our basic human rights. No one hears our plight other than when we use bombs and rocket attacks. We have no choice but to fight oppression with violence.€

€œWe have no choice!€ insists the Israeli, "œWe have given land for peace; we withdrew from Gaza and subsequently suffered years of rocket attacks and terrorism sponsored by Iran. We have to ensure the safety of our citizens.

We have tried all diplomatic solutions. All they understand is force.€

It is precisely the difficulty in seeing a choice of a different narrative that binds Palestinians and Israelis in this loop of suffering. In seeing no choice one can avoid the pain of introspection and of discovering one's own shadows, responsibility and accountability. There is comfort in feeling that all goodness and justice lies with oneself and that the source of the problem and of all evil is conveniently located in the other.

So what different paradigm can be offered as a pathway through this impasse? To start with, it would help to move beyond the focus on "œus" and "œthem" and address the dimension of the system as a whole. For the Israeli-Palestinian system to be healthy it necessitates the health of all parts of the system. One part cannot thrive for long at the expense of the other. It is in the self-interest of all parts of the system to invest in the well-being of all other parts. Well-being is not financial prosperity alone but entails also a deep sense of safety, justice, recognition and hope. Without these there will inevitably be discontent, rage and uprising. It is clear that those in power have a greater burden of responsibility for the health and prosperity of the system as a whole, but this does not exempt the disenfranchised from their own authority and accountability.

The time is ripe to recognize choice in the face of threats. It is time to have the courage to look critically at one's own contribution to the escalation of conflict and to the state of the system as a whole. Despite our differences, we are inextricably interconnected as one. As long as we deny our interconnectedness and mutual accountability and hold onto partisan interests and politics, we will dig ourselves and our children deeper and deeper into the same tragic divisiveness that spawns the ongoing enmity and war.

Shelley Ostroff PhD is a consultant living in Jerusalem. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

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We, the people, must define our future

Post (South Africa)

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e1 Edition

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Body

TWO weeks into the New Year and for many, the holidays seem a distant and hazy memory. How quickly we get embroiled in the hectic pace of the working year, almost forgetting to breathe? I returned to work two days ago after a two-week break in Cape Town - sun, sand, mountain, long lunches, walks on the beach, sunsets at 9pm. I have terribly mixed feelings about Cape Town. On the one hand, it reminds me of the old lily-white pre -1994 South Africa of entrenched divisions, glaring extremities of wealth and poverty, a city cushioning its privileged minority white population within the sheltering walls of Table Mountain.

At the same time, the proximity of mountains and sea, and a gentler pace of life, also beguiles me with time for everything: work, family and friends.

Capetonians seem to have a more balanced lifestyle that is in complete contrast to Johannesburg's incessant and frenetic rhythm dictated by money and achievement. More importantly, I don't feel that my life is threatened at every given moment or that my car will be hijacked or my holiday home burgled. People park their cars on the street! They walk their dogs in parks and have neighbourhood get-togethers! Okay, so one would argue that spending leisurely days in Vredenhoek, Paternoster and Stanford, does not reflect the lived experience of the less privileged who reside in Khayalitsha or Mitchells Plain, but one can not deny that Cape Town just does not have the same palpable form of aggression. Living in Johannesburg is like being in a war zone without the bombs - manic rage-driven drivers, daily hijackings, ATM bombings, cash heists, shopping mall hold-ups, house-breaking and rape - it's a non-stop saga of violence that encompasses our lives completely. The anxiety is like a never-ending migraine, a constant throb that dictates your moods, regulates life into calculated moves dictated by a need for safety.

Yes, people are paid more, but at what a cost that comes. More and more people are choosing to move and take pay cuts in order to preserve their sanity, safeguard their lives and the future of their children. So, is a move to a quieter, safer place on the cards? I don't know. I do know that the rampant crime has taken its toll on my health and outlook on life. Nevertheless, perhaps I should also be counting my blessings. Just read on. The Zimbabwean people are at the mercy of a mad dog dictator, without food, medical care, education or a chance to offer their children a decent life. Israel continues its reign of terror against the Palestinians. Rockets rain down on innocent civilians in the heavily blockaded Gaza strip. To date, more than 800 Palestinians have lost their lives, many of them little children. Israel defends its actions saying it will use any means whatsoever to disarm and neutralise <code>Hamas</code>, citing the organisation's rocket attacks against northern Israel. Thirteen Israelis, mostly soldiers, have been killed. The retaliation is completely out of proportion.

The Red Cross and UN have accused the Israeli army of attacking medics and ambulances attempting to assist the injured and preventing the evacuation of people to hospitals and safe areas. Gaza's infrastructure has been

We, the people, must define our future

annihilated, hospitals have no electricity or supplies and are completely unable to cope with the hundreds of injured and dying. Images of bleeding and maimed Palestinian children, who in some cases have lost their entire families, tell of the human tragedy that is unfolding. And while the world protests and the UN calls for an immediate cease-fire this genocide continues because Israel is sheltered by the might of the US.

Western leaders howl in protest against the likes of Robert Mugabe and president of Gabon, Omar Bongo, but are silent about Ehud Olmert, Israel's Prime Minister, who has sanctioned this radical air and ground incursion into an already beleaguered Gaza Strip. They are targeting civilians, deliberately saying that *Hamas* is using the civilian population as a shield. I find it frightening how a people who suffered the Holocaust can inflict such pain on innocents and all in the name of protecting their rights. Not all Israelis support the Gaza attack and I am sure that this reflects the sentiments of many Jews all over the world, who cannot abide the atrocities that are taking place in their name.

South Africa must speak out and take diplomatic action against Israel. But our government does not have a respectable record of accomplishment in international diplomacy, having failed to take action against Robert Mugabe; vetoing a UN bill that would regard the rape of <u>women</u> as a war crime; and electing to remain silent on a whole array of moral issues. As we enter 2009, the world is beset by enormous political, economic and social challenges that demand that each of us take a stand and make our voices heard. This year we vote in a new government and my resolution is to ensure that my voice will be as loud as my vote. We must all contribute towards building a democracy that upholds the rights of all, and that can only happen if we get involved in holding people in power to account, asking questions and demanding answers. Corrupt politicians, warmongers or global capitalist pirates, need not define the future. We can make an impact and should.

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How Britain's mosques foster extremism; Sectarian, conservative leadership is driving confused young Muslims into the arms of radicals

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Length: 893 words **Byline:** Ed Husain

Body

As a child, I was unsure if I belonged to Britain, India - or both, or neither. In the day I went to a multifaith, multiethnic state school in the East End of London. At school I was taught to question, think and see all religions equally. In the evenings, I attended Koran schools at a mosque on Brick Lane where I was forced to learn to read Arabic, but not to understand meanings of words. I was not allowed to question, but simply to bob to and fro and learn Arabic prayers without understanding. All our teachers were elderly Asian immigrant men, and we were not allowed to mix with girls.

At school, our teachers were mostly English women and we were encouraged to mix with everybody.

I developed two personalities, two worlds, two allegiances: one at "English school" and another at the mosque. I was torn, confused and full of questions. But what now? Two decades on, surely Britain's Muslims are in a better place.

Today, there are between 1,200 and 1,600 mosques in Britain - no definite figure exists. Yesterday, the Charity Commission sought to gloss over the malaise in them by publishing figures on attendance, but not inquiring into difficult areas. At

Quilliam, Britain's first counterextremism think-tank, we commissioned a poll of more than 1,000 mosques in 2008, during Ramadan when mosques are busiest.

Despite employing Urdu and Bengali-speaking researchers, we could poll only just over 500. Most British mosques don't maintain a reception or service to answer questions, and not every one we did reach was willing to answer.

Quilliam's report, Mosques Made in Britain, reveals the true extent of the mess. We found that 97 per cent of imams, or leaders, were from overseas and 92 per cent were educated abroad, mostly in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Almost all mosques are controlled by first-generation immigrant men, leaving most British Muslims - <u>women</u> and young people - out of the management structure.

How Britain 's mosques foster extremism Sectarian, conservative leadership is driving confused young Muslims into the arms of radicals

This is not new. Quilliam has merely found evidence of a problem that has been known among Muslims for more than two decades.

Most British Muslims are under 25.

When, like me, they have questions about identity, belonging, values, and religion, their local mosque leadership is futile. Britain's mosques are run by men who are physically in Britain, but psychologically in Pakistan. They retain their village rituals and sectarianism, and prevent the growth of an indigenous British Islam. And for as long as young Muslims are confused about whether they belong in Britain or elsewhere, we risk handing them over to preying extremists in our midst.

By importing cheap imams from poor, intellectually deprived and theologically conservative places mosques put young Britons in the hands of men who do not have the linguistic or cultural backgrounds to deal with modern Britain. Little wonder, then, that many young Muslims turn to radical university Islamic societies, extremist websites, and *Hamas*-supporting groups in Britain for "religious guidance".

Mosques Made in Britain also found that nearly half of mosques do not make provisions for <u>women</u>. And those that do provide disgraceful, unhygienic quarters for them to pray and ensure that <u>women</u> maintain no real presence at mosques. With very few exceptions, most mosque management committees are dominated by older men who have successfully kept out <u>women</u>.

As this generation of imams and elders eventually move aside, who will take their place? Of the 27 or so Muslim seminaries or dar ul uloom in Britain, 25 come from the austere, Deobandi tradition - the preferred school of the Taleban. So while British soldiers risk their lives in Afghanistan, in British Muslim seminaries we allow the teaching of intolerance, unequal treatment of <u>women</u>, religious rigidity, the banning of music and theatre, and an end to free mixing of the sexes.

At these seminaries, medieval textbooks are still taught without any reference to context. Graduates of these highly conservative madrassas have taken up nearly 100 posts as chaplains in our prisons. Soon, they will move into mosques as English-speaking imams, without any understanding of British values of liberty, tolerance and pluralism.

How long will we tolerate this underworld in Britain? Two years ago the Government established a Mosques and Imam National Advisory Board and included <u>Hamas</u> supporters to win over radicals. What has it achieved? Large numbers of British mosques are not properly registered with the Charity Commission, imams work with children without Criminal Record Bureau checks, and mosque buildings flout health and safety regulations. Would other schools or churches get away with this? More than three years after the July 7 bombings, where are the citizenship classes in mosques? Or the English-language teaching for foreign imams? With such problems on our doorstep, as a community we are still focused on British policy in Palestine and Iraq at the expense of our children's education, gender apartheid at mosques, and inadequacies in language, safety and leadership. Labour politicians are only too keen to campaign for the Muslim vote in mosques in Blackburn, Manchester and Bradford while turning a blind eye to the failure that surrounds their constituents. For how much longer? Ed Husain is co-director of Quilliam, and author of The Islamist..

I had two personalities, one at 'English school', another at the mosque

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